

# Forerunner

Winter 2017

**Together** is the magazine where community, school and church meet.

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**St James & Emmanuel  
Academy Trust**

Didsbury CE  West Didsbury CE  St Wilfrid's CE 

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Didsbury CE Primary School, Elm Grove, Didsbury, Manchester M20 6RL

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Cover photograph: Pupils enjoy the Great Get Together at West Didsbury CE.



Matt Whitehead is Executive Headteacher of St James and Emmanuel Academy Trust

# Sharing skills

When people ask me what I like most about walking into the three schools that make up the St James & Emmanuel Academy Trust (SJEAT), I always say how they make me feel. They are happy, warm places where learning is celebrated. So to combine that atmosphere with results which show all three are performing above national standards is stunning.

I strongly believe that each school, while maintaining its individual character, community and identity, has really benefitted from the ethos of collaborative support that SJEAT can provide.

Staff now share planning, assessment and ideas – we recently had a seminar at St Wilfrid’s on how to deliver outstanding teaching and learning, attended by over 50 people. The directors work with the fantastically committed Local Governing Boards and parents to determine the individual direction of each school within a supportive and challenging overall framework. Best of all, because of this outstanding leadership and quality of teaching, there are now incredibly exciting opportunities for every single child we are honoured to be entrusted with.

So we have more inter-school competitive sport this year, but it’s not just about having extra netball and football matches. We’re bidding for Forest School status at West Didsbury CE, which will mean Didsbury CE and St Wilfrid’s will also be able to offer outdoor learning space. The fantastic sensory room at West Didsbury CE is available for all three schools to use. St Wilfrid’s were the first with prayer spaces; Didsbury CE has developed that idea to suit their circumstances, and West Didsbury CE are planning their own approach. That’s wonderful for the spiritual growth of the schools.

There are other great curriculum developments in PSHE, Music and RE, and we’re particularly proud of the Heartsmart initiative, which builds resilience, emotional intelligence and active empathy in the hearts of children. No doubt St Wilfrid’s will use the experience of West Didsbury CE as it moves towards becoming a two-form entry school, thanks to the demand for a high quality education in Northenden.

The way the three schools collaborate with each other means its children have unique access to learning and development. It’s a pleasure to see them thrive.

St James & Emmanuel Academy Trust



# A new approach equals success

Pioneering strategies mean **St Wilfrid’s** is now way above national averages for Maths. Its children explain why it is so much fun.

“The thing is with Maths,” thinks Nicholas, aged 7, “is that it’s all around you. We might learn it in the classroom but look at that clock. You wouldn’t be able to tell the time without Maths. It’s my favourite subject.”

Nicholas isn’t the only child at St Wilfrid’s CE Primary who loves Maths. Holly, also aged 7, says the lessons “always

end up being fun” and Chloe, 7, says that her class all enjoy Maths, even when it’s a really tricky topic.

All of which is music to the ears of St Wilfrid’s Head of School, Helena Miller. Since the school joined the St James & Emmanuel Academy Trust, 83 per cent of children now achieve the expected standard in maths – way above the national

average. It’s an outstanding set of results – it means St Wilfrid’s is above the national average for the progress children make in Maths, in the top 10% of schools in England – which Mrs Miller says is thanks to a lot of hard work from both staff and children alike.

“All the staff have bought into the vision of what we want to achieve,” she says. “Because a



lot of our monitoring has been around improving the teaching and learning of maths, our staff have had good quality professional development, the lessons have become more engaging and it means we're now developing really positive outcomes for the children. It's going so well."

The days when a child would be left to battle with long division at the back of the class are, thankfully, long gone. But the strategies and tactics at St Wilfrid's are so pioneering, engaging and



successful, Didsbury CE Primary and West Didsbury CE Primary have also been involved with the developments.

"Teachers can now plan a lesson to each individual child to ensure and accelerate progress," says Mrs Miller. "If a child is struggling with a learning objective in the morning, they will have some interventions with a Teaching Assistant or a teacher in the afternoon to make sure they've plugged that gap so they're ready for the next morning. It's all about making sure children are continually assessed and monitored."

It's not just in Maths where St Wilfrid's is beginning to see major improvements. As part of St James & Emmanuel Academy Trust's commitment to a broad and balanced curriculum, money from the National Lottery and Tesco's Bags of Help scheme has been allocated to augment outdoor learning. Meanwhile, encouraging all children to take part in extra-curricular activities means that, now, over 75 per cent take part in at least one club, from Lego to Netball.

Alannah, aged 8, does three – gymnastics, cookery club and street dance – and she's not



alone in joining in with as much as she can. "We made a Chinese pizza the other day," she beams. "I like cooking at home, so it's good to try different things with friends here, too."

"I do football," adds William, aged 7. "Then there's Computer Club. I coded a little sprite to move the other day – it's really good to do all these things at school. It keeps your body and mind fit, and you get better at things."

"You can get really fit with the football and gymnastics I do," agrees Ollie, aged 5. "It's great to be part of a team at football and though gymnastics is hard, it definitely becomes easier with practice."

Mrs Miller, herself about to take cross country club,

thinks that the wide range of activities offered to children by every single staff member at St Wilfrid's can have a genuine effect on pupils' health and wellbeing.

"For example, in Lego Club, the children develop strong relationships with other members of staff – as they're building, they're chatting away. In cross country, they're participating on the weekends and applauding others who show phenomenal talent.

"Because we give the children the opportunity, they know we believe in them – which all fits into our ethos of Belonging, Believing and Becoming."

So, though it's a school where so much has changed so

**"Teachers can now plan a lesson to each individual child to ensure and accelerate progress."**

**Helena Miller, Head of School**

rapidly – even the uniform has moved to blue after a democratic vote – Mrs Miller's vision that every single child benefits is bearing fruit, through supportive parents and the fact that children are clearly thoroughly enjoying coming to school.

"The maths result proves that what we're doing is working and that we're on the right track," she says. "I'm absolutely thrilled with the progress we're making."



# Worshipping and Learning together

Didsbury CE has developed the concept of collective worship and Head of School **Simon Ball** explains why it's so valuable.

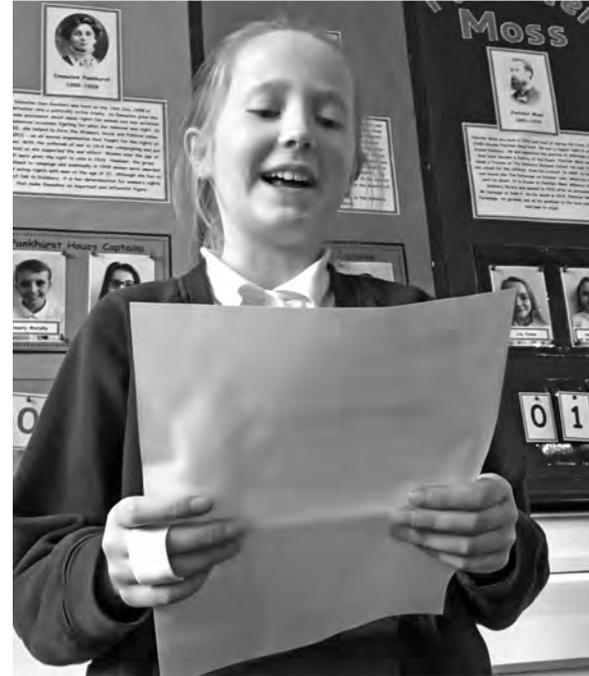
In a classroom at Didsbury CE Primary School, Year 6 children are working out who will play what role in the assembly they are planning for Monday. After some excited discussion, they decide their parts and agree to meet at lunchtime to refine their production in front of the whole school. "They really commit themselves," says Didsbury CE's Head of School Simon

Ball. "These are children who have volunteered to help lead the assembly, so they're very brave. Creative, too."

The concept of collective worship at the school has developed over the past two years into, as Mr Ball puts it, "a great way to set the children up for the day." The programme of daily worship is split up into child-friendly, half-termly themes and

values – for example, courage, friendship, forgiveness or respect – made specifically Christian at Didsbury CE by the use of bible stories to explain and illustrate. Which is where the Collective Worship Team from Year 6 come in.

The following Monday, Annie, Henry, Katie, Rosa and Leni were ready to step forward and tell the Parable



first lesson of the school day. Each classroom has a Reflections area where children can write prayers, or perhaps jot down what they're thankful for. There are also Reflections books managed by six children each week, where they have to answer a question relating to the theme discussed in Monday's collective worship. Sometimes that can be a written response, but some children might choose arts and crafts instead.



of the Sower. The confident and approachable way in which they told the story of the farmer who sows seed on four different types of ground helped emphasise the idea that developing the fruits of the Holy Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control – is something that everybody can work on at any time, whether that be not reacting when you're fouled at football to helping someone with their work.

Later, Annie reads a prayer and everyone at the assembly is asked to look out for one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in someone else that week – and write it down. Every child does so.

## Collective worship is a great way to set the children up for the day.

"If we were sitting down at the back of the school hall being talked to, I don't think we'd completely get the messages," says Annie, one of the Collective Worship Team. "But because we're acting things out and our friends can see us do it, I think we all understand far more about, say, how to be thankful for the things we have, or the importance of being kind."

The Collective Worship programme doesn't stop when the bell sounds for the

"Collective worship is a really valuable and inclusive way of getting children to think about the way in which they can live their lives," says Mr Ball. "What's also noticeable is that when the Collective Worship team take over from my welcome words at an assembly, their enthusiasm encourages other children to participate – both during the assembly and then later in the week in the Reflections areas and books. The themes we discuss really stick."

"The Reflections books are really interesting," adds Katie. "When you get them back at the end of the week, you can

see that everyone has different answers to the questions, which is really good. And by flicking back through it at the end of a term it also helps everyone to remember what we've been working on."

The idea of Collective Worship at Didsbury CE has an added benefit for Mr Ball in that it gives the Year 6s at the top of the school a real sense of responsibility. Sometimes the children have to turn an assembly around very quickly, but rising to these challenges, meeting deadlines and then presenting their work

**"When the team take over from my welcome words at an assembly, their enthusiasm encourages other children to participate."**

**Simon Ball,  
Head of School**

publicly is all hugely beneficial for their development and confidence.

"And it's enjoyable," says Henry. "There have been

some really funny moments, like when we asked for people to write down two blessings starting with the same letter. We had some great ones, like living and loving – and then someone had written iPhones and ice cream!"

"That's the world we live in," smiles Mr Ball. "But the fact that the children generated these reflections themselves and now can all remember them months on, whether they were spiritual, emotional or in that last case slightly materialistic, proves how powerful and valuable Collective Worship can be."



# Building a community

West Didsbury CE Assistant Head **Hannah Large** shares her pride in the diverse, happy community developing at the new school.

It seems like only yesterday that we welcomed the very first children into West Didsbury CE Primary – and simultaneously like we're an established school that's been here for much longer than two years. That's primarily because we've built an incredible community of parents, staff and – most importantly – amazing children who feel like they belong to something special.

I certainly felt an overwhelming sense of pride earlier this year when we held our Great Get Together day on the school field. It was the most fantastic afternoon; everyone brought

**"Parents, staff and children thrive in our culture of participation."**

a platter of food from their country, so we had Iranian food, pasta dishes, samosas, bhajis. There was a bouncy castle, tennis and football. It was wonderful to see picnic blankets spread out and our families enjoying each other's company.

In the end, there were approximately 500 people out there – incredible if you remember, at present we still only have three school years at West Didsbury CE Primary.

The afternoon not only reflected the diverse community we've become, but was a great example of what we've built.

Coming just after the Manchester bombing and inspired by the MP Jo Cox, we had a banner made by the children which said, "Far more unites us than divides us" – and that really summed up the afternoon. We had such a special day, all our summer fairs will be like that in the future – it's not so much about how much we can raise (although we did spectacularly well in that regard too) but bringing everyone together for a day of family fun.





Our most recent celebration, the Harvest Festival, also underlined the staggering progress we've made as a community. The first time we held one in 2015, all the parents and their children were in one classroom. Two years on, the amount of support we had meant that we couldn't fit everyone in the school hall! And to be able to raise money for St James & Emmanuel's Raising The Roof appeal was a really nice feeling: it felt like we were in some small way giving back to the church which had built our school.

Though perhaps we shouldn't have been surprised that so many people wanted to be involved in the Great Get Together and Harvest Festival. The parents, staff and children thrive in our culture of participation; everybody wants to come to everything we do at West Didsbury CE, whether that be an after school club or a social event.

That hasn't come about by accident. We've done a lot of work with the children on values and encouraging a world where everybody feels part of a community – and

this is a key part of St James & Emmanuel Academy Trust's ethos of Belonging, Believing, Becoming, where children feel a sense of Belonging to the school and community of West Didsbury, Believe in their ability and potential and Become well-rounded and self-aware young people who can be a force for good in society.

In our case, Belonging, Believing, Becoming is a brilliant concept because as a school that wants to meet the needs of lots of different faiths and backgrounds, we can help everybody understand how they fit into society and a community.

This inclusive approach underpins everything we do, and with the PTA we're setting big targets. We want to develop our wonderful outdoor space, so we're currently in the process of planting more trees and developing an outdoor classroom as part of a Forest School bid: we believe that children should be encouraged to be creative and outside as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Inside the new building, we're also really keen the new



*Just some of the families that enjoyed this summer's Great Get Together.*

Sensory Room isn't just used by children with individual needs. Our children will be able to go there at lunchtimes to relax and reflect on one of the weekly themes if they want to, and have their own quiet time. So it's not just an educational needs provision, it can be a moral, emotional, spiritual space too. After all, strong mental health is really important to develop in children; if you encourage someone to understand their place in society, who feels comfortable with who they are, then that's really valuable.

This year, more siblings of our very first intake have started Reception. That's been lovely to see - and their older brothers or sisters in Year 2 have developed into

confident, assured and talented children. As a school, West Didsbury CE Primary gets bigger each year. As a community, it's just getting stronger.



# We stand together

2017 has been a challenging year for Manchester. John Conibear highlights the impact of a local project celebrating what unites us.

**E**verycolour uses the popularity of football to encourage values that tackle discrimination. Supported by Kick It Out, football's official diversity campaign, the project follows England men and women at major tournaments. Summer 2017 saw England compete at the UEFA Women's Euros.



Another successful campaign, for Everycolour at least, saw over 200 pupils from Broad Oak, Cavendish and Didsbury CE schools take part in blogging workshops, a 7-a-side tournament and a quiz at the National Football Museum.

The Everycolour Blog followed the Lionesses all the way to the semi finals, publishing nearly 500 posts. One lucky blogger even interviewed England's Demi Stokes before the tournament.

As the main element of the project, the multimedia Everycolour Blog allows pupils to explore and express their views creatively on a wide range of issues, from football to discrimination and diversity.

So what?

Everycolour embraces the opportunity to demonstrate all we have in common and provides a forum to express and respect our differences.

Manchester was the focus of world news in May with the bombing at the Arena. The outpouring of grief and collective determination to show unity helped the city come to terms with a horror that touched so many.

Worryingly, the atrocity was also exploited by bigots as an excuse to try and create division. Reports of hate crimes increased and certain communities felt under siege.

The news cycle inevitably moved on, but Manchester's challenge has been to bring something good and lasting from such painful memories. The city's 'We stand together' campaign was born.



**"I love the Blog! Simply to read and watch the views and insights of these young people is inspiring. The mix of faces and enthusiasm gives me real hope for the next generation."**

**Nick Bundock, Founder Director of St James and Emmanuel Academy Trust**

The Everycolour project wholeheartedly supports the campaign's message of peace and the small impact the project has made already has been acknowledged with shortlistings for two quite different awards this year.



The 2017 No2h8 Crime Awards were established to encourage 'upstanders', not bystanders. Everycolour was a finalist in the Community category, which was won by human rights activist Farooq Aftab. Other awards went to Dr Nasser Kurdy (who treated many casualties of the Arena bomb), the Sophie Lancaster Foundation and Stop Funding Hate, which won the Jo Cox award presented by Brendan Cox. Humbling company to be in.

Everycolour was also a finalist in the Inclusion category at the North West

Football Awards. Cerebral Palsey United were the worthy winners, but simply being shortlisted is confirmation that Everycolour's message of inclusion and acceptance is valued and needed.

Kick It Out marks its 25th anniversary in 2018 and Everycolour will play its part with a new Kick It Out anthem for its choirs. 25 years of calling out those who discriminate and hate is not really a cause for celebration, but Everycolour is one of Kick It Out's good news stories – a clear demonstration that there is more that unites us than divides us. We need to challenge bigotry and embrace acceptance every day – after all, in football and in life, we are every colour.

Everycolour plans to return next year to follow England at the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

**The 2017 Everycolour Blog can still be enjoyed at [everycolour.co.uk](http://everycolour.co.uk)**

# The Dental Health Centre

1b School Lane, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 6RD  
t: 0161 445 5459, e: [contact@didsburydentalhealth.com](mailto:contact@didsburydentalhealth.com)  
w: [www.didsburydentalhealth.com](http://www.didsburydentalhealth.com)



Nicola Owen and her team have been offering quality dental care at The Dental Health Centre for over 27 years in Didsbury village.

- Affordable patient plans.
- All types of dental care.
- Emergencies usually seen same day, including non-registered patients.
- Hygienist appointments available.
- Dental phobia patients especially welcome.

New patients welcome  
**Telephone to book your appointment**  
**0161 445 5459**

# Breaking down barriers and offering hope

Kieran Roberts, a teacher at West Didsbury CE, is also Director of the **No Barriers Foundation**.

In 2014, I visited Tanzania with a group trekking Mount Kilimanjaro. On the journey down, I injured my neck and had to go to a local hospital. It was a hospital in name only; patients lied on bare tables and the one doctor there tried to tend to all the patients at once. I wanted to do something to try and improve the situation but with no medical background I wasn't sure where to start. The local schools were in a similar state – lacking resources and qualified staff – and as I was completing my teacher

training this seemed like an ideal way to help.

What started with a simple book drive to provide Tanzanian schools with children's books rapidly and unexpectedly grew in to a charity which to date has provided over 3000 books to schools in Tanzania, Kenya, Guyana and Bangladesh and The No Barriers Foundation will be hiring its second teacher in Bangladesh this winter. We're also working with local authors to produce dual-language books as they're proven to have a greater

**“We will soon be hiring our second teacher in Bangladesh.”**

impact on reading proficiency. By partnering with local charities based in the same countries as our partner schools, we've identified schools in need of help which are missed by larger NGOs.

We've been able to grow thanks to the kindness of strangers; people have donated books and money along the way which has made all this possible. In order to reach more children, we need your support. Donating books or donating on JustGiving will have a profound impact on lives in developing countries. If education is the route out of poverty, books are the vehicle.

To help and find out more, visit [nobarriersfoundation.org](http://nobarriersfoundation.org)



# The Word became flesh, not just more words

**Andrew Bradley**, Rector at St Wilfrid's Church, knows that actions speak louder than words.

**A**t the time of writing, the Church of England has just launched a new website. Apparently it features a significant increase in the amount of pictures and videos, whilst the number of pages and documents have been reduced by about 90%. This change not only reflects trends in web design over recent years, but is, I believe, highly pertinent for any organisation that seeks to promote the Christian faith. Why? Because, as we'll be celebrating this and every Christmas, God visited his world in such a way that we don't have to rely on just words any more.

Don't get me wrong. I love words. I love reading. I love preaching, for goodness' sake. Words can and do convey so much meaning. But if you were given the choice between a letter from a loved-one in Australia, and a face-to-face visit from that same person,

**If we truly want to know God's presence in our lives, we look not to books, or sermons, but above all to one another.**

I'm pretty confident you would choose the latter. You might even stump up some of the money for the flight.

The good news of Christmas is that in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, God chose the face-to-face visit also. Written commandments and prophets' oracles can only take us so far; eventually, God and humanity need to look each other in the eye, breathe the same air, walk the same soil, embrace the same joys and sorrows. So God took the initiative, shared our human life like never before, and the world has never been the

same since. As one of the gospel writers put it: 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1:14)

At St. Wilfrid's this year we have been re-discovering this truth in very special ways. Along with every Anglican church across Manchester we have been re-visiting our core values and our vision statement, something that we feel really describes who we are and who we aspire to be. This is what we came up with:

*'St. Wilfrid's is an open and welcoming community of faith reaching out in love and friendship'.*

Shortly after this statement was agreed I was lucky enough to be on retreat and to have some time to reflect on it. Another verse from John

came very clearly to me: 'No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.' (1 John 4:12) In other words, if we truly want to know God's presence in our lives, we look not to books, or sermons, or dare I say the latest worship song, but above

all to one another. It is as we look each other in the face, it is as we love and serve one another, that we truly see the face of God.

It has often been a running joke in church circles that the Word became flesh and we turned Him back into words –

and lots of them! But the true quest of the Christian faith is not more words, but building loving community. This is the adventure we will be pursuing with a vengeance at St Wilfrid's – do come and join us if you live in Northenden, and maybe you'll see God like you've never seen Him before.



# Raising the Roof

Emmanuel church is benefiting from a much-needed makeover, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund

Emmanuel in Didsbury is not nearly as old as its sister church, St James, but it harbours a number of heritage treasures. Over the years, the interior of the building has undergone many changes and is now almost unrecognisable from the church that first opened in 1858 to service the rapidly expanding merchant class moving into Didsbury. These days the open-plan, flexible seating in Emmanuel enables

hundreds of concerts, U3A meetings and BBC broadcasts – not to mention church services. But all this is under threat from a badly leaking and rapidly decaying roof.

Anyone who has visited the church in recent years cannot help but notice the poor state of the lighting and interior decoration, which is peeling off the walls in huge flakes that occasionally drop onto people's heads below!



This is all about to change, thanks to a Heritage Lottery Grant for £250,000. With this money we aim to begin to rehabilitate one of Didsbury's iconic heritage locations. Phase 1 will utilise this generous gift to repair the



## We are beginning to collect an oral history where we gather memories of Didsbury and the church as a permanent record of yesteryear.

south side and most badly degraded part of the roof. We also aim to repair some of the stonework around the most threatened windows and create a proper disabled access to the main entrance on Barlow Moor Road, where Home Community Café is situated.

The only slight snag is that in order to unlock the lottery grant and to complete the works in Phase 1 we need to

raise £55,000 as our contribution to the overall project. As we go to press, we've already managed to raise £46,000 from the church community and the parents of Didsbury and West Didsbury CE primary schools. This leaves £9000 to find before Christmas.

The people of St James & Emmanuel church see their buildings as belonging to the community and the community certainly makes use of them! We're committed to preserving the heritage that belongs to all of us and if you'd like to help, please visit the fundraising page at [stjamesandemmanuel.org](http://stjamesandemmanuel.org)

One of the most exciting aspects of the HLF scheme is the requirement to increase the heritage value of the

church within the community. To this end, we are beginning to collect an oral history – starting with older members of community – where we gather memories of Didsbury and the church as a permanent record of yesteryear. We are also developing leaflets that tell the history of the beautiful windows in Emmanuel and the stories behind them.

So why not pop into Emmanuel any weekday from 10.30am. You can find out more about Raising the Roof and also enjoy some delicious food and drink in Home Community Café!





# Beattitude

**Nick Bundock is  
Founder Director  
of St James and  
Emmanuel  
Academy Trust**

At the time of writing, the headlines are full of scandals and abuse. The Harvey Weinstein affair has rocked Hollywood and, closer to home, the Palace of Westminster is reeling from revelations of inappropriate and, in some cases, illegal behaviour. Heads are rolling, careers are ending and the list of victims is growing. Power and the abuse of power lies at the heart of many of these events, but if we're honest there is another commonality: men. As a man it pains me to admit it, but our sex is in crisis. Far too often the combination of power, opportunity and personal gratification are a cocktail that some men are finding impossible to resist.

There is a spiritual as well as a moral vacuum at the heart of this crisis. St Ignatius of Loyola warned us that our weakest spot will always be exploited and become the source of our downfall. These are wise words but how rarely do we undertake the kind of self-examination necessary to defend ourselves from our vulnerabilities? All of us, but men in particular, need to make peace with our mortality and frailty in order to become better and more courageous human beings. At Christmas time there is,

however, one man who rises above the crowd as a shining example to the men of today. His name was Joseph. We hear a lot about Mary at this time of year, and rightly so, but Joseph's choices give us men much to ponder. He stuck by his

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**Far too often the combination of power, opportunity and personal gratification are a cocktail that some men are finding impossible to resist.**

woman even when the suspicion of her infidelity was a real one. He protected her from scandal by continuing with the marriage. He was humble enough to change his mind and brave enough to face the consequences. Men and boys need role models like Joseph, particularly in a climate when some men think it's OK to take what they want, when they want.

If you go to church this Christmas then listen out for Joseph and let's learn from the good guys in the Christmas story, and maybe we'll be inspired by them. It's an enduring truth that we become who we admire.

**Be**  
**Belonging**  
**Believing**  
**Becoming**