

### Meeting Structure:

We generally start our pub sessions with a lunch and fellowship time starting at 13:00. We usually split our sessions into two periods, although this may vary, with a break in between. Our session ends no later than 15:30. The exception will be when we visit other places.

### Location:

Most of our meetings take place at the Clarence Pub near Green Park tube station:

The Clarence

4 Dover Street

London W1S 4LB

Hope to see you there!

## The Vagabond's Programme for 2015

### The Little Vagabond

By  
William Blake

*Dear mother, dear mother, the church is cold,  
But the alehouse is healthy and pleasant and warm;  
Besides I can tell where I am used well,  
Such usage in Heaven will never do well.*

*But if at the church they would give us some ale,  
And a pleasant fire our souls to regale,  
We'd sing and we'd pray all the live-long day,  
Nor ever once wish from the church to stray.*

*Then the parson might preach, and drink, and sing,  
And we'd be as happy as birds in the spring;  
And modest Dame Lurch, who is always at church,  
Would not have bandy children, nor fasting, nor birch.*

*And God, like a father rejoicing to see  
His children as pleasant and happy as he,  
Would have no more quarrel with the Devil or the barrel,  
But kiss him, and give him both drink and apparel.*

THE VAGABONDS are a group of mainly Christian spiritual enquirers. We meet informally once a month in a pub close to St. James' to discuss a topic of interest. We take our name from William Blake's poem *The Little Vagabond*, a character who prefers the alehouse to the church (Blake was baptised at St James'). The topics of interest are spiritual in nature. We also visit each year other places of worship.

## Vagabonds Programme for 2015

### January 18<sup>th</sup> - Redemption Strategies - The Arts as Healing

This session will examine the relationship between the arts and healing in the broadest sense of the word. It will examine the relationship between contemporary conceptualisations of health and its relationship to healing. It will examine artistic practice as a strategy for healing and relate this to a theology of redemption. It will be illustrated by experiences from a variety of cultures. It will be based on her own writing:.

**Chair** - June Boyce Tillman **Chair Leg** - Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub

### February 15<sup>th</sup> - David & Goliath

How well do you know the Bible story of David and Goliath? Most people will be surprised to find what was really going beyond what you see from a superficial reading of the story.

**Chair** - Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub

### March 15<sup>th</sup> - The Secret Message of the Gospels

It's been suggested that the gospels, in common with many ancient writings, contains an obvious surface meaning, and a deeper, more radical meaning that is hidden behind hints and clues. We will look at the evidence for hidden meanings, consider motives for writing in this way and consider whether any hidden meanings can actually be deciphered. If they can't be deciphered, can we still understand the bible? If we can understand them, does that change the message of the gospel?

**Chair** - Leon Clarke **Chair Leg** - Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub

### April 19<sup>th</sup> - Incarnational Theology/Christmas without the tinsel

God chose to be a baby. How does this affect the way we address power, children and the messy bits of life?

**Chair** - Elizabeth Lil **Chair Leg** - Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub

### May 17<sup>th</sup> - Doubt

To have doubts is something a lot of people have. How do we, as a spiritual community, let people know that doubt is OK? What is the power and weakness of a spirituality of doubt? Do the stories of Thomas, John the Baptizer and Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane help?

**Chair** - Lucy Winkett **Chair Leg** - Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub

### June 21<sup>st</sup> - Rene Girard: The Theology of Scapegoating

According to Girard, various desires causes conflict among people. One way to resolve the conflict is for folks to identify an agreed scapegoat who is then expelled from the society and social order is restored. Girard believes this is what happened to Jesus. This serves as an atonement theory.

**Chair** - Puck de Raadt **Chair Leg** - Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub

### July 19<sup>th</sup> - A Good Man is Hard to Find

We will be looking at a short story entitled "A Good Man is Hard to Find" by the American writer Flannery O'Connor. Her short story about a family holiday road trip to Florida touches on some interesting theology.

**Chair** - Lindsay Meader **Chair Leg** - Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub

### August 16<sup>th</sup> - Christians and Other Animals

The relationship between the Church and animals has been a very mixed bag over the millennia - from St Francis and others who have shown love for all creation, to parishes that have thrown goats off church towers to 'celebrate' their patron saint. What do the Scriptures say about animals? Are we called upon to care about their welfare?

**Chair** - Adolfo Sansolini **Chair Leg:** Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub

### September 20<sup>th</sup> - The Confessions of St Augustine

This book was No. 1 in the *Church Times 100 Best Christian books* chosen by its reviewers in 2014. One of these wrote 'The first and best "journey of a soul" story in all Christian history. Loved most of all for its honesty, and admissions of weakness, doubt, and confusion, does this book, a bridge between the Classical and Medieval worlds, have more to say to modern liberal Christians than we might imagine?

**Chair** - David Carter **Chair Leg** - Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub

### October 18<sup>th</sup> - Faith in Action: The Birmingham 1963 Civil Rights Campaign

This session will put you into the shoes of Dr Martin Luther King Jr and his advisors as they try to end racial segregation in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963 while struggling against a vicious police force, schismatic white power structure and disunited African American community. You will be put into that environment and will have to make the same tough decisions they made while trying to keep true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Could you make better decisions?

**Chair** - Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub

### November 15<sup>th</sup> - Euthanasia

How do we balance preventing the heartless suffering of the dying with the fear of the slippery slope of people dying before their time? Is the medicalization of death exacerbating the desire for assisted dying? What should the Church's position be on all of this? These and other issues surrounding euthanasia will be discussed in this session

**Chair** - Michael Pearson **Chair Leg** - Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub

### December 20<sup>th</sup> - Vagabonds Christmas Party & 2016 Planning Session

Come to the celebration with ideas for next year

**Chair** - Cornell Jackson

**Location:** Clarence Pub