

A caring community with every member equipped to demonstrate Christ, working with others to advance God's Kingdom in Chard and the world

Seek God – in prayer, worship, study of the Scripture and fellowship, we value the pursuit of God in Jesus Christ;

Love Generously – in time, talent and treasure, to stimulate one another to good works and a lifestyle of generosity;

Expect transformation – to see God's Holy Spirit move in individual lives, in the church and across our community

You may have been coming to Forefront for years. Or maybe you just popped in for one Sunday. Either way, if you feel moved to act on the things mentioned in the talks, we would be pleased to pray with you.

Ask someone in the service to point you in the right direction, or call in during the week at Forefront Community Centre (next to Chard Post Office sorting centre).

Contact details and more at forefrontcommunity.org

Genesis is the first book of the Bible in both the Jewish and Christian collections of theological works. The book is highly literary in form, and its emphasis on people's stories suggests it was first an oral collection which would have been recited down the generations. The book was compiled, in written form, in the Jewish canon in the fifth century before Christ—traditionally, by Ezra the Priest—during the Babylonian exile. There are no Persian loan words in it, unlike Ezra's own writings, suggesting the text remains faithful to its original, ancient form.



Sermon series notes

Genesis 1 to 4

 forefrontcommunitychurch

Who am I? How did I get here? What is my purpose on earth? In what ways am I free, and what responsibilities do I have?

These fundamental questions have exercised people of every culture and background through human history.



In *Genesis*, the first book of the Bible, answers are provided from the point of view of a family (who, by the end, are a nation) who have been called by the Creator God and commanded to live as his people, revealing his nature and commands in an often hostile world.

The opening chapters are similar to the creation stories told by other ancient peoples, but the content and the theology are startlingly, unsettlingly different.

We begin the year with four speakers tackling the first chapters of *Genesis*. What is the chapter all about, and what does it mean to us today?

22 January, Creation (chapter 1 to 2:3)

29 January, Made in the image of God (ch 2)

5 February, The Fall (ch 3)

12 February, After Eden (ch 4)

To get the most from the talks, please read the chapter before the Sunday service each week. Pray for understanding, and that the speaker, service leaders and worship team would help us interpret the message in a way which helps us to seek God, love generously and expect transformation in our lives.

Sunday 22 January
Genesis 1—Creation
Nigel Marsh

The beginning is the most important part of the work

Plato

Why does something exist, instead of nothing? Is the physical reality that we can measure all that exists? If there is a Creator of everything, what is he or she like, and why go to all this bother? Does the universe have a purpose?

Physicists note that the basic laws of the universe seem to be amazingly, precisely fine-tuned for life. They struggle to explain this apparently benign, planned physical environment, and the mystery of human consciousness in it. Genesis has no such problems—in the beginning was God, who commanded everything into being in a structured, organised way, for a purpose; to demonstrate the divine glory in a physical realm, and to create a physical partner “in his image” who would oversee the new domain and fulfil God’s purposes in it.

Sunday 29 January
Genesis 2—Made in the image of God
Keith Barnard

Genesis 1.26-27 tells us the basic facts, but we need Genesis 2 to open up what it means.

In what ways do we reflect God’s image? What can I see of God in my own life, or in the lives of others, in this fallen world?

Genesis 2 points us towards creativity and work; towards spirituality and moral choice; towards relationship and active partnership. These are important concepts, but how can I be like God in any way today, and how can I know the help of the Spirit of Christ in getting there?

We need the New Testament as well as Genesis to complete the picture and set us on the road.



Sunday 5 February
Genesis 3—The Fall
Tom Smith

Genesis chapter 1: God created everything out of nothing. Perfection!!
Genesis chapter 2: Man and woman made in the image of God, marriage by God’s design. Paradise!!

We live in a wonderful world that a loving God has made. And yet, alongside all the beauty there is much that is very bad. It is a tragic world in which sinful humans seem intent on destroying each other – through warfare, economic injustice and crime. Something within us says “It shouldn’t be like this. What has gone wrong with our world?”

Genesis 3 describes the devil’s temptation and mankind’s devastating fall: from paradise to hell, from perfection to sinful rebellion, from joy to sorrow, from health to dis-ease, from joyful marriage to blame and brokenness, from God’s friendship to God’s wrath, from Life to Death! Genesis 3 is a Gospel chapter, explaining our need of a Saviour, Jesus.

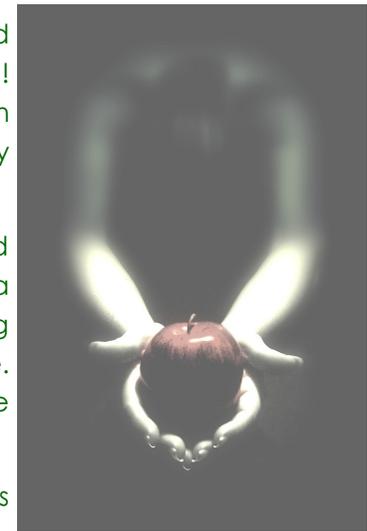
Sunday 12 February
Genesis 4—After Eden
Chris Spracklen

Cain has a faulty understanding of God, and it leads him to murder his brother. Sin, which God depicts as a savage animal, is now released into the human race. The earth itself reacts to the memory of the blood that has soaked into it. For Cain, this means life as a wandering nomad. The soil will no longer bear the crops he once sowed—and presented to God as an offering.

God, still merciful, protects Cain with a mark so people will know that they will suffer seven-fold if they kill him. His descendant Lamech follows Cain’s murderous ways, taking his own violent revenge and adding the boast that he will be avenged 77 times if he is harmed.

Jesus must have had this account in mind when he responded to Peter’s enquiry about how often one should forgive someone who offends them. Refuse the instinct to get revenge not seven times, says Jesus, but 77 times.

The Christian is called to be part of God’s response to human sin, through forgiveness, peace-building and a refusal to add to the burden of sin in the world.



Forgiveness says you are given another chance to make a new beginning

Archbishop Desmond Tutu