

Dear Friends

Rev. James T. East was a Methodist minister who was fascinated by the Holy Land and it was his life-long dream to travel there. Having little money, he saved all he could throughout his life and after retiring to Blackburn in Lancashire he finally had enough money to make the trip. He went to the travel agents to make the arrangements, but on return received a message from a friend. His friend was ill and needed an operation or he would die. The friend didn't have the money (this was in the days before the NHS) so James cancelled his travel plans to Israel and gave the money to save his friend.

Out of that experience he wrote a hymn to remind himself and us that God is everywhere and not just in the Holy Land. Where we are, where we meet God, becomes our Holy Land. Where we are called to follow, that is our Bethany. So, although we often think of the hymn he wrote primarily as a carol it is, in fact, only the first verse that has anything especially to do with Christmas. This is what James East wrote:

*Wise men seeking Jesus travelled from afar,
Guided on their journey by a beauteous star.*

*But if we desire Him, He is close at hand,
For our native country is our holy land.*

*Prayerful souls may find Him by our quiet lakes,
Meet Him on our hillsides when the dawning breaks*

*In our fertile cornfields where the sheaves are bound,
In our busy markets Jesus may be found.*

*Fishermen talk with Him by the great North Sea
As the first disciples did by Galilee.*

*Every peaceful village in our land might be
Made by Jesus' Presence like sweet Bethany.*

*He is more than near us if we love Him well,
For He seeketh ever in our hearts to dwell.*

May it be that during Lent, a time of reflection, we might discover or indeed rediscover Jesus close at hand.

Blessings,

Allan

Practical Aspects of Spirituality



Join us for
**Connecting with God -
what suits your personality?**

led by

Anna Carrington

**Saturday 23 March
09.30 – 12.00**

**St. Mary's Church
Guildford GU1 3UP**

Refreshments from 09.15

UPCOMING EVENTS:

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
23 March	10am to 12 noon	Coffee Morning	Knaphill
23 March	10am to 12 noon	Lego & Discovery Club	Trinity, Woking