

# 'Thy Great Name We Praise': Introduction

## 1) What is Ledbury on this year?

## 2) Why?

i. The purpose of our faith

*"If he graciously lets us see something of himself, then we are moved by the same grace to seek with a great longing to see him more fully."*

*"I saw him and I sought him, I had him and I wanted him."*

Julian of Norwich

ii. The age in which we live

*"You could make the case that our culture today is awe-deprived. Adults spend more and more time working and commuting and less time outdoors and with other people. Camping trips, picnics and midnight skies are forgone in favour of working weekends and late at night. Attendance at arts events — live music, theatre, museums and galleries — has dropped over the years. This goes for children, too: Arts and music programs in schools are being dismantled in lieu of programs better suited to standardized testing; time outdoors and for novel, unbounded exploration are sacrificed for résumé-building activities. We believe that awe deprivation has had a hand in a broad societal shift that has been widely observed over the past 50 years: People have become more individualistic, more self-focused, more materialistic and less connected to others. To reverse this trend, we suggest that people insist on experiencing more everyday awe, to actively seek out what gives them goose bumps, be it in looking at trees, night skies, patterns of wind on water or the nobility of others — the teenage punk who gives up his seat on public transportation, the young child who explores the world in a state of wonder, the person who presses on against all odds."*

New York Times

iii. The church culture we inhabit

*"the fundamental problem within the evangelical world today is that God rests too inconsequentially upon the church. His truth is too distant, his grace is too ordinary, his judgement is too benign, his gospel is too easy, and his Christ is too common."* David Wells

*“Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity.”* Charles Spurgeon

“what comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us... were we able to extract from any person a complete answer to the question, ‘what comes into your mind when you think about God?’ we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that person.” AW Tozer

iv. The issue of our time

*“Nearly all wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves”* John Calvin

*“As a sunbeam perished when cut off from the sun, to man apart from God would pass back into the void of nothingness from which he first leaped at the creative call... we can never know who or what we are till we know at least something of what God is.”* AW Tozer

## Conclusion

## Review questions

- 1) What is God like in your typical thinking?
- 2) What did you think of Julian of Norwich’s language, how close/far from your own experience is it?
- 3) Think about the age in which we live, culture we inhabit and issue of our time – did these ring true to you? How do you think a Ledbury spent ‘beholding our God’ will help?