

# Jesus' family tree

Julian Smith *reflects on 2 Samuel 7:1-14a*

The television series *Who Do You Think You Are?* reflects a growing interest in genealogy. Viewers seem fascinated by the family trees of celebrities, hoping to find links to notorious ancestors or some noble lineage.

The Bible, too, is interested in family trees, as the seemingly endless lists of "begats" testify. It is important that these genealogies place Jesus in the direct family line of King David and our reading today explains why.

Israel is enjoying a period of peace and prosperity. David is king and has built a palace in Jerusalem, but God's dwelling place, the Ark of the Covenant, rests in a tent, as it did during Israel's long years of wandering. David wants to build a permanent resting place for it and confides his wish to the prophet Nathan. But God appears to Nathan and tells him that David will not build a "house" for God, rather God will raise up a "house" for David. David will not build a temple for God, but God will raise up a dynasty of David's descendants and his son will build the temple. "He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever"

In this solemn covenant between God and David rests the promise and hope of the Messiah fulfilled by Jesus, which is why his family tree contains carpenters and kings. ☺



Lord Jesus, David's son and Messiah – you came to bring God's love to a dark and troubled world. Shine that love on us today and help us to be lights for you in the places where we live and work. Amen.

## Journalling

### *A new encounter with the word*

by Julia McGuinness

When a Bible story becomes familiar to us, we might assume it has nothing new to teach us. But using such stories as a springboard for writing can enable us to encounter it afresh and reap new insights.

Take a story that you feel you know quite well and write it out from memory. When you have finished, up the Bible and compare what you have written with the

original. Are there things you have omitted, misremembered, re-ordered or perhaps particularly emphasised? What might this mean? Write a few lines reflecting on what you notice that strikes you as personally significant. Now re-write the story as one of the characters in it, either at the time or looking back much later. Although the story's content remains the same, you will need to use your imagination to bring alive what your character is sensing and feeling.

Re-read and reflect on this new version. What emerges from the story through approaching it with this different perspective? ☺

## Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

Sometimes the weather seems back to front, so that it's dry in the spring, when the grass in the field needs to get growing, but wet when the meadow needs cutting, drying and baling. My farming neighbour doesn't moan or get overly anxious and I've learned to relax a bit, too, although anxiety comes easily to this smallholder!

So why does the experienced farmer not worry? I think she's seen it all before, has learned to make it work somehow, whatever happens, and to live with the outcome whatever it is.

I think that's not fatalism, but faith. And the faith is this – not the Sunday-school stuff about God-in-the-sky, but a faith that stewards this little bit of creation as well as possible and rests in it. So my neighbour and I know that we aren't separate from nature but are part of it, part of what God called "very good". ☺

“You can do very little with faith, but you can do nothing without it.”

Samuel Butler (1835-1902), English author