

John	<p>The theme of this talk uses words from the readings From Romans we find the words transform and renew yourself and from the gospel “Seek ye first the kingdom of God”.</p> <p>Parts of this church date back to the 14th century but Scampton Church is in the process of renewing itself. The sound system and visuals were paid for by the Diocese. A hearing loop is on its way. I have a chronic back problem and the pews here were the most uncomfortable in all of Springline and Owmbly. However, these chairs are the most comfortable for my back of any that I’ve sat in recently. They also mean the building can be arranged for other uses. There is a decent toilet outside. Last Sunday I attended church in a village hall. That public building had audio visuals to plug in, and comfy chairs. It also had excellent toilets, not outside; and an excellent kitchen and efficient heating system. So this church still has some opportunities to transform and renew itself.</p>
Pete	Loud cough
John	What I want to ask is, “What am I doing to transform myself? What are you doing to renew yourself spiritually?”
Pete	Even Louder cough
John	Oh! Excuse me. I think we’ve got the resident pest here. Let me have a look.
Pete	<p>As John looks into Pete’s house Pete pops up and gives him a shock.</p> <p>Hi, John. Good to see you. Aren’t you going to introduce us?</p>
John	I suppose so. This is Pete the Puppet. He lives here at Scampton. They can’t seem to get rid of him. Why don’t you tell people what you do, Pete?
Pete	Explains about Extreme Sports (with images).
John	And you know a few famous people as well, don’t you, Pete?
Pete	Boasts about his celebrity friends (with images).
John	Anyway, Pete, I was just telling the people here about Scampton church. Here we are with their new chairs, a sound system, a hearing loop and a sound system. They’ve been renewing themselves. I was about to ask the congregation how they renew themselves – refresh their faith so that they don’t let their relationship with God go stale.
Pete	And is that box you’ve got there something to do with that, John?
John	Oh, you noticed it. Yes, it’s my Sunday box. It travels round in the boot of my car and I get it out every Sunday to take into church with me. It’s got God inside. And I take him out every time I go to church and then tuck him away again when we’ve finished.
Pete	To get refreshed and renewed?
John	Sort of. But recently I heard this loud noise when I was driving in the car. I stopped immediately because I thought something was wrong. Turned off the engine but it carried on. Bang, bang, bang.

	So I got out. It seemed to be coming from the rear of the car so I walked round, got on my knees and looked underneath. Couldn't see anything. Opened the boot and it was God!
Pete	Wow! What was he doing?
John	Well, he was fed up. He said, "Why do I have to stay in this box all week? You take me out on Sunday and then stuff me back inside. It's as if I don't have anything to do with Monday to Saturday.
Pete	Not like me, John. I'm here all the time. Scampton Church is my home. I don't put God in a box. You should be more like me. Holy.
John	Is that right?
Pete	Yes, I go to church, I've got a Bible – here it is.
John	That looks like a brand new Bible, Pete.
Pete	No, it's ages old, John. Used to belong to my mate, Joe. He gave it to me. I've really looked after it. After all, it's God's Holy word.
John	God's Holy word? What does it say?
Pete	Well ... holy things. You know, about God and Jesus and stuff.
John	You read it all the time, do you?
Pete	Err ... no. I don't want to wear it out.
John	You don't want to wear it? You've not touched it in ages. Give it here. (Blows a cloud of dust off it). That's just what God was saying to me when he made all that noise in the car. It's no use putting God in a compartment. We've got to take hold of him all the time. He said it was like the Hebrews when Moses had rescued them from being slaves in Egypt. They were in the desert for 40 years and he fed them every day. He gave them this stuff called manna. But they couldn't, like, go to Tesco and get a load for the week. It didn't last. They had to go out every day and collect fresh stuff.
Pete	I wish God would do that for me. I get pretty hungry cooped up in the church all week. The only time I get a bite to eat is when there's a church service. I'm looking forward to the Bring and Share at the end today. Do you think there'll be Jaffa cakes.
John	If there were Jaffa cakes, what would you do?
Pete	I'd wait until nobody was looking and pinch the lot.
John	That's even less Christian than not reading the Bible! Shame on you!
Pete	Only joking, John. Where's your sense of humour?
John	OK, Pete. I was worried. I crave for Jaffa cakes as well. But when you have a Jaffa cake what do you do with it? Do you look at it,

	smell it, run your finger across that smooth chocolate coating, take artistic photographs of it?
Pete	No you're having me on, John. You know I'll eat it!
John	Course you will. And that's not all you'll eat between now and next Sunday.
Pete	No, three square meals a <i>day</i> Otherwise I'll waste <i>away</i> . Do you like that rhyme, John? I'm a bit of a poet, you see.
John	three square meals a <i>day</i> Otherwise I'll waste <i>away</i> . Yeh, I get it! But if you don't eat you'll waste away. You need regular food. And what you eat and digest becomes part of you. The vitamins and protein make you strong and healthy in your body. In the same way you need regular doses of God. Consuming God is the spiritual version of getting protein and vitamins. Otherwise you fall apart spiritually and mentally. Once a week isn't enough, Pete.
Pete	You've convinced me, John. I can't do without spiritual food just as I can't do without eating food. What can I do about it?
John	Well – Bible study notes, "Pray As You Go", Bible Study group, ALPHA. But I have a special free gift for you here, Pete. It's a free, high class envelope.
Pete	Wow, a free, high class envelope. What's the catch?
John	Well, there's stuff inside ... (hands Pete the booklet)
Pete	I can't understand this John.
John	That's because you're holding it upside down! (turns it round)
Pete	Ah! I see. It's even got cartoons in it. Oh, hold on, it's not come out right, John. The printing's missing here.
John	No, that's because it's a series of exercises and it asks you to think about things and then write your own comments down. It's a way of hearing from God every day and I believe what God wants to say to people is how precious they are to him, how he delights in them.
Pete	Really, John? Does he delight in me?
John	Well, I think he especially delights in the hand that holds you, Pete, and in your voice.
Pete	So, Seek ye first the Kingdom of God ...
John	... and his righteousness
Both	And all these things will be added unto you, Allelu, Alleluia.