



Welcome to St. John's

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

MICKLEOVER

News Bulletin Sunday 17th March 2024

Services in our Churches

10am At St. Johns – Morning Praise, streamed to Youtube, with Clare Owen leading and Judi Witcomb speaking.

Youtube link: <https://youtube.com/live/7RmKlUnXVSc>

10am At All Saints – Holy Communion with Peter Walley leading. and Helen Walley speaking.

Prayers during the week – Prayers at 8am Tuesday mornings, meeting on Zoom with the usual log in.

Wednesday Holy Communion – Holy Communion at All Saints 9.30am – followed by part five of Prayer Course 2.

All Saints Café Warm Space – Join us Wednesdays 10am-12noon for friendly chat and refreshments.

St John's Rest Stop Café Warm Space – On Friday mornings 10am- 1pm in the Link. Do join us for Tea/Coffee, friendly conversation, and delicious home-made cakes. Please join us after cafe to share a light lunch and then we will be providing a lent course called The Prayers of Jesus. Further information from Judi Witcomb on 07531495891.

Craft and Table Top Sale – 16th March – 10.00am to 1.00pm We will need volunteers to help set up on Friday 15th March, and to clear away after the sale on 16th. We will be having the usual book sale and donations for this will be very welcome. Please leave books in the vestry or at the back of church. Do then come and browse and buy on the day. Please let Joy or Richard know if you are able to help in any way. Thank you.

Padley – Demand for our emergency food parcels and hot meals has increased dramatically since the 'Cost of Living Crisis' began. Last year we provided over 21,000 meals, hot from our day centre or in one of the 2,467 food parcels we provided to people who needed help. Now we need your help more than ever to support those at risk of homelessness and poverty in Derby and Derbyshire. We especially need donations of: *Tinned soup, Tinned meat, Tinned fruit, custard, Cereal and UHT milk*. There is a full list of items in the link with details for where to take your donations.

Mickleover Singers Easter Concert – Viva la Musica - Saturday 23rd March, 7.30pm at St. Johns Church. The concert will be a celebration of music from around the world. £8 on the door, (Cash only) including light refreshments in the interval.

St Andrews Services in March - There will be a Holy Communion on Easter Sunday at 11am (in place of evening prayer on Palm Sunday). The two month services notice sheet has been corrected.

Go Ukelele Crazy – Friday 15th March, 6.30pm at Our Lady of Lourdes Church Hall. Tickets £5 (under 16 free) includes tea or coffee. A raffle will also be held on the night. All proceeds to Derby City Mission.

Easter Crafting – at the All Saints Wednesday coffee morning starts on 13th March. Then on 20th and 27th March. The session is free and all are welcome.

Padley Donation Drive – Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Uttoxeter Road, 16th and 17th March 11am-12.30pm. Please bring food, toiletries and clothing but NO out of date or opened food, duvets, pillows, mattresses or furniture.

Easter Lilies – The Easter Lily list is now in the link. If you wish to remember your family or friends with an Easter Lily, please sign up. Thank you. *Eunice Upton*

Electoral Roll Revision – The Electoral Roll for St John's is being revised. If you are not already a member and you would like to join, are over 16 or will be 16 during the next year, please complete an application form to be found in the link at Church and hand it to a member of the Clergy, a Church Warden or Andrew Templer (Tel: 01332 515293 or email andrew@templerfamily.co.uk) **Please also complete, at the same time, a Church GDPR Consent form to give us expressed permission as to how we can use your contact data. Thank you Andrew Templer**

Collect for Fifth Sunday of Lent

Gracious Father, you gave up your Son out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Readings this week

Hebrews 5: 5 -10, John 12: 20-33

Readings Next Week

Psalm 118: 1,2, 19-end, Mark 11: 1 – 11

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‘Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.’

John 12:24

Talk by Helen Walley based on John 12:20-33 and Hebrews 5:5-10

Today we are given two pictures by Jesus himself, which he shared with his disciples as a way of preparing them that he would have to die. The **first was the graphic picture of seed going deep into the earth to then yield a wonderful harvest.** So let's look at that first.

I love this time of year. Yes it is Lent and we are preparing for Easter and anticipating the celebration of the resurrection. That is all about new life and new freedom. We will come to that a little later...however this precise time is more about the necessity of death, so that new life can come.

I find in January I am waiting with such anticipation, and often disbelief, that anything will ever come up from the ground and bring the colour and beauty that we now see with the snowdrops, that are just going over, and the daffodils that are heralding spring. The process that occurs in the garden is just this – a seed is planted, and in order for life to grow from it, it must die and do so in the dark, hidden part of the earth, deep in the soil. The life breaks free from the seed and sprouts into something new, leaving behind the shell of what once contained it. Then it yields its fruit and often abundantly.

This Sunday is what is sometimes known as Passion Sunday, it is when in preparation for Easter we think about the reality that Jesus had to die. Though, in our clinical world where we would love to keep everything nice and tidy and alive, the reality is that death has to be faced. And Jesus was attempting to warn his disciples of this reality. Why does it have to be death? Surely this is the one who has come in power to save us.

David Runcorn in his book 'Touch Wood: Meeting the cross in the world today' gives us some very helpful things to contemplate. 'Is this man of Calvary the God we want? He says, 'The cross of Christ is the way of divine weakness and vulnerability. It challenges all our ideas of power and influence. This is the God who refuses to 'take over' our lives but comes alongside and shares them. There on the cross God takes all the dark brooding evil this angry, broken world can throw at him.' There is something about the folly of the cross and the vulnerability of Jesus that throws everything in the face of the powerful and the use of power to find a way out. For new life to come, Jesus has to die. He died that we might live.

The second picture is that of Jesus relating how he will be lifted up from the earth and will draw all people to himself.

The aftermath of Jesus' death proves the literal truth of the words "*all people*." His death will shake the worldview of a pagan soldier, witnessed by both followers and enemies. He will die in between thieves only one of whom will believe. His body will be attended to by both loyal disciples and secret followers—those of both low and high class. Women will be the first to learn of His resurrection. Gentiles will be converted. Hardened enemies will become missionaries. Social barriers will be broken. In eternity, those redeemed by Christ will include members of "every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages."

Both of these pictures, the seed dying and Jesus being lifted up on the cross, were said by him to show the manner of death that he would have to go through. Then in the Hebrews passage we hear of the agony that was felt by him. Jesus is depicted as the one who is the high priest, able to relate to us in our weakness, one who has experienced suffering, but is also perfect and so totally able to be trusted. And he agonised over going through with the final journey to the cross. Malcolm Guite, the poet, tells us about George Herbert's poem 'The Agony' in which we see how the Passion of Christ, from his agony in the garden to his death on the cross, helps us to renew our understanding, first of our sin and then the amazing love that meets us just as we are and redeems us.

At the cross our sin, that place of darkness in all our lives, and God's love, the warm and life -giving light, meet. We live in an age where knowledge of self and self growth are so emphasised and mostly in a personal and self-contained way. People speak of not knowing who they are and wanting to find their identity. Believe me, I have thought a lot about this having studied and worked in the field of psychology. However, I am deeply of the view that our only hope of real self-knowledge is to look for a light beyond ourselves and come to know God, who knows us better than we can know ourselves so that one day, to quote the apostle Paul, we can 'know even as we have been fully known'. In Jesus, God meets us right where we are as those created and deeply loved by him. As Psalm 139 says 'You knit me together in my mother's womb,...I am fearfully and wonderfully made...my frame is not hidden from you.' Psalm 139: 13-15. It is from the passion of Jesus, his giving of himself for us, that we learn both who God is and who we are. What we read of in our Hebrews passage today is Jesus agony in the garden, and that is an image of our inner condition, both an image of what sin does but, and most profoundly, how God responds to us in love, bearing the sheer weight of the sin and transforming us. Jane Williams said, 'The cost of God keeping his promise to us, despite our inability to keep our side of it, is written on the human heart, the human life and death of Jesus. The way God does what we cannot do, and will not do, is to come himself as one of us, and keep both sides of the promise himself.'

This week if we grasp nothing else, **it is my prayer that we each understand the depth, the breadth, and height of the love that God has for us and that it is demonstrated most powerfully in the one who was willing to give up his life for us.** He asks us to be those who give up the idea of life lived purely for self, in order to live life serving him, who was willing to give His life to secure for us the gift of eternal life.

Every blessing Helen (Walley)