



ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST MICKLEOVER

Welcome to St. John's
Sunday 28th April 2024

Services in our Churches this Sunday:

St. Johns – Holy Communion at 10am. Peter Walley will be speaking.

All Saints – Morning Worship at 10am. Clare Owen will be speaking.

St Andrews, Radbourne – BCP Evening Prayer at 4pm. Led by Clare Owen.

YouTube link – This Sunday's service will be streamed from All Saints. https://youtube.com/live/_xT9Gcbfmpg

Collect for this Sunday

Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for the world
and the wonder of your risen life:
give us compassion and courage
to risk ourselves for those we serve
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Readings this week

Acts 8: 26 to end, John 15: 1 to 8

Readings Next Week

Acts 10: 44 to end, John 15: 9 to 17

Mid-week Services:

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

Wednesday Holy Communion - Said Holy Communion at All Saints at 9.30am

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- 12noon in the Link. Do join us for Tea/Coffee, friendly conversation, and delicious home-made cakes. Brunch follows on from 12-15pm to approx. 1pm, bring your lunch, and eat together with others with a faith talk during our time together.

Electoral Roll Revision - The Electoral Roll for St John's has now been revised. Please take the opportunity to check that the roll is correct and if any mistakes are found, please inform Andrew Templer as soon as possible 01332 515293 or andrew@templerfamily.co.uk

CTM Prayer Walk – Thursday 2nd May at 10-15am. Meeting at All Saints Car park (road end as it is polling day). We will walk for about an hour, praying God's blessing upon the people and businesses in this area, and listening to God's Holy Spirit as we go. If you plan to join us please let me know by email ray_lee16@yahoo.co.uk, or phone or text to 07766927539 Thanks *Ray Lee*

Plant Sale – 18th May, 10am-1pm. Advance Order forms for plants are available in the Link or by contacting Joy on 515293 or via events-stjohns@mickleoveranglicans.org.uk Deadline for orders is Friday 10th May. Payment on the day. Joy

Help Needed - The Our Mickleover spring fair is happening on **Sunday 26th May** from 3pm-6:30pm. The Mickleover Churches together are again running a tombola in aid of Padley, so we need suitable prizes donated and plenty of volunteers on the day. We will need a number of helpers for at least half an hour or more before the start for setting up the stall, and then helping staff the stall during the fair, particularly during the first hour or two - things may quieten down a bit after the initial rush. We'll also need help to dismantle and put things away after. Please speak to Mike Shooter mikeshooter@hotmail.co.uk for details.

Thy Kingdom Come - is a global ecumenical prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for friends and family to come to know Jesus. It started in 2016 as an invitation from our Archbishops to the Church of England and has grown internationally and ecumenically. This year we invite you to be a part of this **from Ascension to Pentecost** (9th-19th May). In each church you will find **Novena study guides** for the 10-day period, also a **Prayer Journal**, a great way to note prayers and the answers that come. Please do take one or both of these for your own use. Each day we will be meeting to **pray for our community in All Saints church at 8am** and all are welcome. On 8th May the Vicarage home group will be setting up **Prayer stations in All Saints church** for use in the 10 days so do come and make use of them either with your home group or when you are in the church on Wednesday morning or Sunday. (We are hoping to open the church on other mornings too – please contact Peter if you can help to steward) or, you can use the posters in the graveyard to pray outdoors. Please do join with us. *Helen Walley*

RIP Irene Cook – the funeral will be at St Johns on 13th May at 1.30pm. Followed by a private committal at Markeaton.

Flower Fund – Twenty pounds more has gone into the flower fund from the Easter lily list. Thank you.

Divine Meetings

I'm sure all of us have bumped into people in the street or in a shop or a coffee shop and it has been just the right time. A conversation has flowed, we have listened or they have listened to us and something good comes out of it. Our scene in Acts is a rather spectacular version of a divinely appointed meeting. Philip was one of the seven chosen by the Apostles to help in the practical care of those in need in the first church. The Seven were described as being 'full of the Spirit and wisdom' (Acts 6:3ff). Philip also seems to have been given the gift of being an evangelist. In this remarkable event, an Angel of the Lord indicated to Philip that he was about to undertake a journey. The distance from Jerusalem to Gaza is only around 30 miles. We are not told exactly where Philip caught up with the Ethiopian but the Holy Spirit said to Philip "Go up to that chariot and stay near it." As he drew alongside, probably running at quite a pace, he heard the Ethiopian reading a passage from Isaiah 53. [*"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ³³ In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth."*]

A conversation ensued and Philip was bold enough to suggest that the passage that the man was reading out loud referred to the events in Jerusalem only a few weeks earlier. Jesus himself had indicated that these verses applied to the way in which he was going to be rejected (Matthew 8). Clearly God opened the mind and the heart of the Ethiopian to understand and receive the good news that Philip had brought to him. He was converted and baptized.

For an evangelist like Philip having a conversation like that must have been a wonderful encouragement. It was (to coin a phrase) 'a John 15' moment. The Ethiopian was like a ripe fruit ready for the picking and Philip recognized this.

It was also significant for the early Church. For Philip's encounter closely followed by Paul's conversion followed by Peter's meeting with Cornelius were key moments in the early church's engagement with Gentiles.

Philip was obedient to the Angel's command – the Ethiopian Eunuch was clearly a God-fearer. He could never be a convert to Judaism because he had been castrated, but none of this put Philip off. He must have realized that God had already been working in this man's life and that all he had to do was explain who Isaiah was referring to. But the book of Acts then goes on to say that an even more remarkable thing happened to Philip afterwards. As soon as the man had been baptized, the Spirit took Philip away and put him down in a town some 15 miles distant, called Azotus (formerly known as Ashdod, the city of the Philistines). That Philip was taken away didn't seem to faze the Ethiopian at all. He was so overwhelmed with thanks to God for his conversion that the small matter of Philip disappearing supernaturally only enhanced his new-found faith. We read that he went on his way, rejoicing and it seems fairly likely that it was him who went on to be the founding Father for the Ethiopian Church which is one of the oldest churches in Christendom and is still flourishing today. And what of Philip? We read that he carried on his preaching ministry and finally settled in Caesarea, where he married and had four daughters who were all given the gift of prophesy and who were highly esteemed in the churches for their faith in Jesus Christ.

How this story might encourage us today?

There is no doubt that the amazing miracles wrought by the early disciples who had been filled by the Holy Spirit contributed greatly to the expansion of the early church. People were hungry for God and miracles came alongside the preaching of God's word. At the same time Acts records that the church went through many difficulties, the message was not always received with joy. Vested interests were threatened. Christians such as Stephen whom Philip knew well, lost their lives. It is true that we have often not helped the gospel make headway because too often our actions do not match our words. To 'love our neighbour as ourselves' is a much more difficult thing to live out than we might at first imagine. But it is not impossible. To live a life that makes a real difference to others means I believe that we start by asking God for guidance and instead of always only thinking of ourselves and our own plans, we need to ask God what is on his heart.

Maybe a prayer we could use at the start of each day is: 'Take me Lord to those whom you would want me to meet – and give me courage to listen and speak as you lead me'.

For those of us who struggle to get out of our homes except on rare occasions – maybe we should ask God to bring to mind those for whom we can pray. We might also ask God for guidance on whom to pray for when we listen to the news on the radio or watch it on the television. Never forget that the simplest prayers are the most effective. 'Lord, bless and guide X today. Draw them to your light.'

Who knows what might come of the church realising that even today the Spirit wants to nudge us into making that telephone call or making a visit to someone when that person comes into our mind. I do believe that if we as individual Christians and Christian communities took seriously our Lord's challenge to listen out for his voice then we would experience many more divinely appointed meetings. Although some may reject our message (and we must be ready for that), we might just also find that our friends are receptive and come to faith. Nothing pleases the heart of God more than someone coming to faith in Jesus Christ and not only God - the Angels in heaven too will then have a proper excuse for a party! *Every blessing, Peter*