

Welcome to our Churches

www.mickleoveranglicans.org.uk

All Saints

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St Andrews

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St Johns

Devonshire Drive, Mickleover,
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Services in Our Churches 7th & 14th July 2024

7th July

- Holy Communion at All Saints, 10am. Clare Owen will be speaking.
- Morning Praise at St Johns, 10am. Paul Pritchard will be speaking.

Live Link: <https://youtube.com/live/zeVStznGntI>

14th July

- Morning Worship with Baptism of Riley and Kirstie at All Saints, 10am. Mary Staunton will be speaking.
- Holy Communion at St Johns, 10am. Clare Owen will be speaking.
- Holy Communion at St Andrews, Radbourne, 11am. Led by Peter Walley.

Midweek Services at All Saints

- Tuesday: Prayers at 8am
- Wednesdays: Holy Communion at 9.30am

Midweek Groups

- All Saints Café: Wednesdays 10am-12
- St Johns Rest Stop Café: Fridays 10am-12

7th July Collect

Creator God,
you made us all in your image
may we discern you in all that we see,
and serve you in all that we do;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

14th July Collect

Generous God,
you give us gifts and make them grow:
though our faith is small as mustard
seed, make it grow to your glory
and the flourishing of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

7th July Readings:

2 Corinthians 12: 2-10, Mark 6: 1-13

14th July Readings:

Ephesians 1: 3-14, Mark 1: 9-13

Church Office's Closed- from Friday 5th - Tuesday 16th July.

You will not receive a notice sheet next week; this notice sheet covers both Sunday's.

'Weaknesses and Strengths' – Grace is all we need 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

I wonder what struck you most from this passage. Most people would say the “thorn” and it prompts the question ‘what could it have been?’ There have been many speculations over the ages, but we will come to that in a minute. Firstly, Paul refers to a rather unique experience he remembered v2 ***“I was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago. Whether I was in my body or out of my body, I don’t know—only God knows.”*** In those times people spoke about the different heavens of the universe. Our sky was often called the first heaven; ‘space’ (where the stars and planets are, as the second heaven, and God’s home as the third heaven. Paul also refers to it as Paradise. He confesses that he doesn’t know if this was a vision or if his body was transported there. But he was able to hear things so astounding that they couldn’t be expressed in words or shared with others. But he isn’t going to boast about it, even though he could have done, as he says in v6 ***“If I wanted to boast, I would be no fool in doing so, because I would be telling the truth. But I won’t do it, because I don’t want anyone to give me credit beyond what they can see in my life or hear in my message.”*** He didn’t want people thinking highly of him for the wrong reasons. He just wanted people to see how he modelled his life and attitudes on his Lord’s. Paul’s humility here is crystal clear. Despite all his experiences which he could have shared, he only wanted people to focus on his faithful proclamation of Christ’s gospel and how it was reflected in his own life.

Let’s now look at the ***“Thorn in the flesh”***. I am sure many of us can relate to this, I certainly can. I know what it’s like to be weak and incapable of doing things. Paul attributes his ‘thorn’ to Satan - ***“So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud.”*** If anyone had a legitimate reason to feel special, it was Paul, just think of all he had been through. He had survived experiences that would have killed most people. Yet, he tells us about this thorn in his side. A thorn is something which hurts or irritates. The Bible is not specific about what it was. It could be a repetitive illness, or something spiritual like unconfessed sin, or something to do with family troubles, or many other things. The ambiguity of it allows us to apply it to whatever causes us to be uncomfortable. But Paul could see there was a purpose to it. It was to keep him from thinking too much of himself despite the astonishing things he had experienced.

Paul asked the Lord three times to take it away. But the response was ***“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.”***, ***“My grace is all you need.”***

The Lord is telling Paul that when he encounters hard times, His “grace” is all he will need. God doesn’t take away Paul’s troubles and temptations, or ours, yet He will give us His grace, which will be enough for us. When we feel that we are weak in ourselves, if we turn to Christ, we will receive strength from him, and that’s the greatest strength of all.

But what is God’s **grace**? It comes from the Greek word “charis”. Defined as “undeserved favour”. Grace is God giving us a blessing we don’t deserve. In Ephesians Paul writes, ***“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from***

God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it." (Ephesians 2:8-9) Paul was often reminded that he once persecuted Christians and was totally unworthy of salvation. But God showed grace by calling him to a new life.

Although the Lord was speaking to Paul two thousand years ago it is equally applicable for you & me today. We all go through times when we have some sort of thorn in our side, then we can see how God's power is perfected. But you could ask why would a God of love want us to be weak? I believe it's because it makes our effectiveness in life more dependent on God rather than on our own energy, effort, or talent. His grace is sufficient for any problem we encounter & the weaknesses that appear are opportunities for God to show His power and love.

Paul tells us **"For when I am weak, then I am strong."** How can that be true, it doesn't seem to make sense but God's grace transformed Paul's life. When he came to the end of himself and had emptied himself of his own strength & power, Jesus was able to fill him with His strength enabling him to carry on in a strength that could only be supernatural. Those who were watching Paul would see the amazing power God can give to those who trust Him. Times when we are weak God can give us spiritual strength to carry out His will to.

I can't tell you how many times I've felt like I couldn't do something because of feeling inadequate or illnesses had incapacitated me. Yet at such times when I felt there was no way, I had been able to do something with the Lord's help. All through His power & grace; not our own.

I once read *"When we are strong in our abilities, we are tempted to do God's work on our own, and that can lead to pride. When we are weak, allowing God to fill us with His power, enables us to be stronger than we could ever be on our own."* "God is with us in whatever we're going through. We live in a world where pain, struggle, & tragedy are a part of the lives of everyone.

When this happens, we should fill that void with the goodness, power, and love of God, which gives Him the glory. Sometimes we may be too weak to do anything but crawl but that is when His strength and power are at their peak. God will give us the strength and perseverance we need to keep moving. When we are in step with our Lord, He will walk beside us and will give us what we need, when we need it. As Isaiah wrote, **"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."** (Isaiah 41:10)

Regardless of what we're going through the Lord will be there to help us. Our weaknesses are opportunities for God to reveal Himself to the world through us, what a thought! Amen

Reverend Paul Pritchard

NOTICES

Mickleover Singers Summer Concert - at St Johns Church on Saturday 6th July, 7:30pm. £8 on door includes light refreshments.

Ravensdale Junior School 'Proper Old School' Summer Fair – Sunday 7th July 3-6pm.

An Open Garden Event - The Thatched Farm on 13th July, 2pm-4.30pm. Tickets can be purchased before the day from Paul Pritchard or Barrie Witcomb, £5 per person, tickets purchased on the day at the gate, £6 per person. Ticket price includes cream tea. All proceeds will go to Champions School in Eldoret Kenya. Adjacent car parking available.

Prayers and Best Wishes – to Ben Williamson and Ruth Preston who are getting married at All Saints Church on Monday 15th July, 12noon.

Confirmation With Bishop Malcolm - at All Saints Church on Sunday 22nd September at 6.30pm. If you have been baptised but haven't already been confirmed and would like to take this step of public affirmation of faith, please speak to one of the clergy team. Peter (with Clare) is hoping to lead a short 3- or 4-week course beforehand to look at Holy Communion and faith. Please drop him a line if you are interested

Pause and Ponder – The current Pause and Ponder will be changed towards the end of July and again towards the end of September. For the September set, the picture theme will be 'Holiday Joy' as seen by 16yrs and under. So, if you have children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces or neighbours children who like taking photos of places visited, items/building seen, interesting views, and they would like to take part, send a copy of the photo/s by email to the Church Office and they will be forwarded to me (if you have my email address send them direct to me) Make sure you include Name of Photographer, name of place, view or building. We need both 'portrait and 'landscape' style please. No selfies!!! Photos need to be with me by September 6th, please. Happy snapping! *Janice*

Lost Glasses – A pair of glasses were left at St Johns after the joint service last Sunday. If you have lost any, please let the office or a member of clergy know.

Thank you - What a fortnight it has been? Going on retreat, ordination, presiding at my first communions at both St John's and All Saints, and enjoying the lovely BBQ hosted by Peter and Helen. I wanted to take the opportunity to thank all of you who attended my ordination and/or first services or watched them online - it meant such a great deal to have you supporting me. I would also like to thank those who were not able to attend but sent their good wishes. I felt surrounded by love and support. It may seem a little strange that this is my second ordination, but for the past year with you I have been a Deacon. This second service means that I am now a Priest and can serve in ways I have not been able to until now. I will now be able to take wedding and baptism services, in addition to the funerals that I have been doing. I am now also able to pronounce absolutions and give blessings, and to preside at communion services. It will be an honour to serve you in these new ways during the rest of my Curacy. Thank you all once again. Every blessing Rev. Clare.