

Contact

www.mickleoveranglicans.org.uk

Parish Magazine

St John the Evangelist

Devonshire Drive, Mickleover

In Partnership with All Saints Church

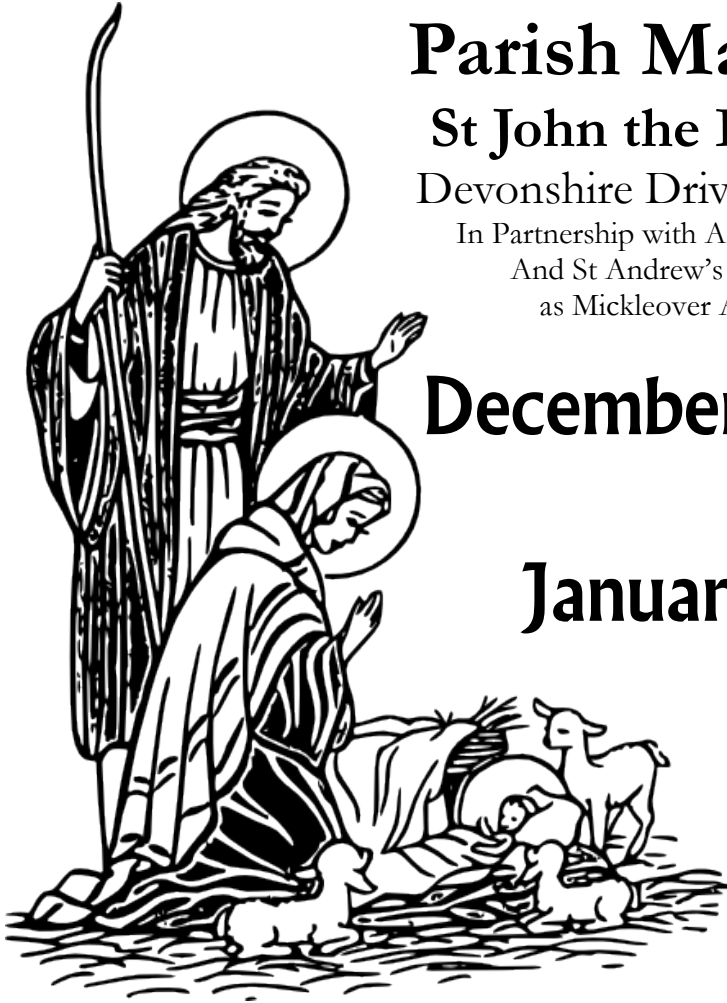
And St Andrew's Radbourne

as Mickleover Anglicans

December 2024

and

January 2025



The last bumper edition of “Contact”

Contact for Official Business

For booking baptisms, weddings and other business,
please contact our Vicar, Revd Canon Peter Walley
Tel: 01332 513793 / 510446 (Church Office)
clergyteam@mickleoveranglicans.org.uk

Hall + Link Bookings

Contact Joy Templer - 01332 515293
Hallbookings-stjohns@mickleoveranglicans.org.uk

For up to date information about events

Website: www.mickleoveranglicans.org.uk
Facebook: St John's Mickleover



REGULAR SERVICES

Sundays at St John's - 10.00am

Morning Praise on 1st and 3rd Sundays

Holy Communion on 2nd and 4th Sundays

Morning Service now on YouTube see the website for details
Joint (MA) Service with All Saints - 5th Sunday in a month

Remember.....

*When the song of the angels is stilled
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks
the work of Christmas begins.*

*To find the lost, to heal the broken,
To feed the hungry, to release the prisoners,
To rebuild the nations.*

*To bring peace among the people,
To make music in the heart
To show the love of Jesus.*

It was a beautiful sight this morning to wake up to snow covering the landscape. Snow is lovely to look at, but not so easy to negotiate if you have to go outside. I pray that all our readers have kept safe without any falls or accidents. Snow is such a tricky thing to forecast in the Midlands as the heaviest snow falls when a low pressure from the west, laden with moisture hits cold air already in place. Just one degree difference at ground level means either snow or rain.

It may surprise you to know that the Middle East also gets snow, and not just on the heights of Mount Hermon in the north of Israel. The Holy Land is such a land of contrasts as you can descend to the Dead Sea (Jericho) and it be well over 20 degrees having left Jerusalem hovering around zero. That happened to me when I went to Israel in the company of other Assistant Curates from Exeter Diocese in early 1999.

Although it is highly unlikely that Jesus was actually born in winter, at least we can sing 'in the bleak mid-winter' knowing that it isn't entirely out of the question that Jesus, Joseph and Mary experienced snow.

In 1999, there was no wall between the West Bank and the rest of Israel. Our coach party was able to freely drive through Galilee, Samaria and Judea which was such a blessing as we were able to see some of the New Testament biblical sites such as Cana and the Well at Shechem (modern day Nablus) and meet the Samaritans (yes there is still a small community there today).

Travel in Jesus' day involved considerable effort. I don't know whether anyone has attempted to work out how many miles Jesus would have walked, from his childhood trip to the Temple in Jerusalem starting in Nazareth, to his three year ministry where he led the disciples across the whole of Palestine.

As the season of Advent comes around again, we are not just thinking about celebrating Jesus's earthly 'birthday' we are also thinking about his second coming as King. Sunday November 24th is Christ the King Sunday – it marks the end of the ecclesiastical calendar with readings from Daniel and Revelation that tell us there is a spiritual realm that is very real even if we cannot perceive it yet.

The book of Revelation in the New Testament was written to encourage Christians who were being severely persecuted, that their trials did not go unnoticed by God. The spiritual teacher and writer Simon Ponsonby picks up this theme when he wrote a book entitled 'The Lamb wins' (which I would highly recommend reading if you want to understand the book of Revelation).

What Revelation tells us is that there will come a time at the second coming of Jesus when all evil, sorrow and every kind of pain will be destroyed and a new heaven and a new earth will be created which humankind cannot spoil, exploit or destroy.

Instead of heaven being a separate place from earth as is now the two will be joined together. Those who have died in Christ will rise with new resurrection bodies. Above all, this isn't just a hope, or a dream which fades, it will be the eternal reality. That is why we sing songs, and praise God in worship now and we pray 'Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven' which Jesus himself told us to pray for in faith.

Simon Ponsonby concludes his book by quoting C.S. Lewis.

'In *The Last Battle*, Aslan, the Christ figure, has triumphed over evil. But Lucy looks sad. Aslan says to her, "You do not yet look so happy as I mean you to be."

Lucy replies, "We're so afraid of being sent away."

Aslan answers "No fear of that....The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: this is the morning."

C.S. Lewis finishes, "And we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story....which goes on for ever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.'

Let's make Advent, which after all, is a season of preparation, a time when we make space to read the gospel stories. May they inspire us to pray even more fervently for those whom we know and love but who don't yet know the saving grace of Jesus. Miracles still happen.

Every blessing, Peter



**Wishing you every blessing
this Advent, Christmas
and Epiphany**

From the Ministry Team

Peter, Alun, Paul, Ian, Clare, Ingrid

Dawn, Helen and Judi

And Karen who has almost finished her training.

*Details of all our Christmas Services are on the centre page
but don't miss...*

8th December - Gently into Christmas - 4.00pm

*A time to reflect on Advent through poems, prose
and music. A bit of peace and quiet amidst the hustle
and bustle of the pre Christmas preparations*

15th December - Carols by Candlelight 6.30pm

Come and enjoy a wealth of carols and readings -
"Nine lessons and Carols" - setting the scene for
Christmas and stay for mulled wine and mince pies!



**Christmas Eve - "Carols round the Crib"
4.00pm**

Join us for this wonderful family service sharing
together in the Christmas story .

An ideal start to the Christmas Celebrations

Christmas Eve - Midnight Communion - 11. 00pm

A warm welcome awaits all who stay up for this
moving and magical service which ends with the final
verse of "O Come all ye Faithful" which starts....
"Yea Lord we greet thee born this happy morning"





The Derby Food 4 Thought Alliance
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Alpha Course

Alpha is a series of
weekly sessions
in a small group
exploring the
Christian faith.



A new group started on
30th October 2024.

If you are interested in joining,
please contact

All Saints office 510446,
Peter Walley 07725 740407
Andrew Brown 07511170421.

St John's Confidential Prayer Chain

You do not have to be a church member to use this service

It can be a comfort and a support to know that
people are praying for you, a family friend or family
member at a time of stress, worry, fear or pain.



To ask for prayer please text or call Helen Walley (Co-ordinator)
on 07725 740408 or email helenwalley@btinternet.com

*Please note: If requesting prayer for someone other than yourself, permission from that
person must be sought.*

There is also a book and prayer board at the back of Church for you to add

CTM Prayer for Mickleover

Thursday 5th December
10-15am - in The Link at St John's



During the winter months, when the weather is not so conducive for walks, we continue to meet and pray together for about an hour in St John's Community Link.

Everyone Welcome

Please note there will be **no Meeting in January** - we will resume in The Link on Thursday 1st February

If you would like to take part, please contact me beforehand
email ray_lee16@yahoo.co.uk ☎ 01332 239645 (screened by ansaphone)

Christingle at St John's



10.00am Sunday 15th December

with JACK at John's too!

You are all very welcome
to this very special service.



Donations at this Service will be sent to the Children's Society



Mickleover Singers Christmas Concert.

Do come and join us for

"A European Celebration"



Saturday 14th December - 7.30pm

Tickets £8 on the door

Includes light refreshments in the interval.

Editor's note: Over the last few weeks, St John's has said "Goodbye" to two of our long serving and much loved members - the next few pages gives a flavour of their immense contribution to our fellowship and ministry.



Brian Seager at St John's

Brian will be missed by many in St John's.

In 2007 he took on the mantle of "elder statesman" from Alan Carter and became Lay Chair of the PCC, having been a member for several years. In this role he kept the meeting on topic, asked key questions about finances and legalities and was excellent at clarifying and summarising complicated items. He maintained his interest and commitment in PCC affairs until October 2024.

Brain served two terms as Churchwarden (2006 -2009) & (2018 - 2021). He was a dedicated and vital St John's "Site Manager" during the construction of the new Community Link in 2010/11. This was a major undertaking and the result has proved a great asset to St John's and the community we serve.

Brain and his garden trains were always a welcome addition to our Open Gardens. Many folk have fond memories of their visits.

He (along with Liz Suckling) created our Bottle Tombola, a popular stall at our Advent (now Christmas) Fairs and enjoyed being part of a team at our annual Wine and Wisdom Quiz - most recently in January 2024.

He had an amazing memory and was a great support and sounding board for many new clergy and Ministry Team members over the years.

Rest in peace - our good friend and mentor.

A summary of Brian's life is on the next page.....

Brian David Seager 1938 - 2024

Brian was born in Ipswich on 24 June 1938. He won a scholarship to Ipswich School where he joined the Sea Scouts, met Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and played Lady Macbeth. He played the clarinet in a local orchestra and had the privilege of having Sir Colin Davis as a guest conductor.

He gained a degree in mathematics at Nottingham university, where he met Pat.

Brian and Pat were married in July 1961 at Donnigton in Shropshire. After a honeymoon in Sussex, they moved to Leicester, where Brian had been appointed to the Maths department at Ratcliffe College. Brian was the first non - catholic they had employed. He coached rugby and organised a Wine Club, the wine was purchased from the parents of a pupil from Derby related to one of Jenny and Alun Rowlands' Daughters in Law. Brian's next teaching post was as Head of Maths at Myers Grove School, Sheffield in 1970. Followed by an appointment as Deputy Head at Thornes House School, Wakefield in 1975. Then as Head of Derby School in 1979. On their first Sunday in Mickleover Brian and Pat came to St John's and the rest is history as they say. Brian joined the Rotary Club and served as secretary and president and was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship. Following the reorganisation of schools in 1989 Brian's career took off in a completely different direction. From early days in education Brian had been interested in the development of teaching and assessment of mathematics in schools which led to the development of the 'School Mathematics Project'. He was Chair of the Oxford & Cambridge examination board and was involved in the publication of over 30 books. From an early age Brian had a keen interest in Railways. As a youngster he had an indoor Hornby Railway layout that he eventually sold to buy his first motorbike. Every time Brian and Pat moved, he would build a new indoor layout. But in Mickleover, a railway was built in the garden. He loved the fleet of a dozen locomotives and rolling stock – most of which he built himself. He really enjoyed sharing these with others in 'Open Garden' events for the church or other charities. For Brian, a successful holiday had to include trains and plenty of ice cream. Together, Pat and Brian enjoyed several 'Great Rail Journeys' across Europe, the USA, Canada, and New Zealand. But his favourite holidays were in the caravan, then the motorhome travelling throughout the UK.

Brian's music interests were varied, from Rod Stewart to Mahler, and from country music to Mozart. He was a loving dad and grandad to his daughters, Claire and Rachel, and his four grandchildren. He took pride in all their achievements and enjoyed nothing more than spending time with his family making treasured memories. Pat recalls a loving husband of 63 years who was so brave, intelligent, kind, and loyal. Thank you, Brian, for so much.



ANN HAXELL

Coming into St John's it wasn't long before you met Ann. She always had a welcome, especially if you brought children. She and Colin were involved in the youth work at St John's hosting a weekly group at their house. Members of that youth group hold reunions today some 40 years later. Ann was also a big part of the Edale holidays and the catering. One year it snowed just before we were due to go and the coach driver refused to go anywhere near Edale. No problem, the trains were running and before we knew it Ann had arranged a group rail ticket. The activities had to be changed but no one complained as poly-bagging was more fun than pony-trekking.

Ann was also a Guide leader for many years (in a house of boys it was a chance to equal things up!) and will be fondly remembered by many past members of the 3rd Mickleover Guides.

Ann was a churchwarden several times and oversaw the installation of double glazing and the hall and kitchen extensions, including the toilet for the disabled. With Colin's help she helped keep the buildings in good order. She always felt we needed a bit more colour around the place. We still refer to the 'blue' room (stage side room) but who remembers the 'pink' (mulled wine) panels and hall door, and what colour was the kitchen? She would happily sit on a chair and paint the bottom half of a wall while some taller person did the top.

There used to be a space between the church and the boiler house/ kitchen area. For a long time it was Ann's vision that we filled it with, not just a church entrance but, a useable space. Meetings were held over many years to discuss plans, sometimes with an architect. At the same time we were all involved with fundraising for the new building, to be known as the 'Link'. The idea being it would not just connect the buildings together but connect with the community and become an

outreach space. What we see today is the outcome of Ann's vision.

Ann supported and was involved in the mission and outreach of the church and influenced the development of teatime, praise services and the current outreach cafes.

She leaves a great legacy, look around.

Fridays at St John's - Lots of Warm Space

and warm Season's Greetings from the "Rest Stop" team



The Rest Stop Café

Fridays 10.00am to 12.00 noon

In the Link and Church

Do join us for a cup of tea or coffee, friendly conversation, and of course delicious home-made cakes

EVERYONE WELCOME

December Specials include.....

6th - Decorations for a Memory Tree

13th - Christmas Jumper Day

in aid of Save the Children

20th - Carol Service with Dedications

from the Memory Tree

27th December - we are OPEN



We are usually followed by BRUNCH

Soup and a sandwich followed by discussion on faith and life.

For more information about Brunch contact Judi - 07531 495 891

Note: No Brunch on 6th December



Church Family Christmas Card

Rather than write out a whole pack of cards to friends at St John's, we ask that you write JUST ONE and add it to our display board. A donation, in lieu of the cards you would have bought, is requested which will be sent to our chosen charity for this year which is **Toy Box**. This charity works to assist Street Children in South America, India, Kenya and Nepal. To find out more visit toybox.org.uk or see the details on the Christmas Card boards at the back of Church.



New Opera
Company
Christmas Concert

**Saturday 7th December at 2.30pm
in St John's Church Hall**

"WATER EVERYWHERE"

is the theme of the concert which features much loved pieces such as Moon River, The Blue Danube, Bali Hi Together with some possibly less familiar pieces.

The concert is in support of Friends of Kenya's Children.

Tickets £10 - at the door

(including light refreshments)

or in advance from 01332 557096 or 01332 882637

email jannice:read55.plus.com or newoperacompany@hotmail.com



Christmas and Craft Fair

Many thanks to all who helped at this event.- donating, setting up, running stalls, serving lunch and refreshments and packing up.

Sadly, the deadline for this magazine is too early for us to include the result.

Please check the Bulletin/noticeboard for details

Eco News



Church Garden

Many thanks to Elaine Pritchard for planting this up for Remembrance Day and to Eunice Upton for some hidden tete-a-tete which we will enjoy in the Spring! You may also have noticed that the garden has recently had a bit of a make-over - new pebbles on the surround and a few more sustainable plants in the "boxes". This is thanks to Dawn Wheeldon who has agreed to keep an eye on it for us.

Recycling Blister (Pill) Packs

Although Superdrug no longer do this, Wendy Lee has done some research and found a company that will recycle them for us. Please continue to drop any empty blister packs into the box in the vestry lobby.

Foil and Metal recycling

Michael Vick is still collecting this for us. If you have any non-ferrous metal such as aluminium, brass or copper - please add it to the "other" recycling box in the lobby or contact Michael direct for larger amounts..

Christmas Card and Wrapping paper recycling - Beware!

Remember that any cards with glitter on CANNOT go into the blue bin. It also can't accept any foil wrapping paper,

Used Postage Stamps - for Bone Cancer

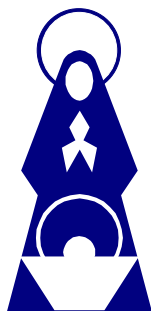
Don't forget that there's a box for these in The Link. They are collected to raise funds for valuable research into this devastating disease.

Don't forget the wildlife - food and water can be a life-saver

What's Happening in DECEMBER

St John's is open Monday to Friday 9.30am - 3.30pm

Sun 1st	10.00am	Morning Praise For Advent Sunday
	10.00am	Holy Communion at All Saints
Thurs 5th	10.15am	CTM Prayers for Mickleover - in the Link
Sat 7th	2.30pm	New Opera Derby Concert in aid of FKC
Sun 8th	8.00am	Breakfast Church at All Saints Centre
	10.00am	Holy Communion at St John's
	10.00am	Morning Worship at All Saints
	11.00am	Holy Communion (Traditional) at St Andrew
	4.00pm	Gently into Christmas
Sat 14th	7.30pm	Mickleover Singers Christmas Concert
Sun 15th	10.00am	Christingle at Morning Praise at St John's with Jack at John's
	10.00am	Holy Communion at All Saints
	6.30pm	Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight
Sun 22nd	10.00am	Holy Communion at St John's
	10.00am	Morning Worship at All Saints
	4.00pm	Carol Service at St Andrew's Radbourne



Do join us to celebrate!

Tues 24th - CHRISTMAS EVE at St John's

4.00pm Carols round the Crib

11.00pm Midnight Communion

Mon 25th - CHRISTMAS DAY at St John's

10.00am Christmas Communion

Sun 29th 10.00am Joint MA Holy Communion at St John's

Note: For details of Christmas Services at All Saints - see separate sheet in the Link, back of Church - we've run out of space here!

What's Happening in JANUARY 2025

St John's is open Monday to Friday 9.30am - 3.30pm

Sun 5th	10.00am 10.00am	Morning Praise for Epiphany at St John's Holy Communion at All Saints
Sun 12th	8.00am 10.00am 10.00am 11.00am	Breakfast Church at All Saints Centre Holy Communion at St John's Morning Worship at All Saints Holy Communion (Traditional) at St Andrew
Wed 15th	7.30pm	PCC.

Sat 18th to Sun 25th January - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Look out for details of what's happening in the Bulletin

Sun 19th	10.00am 10.00am	Morning Praise at St John's with Jack at John's Holy Communion at All Saints
Sun 26th	10.00am 10.00am	Holy Communion at St John's Morning Worship at All Saints

Looking ahead to February 2025

Sun 2nd	10.00am 10.00am	Morning Praise at St John's Holy Communion at All Saints
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The next magazine "Threefold" will be issued February 2025
Any items can be passed to Richard Finch (St John's rep) or
emailed to threefold@mickleoveranglicans.org.uk
The deadline for articles is Monday 20th January 2025



Don't forget **Morning Praise with JACK***
(* Jesus And Cool Kids)

10.00am on the 3rd Sunday each month

Come and join us for crafts and activities
as we contribute to the morning service.

EVERYONE WELCOME

INTERNET CAFÉ



**Monday 10am - 12noon
In the Link**

**Help and advice for computers, laptops,
smart phones and tablets etc.**

FREE WIFI CONNECTION

Do you want to organise your digital photos?
Do you keep getting strange messages?
Do you want help to set up a computer or tablet?
Are you struggling with software?

*Our helpers don't guarantee to have all the answers,
but may know where to start looking.*

Tea, coffee and biscuits are served mid morning

Bring along your own laptop or tablet - or borrow one from us.

Our friendly team is happy to help



**We will probably NOT be around on
Mondays 23rd or 30th December
but will be back on 6th January 2025**



Have an enjoyable festive break - see you in the New Year!

REGULAR ACTIVITIES at MICKLEOVER ANGLICANS

Mon	10.00am	Internet Café - in the Link, St John's
Tues	8.00am	Parish Prayers at All Saints
	10.30am	Stitchers at All Saints Church Centre
Wed	9.30am	Holy Communion at All Saints
	10.00am	All Saints Café in All Saints Centre
	2.00pm	Friendship Group at St John's
Friday	10.00am	Rest Stop Café at St John's
		Followed by Brunch (to 2.30pm)
	5.30pm	Music and Movement at All Saints Centre

Family Events - November

R.I.P.

We give thanks for the lives of:

Brian Seager

Brian English

Colin Radford

Steven White

Ann Haxell

David Kennedy

and we remember in our prayers their families and friends

Editor's note: This poem was popped through my door - "For Contact" - thank you to whomever passed it on.

If you look for me at Christmas
you won't need a special star –

I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,
I'm right there where you are.

You may not be aware of me
amid the celebrations –

You'll have to look beyond the stores
and all the decorations.

But if you take a moment
from your list of things to do

And listen to your heart, you'll find
I'm waiting there for you.

You're the one I want to be with,
you're the reason that I came,

And you'll find me in the stillness
As I'm whispering your name.

THANK YOU to our many contributors

Since I took over the editorship of "Contact" in November 1994, I have been delighted to receive such a variety of articles from a wide range of people. Some have been on a fairly regular basis and some just occasionally. All have been very welcome. Thank you so much for sharing them with us. Joy

Transformed from rubbish into Treasure

*"He is also able to save to the uttermost those
who come to God through Him."*

Hebrews 7:25 NKJV

A Christian leader writes: 'The Italian violin maker Antonio Stradivari was a poor man. And yet his violins are now the most prized violins ever made because of the rich and resonant sound they produce. The unique sound of a Stradivarius cannot be duplicated. What may surprise you is that these precious instruments were not made from treasured pieces of wood; they were carved from discarded timber. Because Stradivari couldn't afford fine materials, he got most of his wood from the dirty harbours where he lived. He would take those waterlogged pieces of wood to his shop, clean them up, and dry them out. Then, from those trashed pieces of timber, he would create instruments of rare beauty. It has since been discovered that while the wood floated in those dirty harbours, microbes infiltrated the wood and ate out the centres of those cells. This left just a fibrous infrastructure of wood that created resonating chambers for the music. From wood that nobody wanted, Stradivari produced violins that now everybody wants.' You say, 'How does any of this relate to me?' Just as this violin maker transformed rubbish into treasure, God can transform you into what you were actually meant to be. You might say, 'But you don't know the things I've done. I doubt that Jesus could save and transform someone like me!' Give Him a try. Put Him to the test. You won't be disappointed. The Bible says, 'He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him.'

Used with permission - UCB "Word for Today" - 15th November

Just a thought.....

"Loving your enemy risks annoying your neighbour."



Remembering two hymn writers

During 2024 two hymn writers from very different eras have been remembered. They were both sternly evangelical but this hasn't prevented their hymns from being popular across the whole range of Christian traditions, including independent evangelical, Anglican, and Roman Catholic churches.

2024 is the 350th anniversary of the birth of Isaac Watts (1674-1748). This was commemorated with a service in the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster broadcast on BBC Radio 4's *Sunday Worship* on 25th August. Isaac Watts came from a dissenting background where singing anything other than the psalms in church was regarded as wicked and so was one of our earliest hymn writers.. He started writing as a young man in his 20s and continued for the next fifty years, particularly following his retirement as minister of Mark Lane Chapel in central London in 1712 through ill health. He is thought to have written about 750 hymns. Those that have survived in our modern hymn books include *Come let us join our cheerful songs*, *Jesus shall reign where'er the sun*, *O God, our help in ages past*, and the moving Good Friday hymn *When I survey the wondrous cross*. Remarkably as a dissenter from this period he has a memorial in Westminster Abbey erected in 1780.

A man from our own time, Timothy Dudley-Smith, author of about 400 hymns, died in August this year aged 97. In a career that included serving in parishes alternating with working for bodies such as the Church Pastoral Aid Society he ended his career as suffragan Bishop of Thetford while serving as the President of the Evangelical Alliance. His writing was based on his poetic skill rather than interest in church music as he claimed that "I can't read music and I'm totally unmusical." His most well known hymns are *Lord for the years* often sung at New Years Eve watchnight services, and *Tell out my soul* based on the words of the Magnificat from the New English Bible which John Betjeman, very much a traditionalist in terms of Anglican worship, spoke of as "one of the very few new hymns really to establish themselves in recent years".

We can give thanks for these and many other hymn writers and composers who have enriched our worship over the centuries, and perhaps ponder on which works from our contemporary Christian music may survive in to the future.

This is a thought provoking re-wording of a familiar Christmas Carol

O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Beyond thy bleak and dreamless sleep
The deathly comets fly
And in your torn streets, haunted
By visions of the dead,
The walls don't shield and can't rebuild
A house of broken bread

O mourning souls, together
We feel the shining pain
A sacred light that's seeping out,
Tracing the next bloodstain
For light burns bright in darkness
And in this world of sin
Amidst the tears, the cracks and fears
Are how the light gets in

How vulnerably, how painfully
Your mothers now give birth,
As Ramah weeps and Rachel breaks
Her body on the earth
No ear may hear her sorrow
But in that deep release
A requiem of beauty still
Whispers it's song of peace

O suffering child of Bethlehem
Whose wounds are always fresh
As love weeps from your ragged skin
And hope is housed in flesh
A newborn birthing all things new
When brokenness you rend
Where ruins stand and tears are stopped
And death is not the end.

Becoming a St John's Angel

“Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body. “

From a poem by St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582):

Within St John's there are many tasks undertaken by Angels. Most (but not all) are members of our Church and much of what they do is unseen. Many view it as a way to be the “hands and feet of Jesus” - could YOU be one of our angels? .

Here's a selection of tasks, they are not only on a Sunday, not every week, some are very occasional, some practical.

Being a Sunday morning welcomer

Preparing and delivering the Intercessions

Reading a lesson

Serve the refreshments after services

Join the Prayer Chain

Lead a Home Group

Empty the bins at the end of events/services

Take home the tea towels to wash and iron

Check the supplies of bin liners/hand soaps/cleaning sprays

Take home the tablecloths to wash/iron after events

Check that the noticeboards are up to date.

Refresh the “Praying For” book each month

Join the Rest Stop or Events planning team

Could you help with a meal for Maundy Thursday?

If any of these appeal - do speak to one of the Ministry Team or a Churchwarden - training, resources and support is available!



Wine and Wisdom Quiz Night
22nd February 2025 - 7.00pm

Tickets: £6 per person - Teams of 4 people

Includes complimentary glass of wine
and half-time refreshments

To book call Richard on 493939

email: events-stjohns@mickleoveranglicans.org.uk

DEADLINE for bookings - Friday 14th February 2025

The FOUR stages of a man's life.

1. He believes in Santa Claus
2. He doesn't believe in Santa Claus
3. He is Santa Claus
4. He looks like Santa Claus

Mickleover WI

Meets at St John's Church Hall at 7.30pm - 2nd Thursdays

12th December - Christmas Dabble and Faith Supper

9th January - South Georgia

New members welcome

Tel: Linda 0779 303 7901 for more details

A seasonal quote

Christmas magic is silent. You don't hear it—you feel it.

You know it. You believe it." – *Kevin Alan Milne*

Baa – Humbug!

Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels' (Matthew 25 v41)

A while back, before his team got a bit too old for such shenanigans, Bob Suckling co-ordinated a regular 'Open The Book' event at Silverhill school. The group would act out Bob's versions of various stories and parables from the Old and the New Testaments. Being me, my all-time favourite was, of course, 'The Good Samaritan' ... but he also had a great, 'Lost Sheep' sketch in which I usually played the sheep. (Many years previously, apparently, this was Alan Carter's role – it is a source of great pride for me to think that Bob felt me worthy to follow in Alan's footsteps.)

Originally, the sheep's name was Bramble and, as the 'sheep' scurried around the periphery of the school hall on all fours (wearing a sheep mask) Bob (the shepherd) would be calling out, "Bramble, Bramble" as he searched for her. At my request, the sheep was renamed, 'Humbug', so I could, "Baa" and Bob could call, "Humbug!" (Bob is clearly a kind and generous man to have acceded to such a request.)

While recently recalling the fun that we had sharing these stories with the children, I started thinking (again) about sheep and goats in the bible – and particularly the New Testament. Goats appear to only get one mention in the Gospels – in Matthew – and elsewhere they seem to be incidental as objects of sacrifice rather than the apparently evil creatures of Jesus' words in Matthew. A proper puzzle for me to chew at!

The thing is, as an individual, I've never felt very stereotypically 'sheepish' which, given the differentiation in Jesus' words, has made me think that I must be 'goatish' in nature and so probably destined for eternal damnation. My understanding of what I'd been taught at school and in my occasional youthful skirmishes with the Established Church, was that sheep have an unquestioning nature – follow the herd, follow the leader, stick to the well-trodden road, don't rock the boat – while goats have a more stubborn, questioning, challenging approach to life, unwilling to accept things at face value or simply

‘because it’s the law’ – and this Challenge to Authority inevitably leads to The Flames of Hell

All my life I have questioned and had doubts about the messages of spirituality that are on offer from many of the world’s religions; in particular I’ve always been suspicious of any requirement to unquestioningly conform to ‘The Party Line’. In New Testament terms my middle name is Thomas – I need to place my hand in the side of just-about any proposition before I can consider accepting it and, on the whole, for me, the generally recognised offerings of the organised religions have fallen short of both my needs and my hopes.

It can be lonely being a goat.

“May you live in interesting times” is often credited as being an ancient Chinese curse although there is little actual evidence of this ... but being born at the start of the second half of the twentieth century has certainly ensured that I – and most of those reading this – have lived through very interesting times indeed! Specifically in this particular context, we’ve seen the Church of England go from being a substantial political power in its own right, and the dominant religious organisation of Great Britain to being just one choice among many spiritual offerings within a society in which religion is certainly no longer a ‘compulsory’ aspect of daily life. (In evidence I suggest that in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century few children were born and not baptised, few couples were married outside of a church and few died without a formal Christian funeral.) In consequence I have seen the church evolve into a far less autocratic body than the ‘behave or be damned’ church of my early youth.

I think that the ‘sheep and goats’ image that I absorbed from my teachers during a time when the Church of England was still a dominant political force was meant to be exactly that – a lesson in Good Behaviour, contrasting the (supposed) rewards of conforming with the dangers of questioning.

My experience of today’s church is of a much healthier place; one that emphasises nurture and individual experience of God rather than blind obedience ... and now the whole passage (Matthew 25 vv31-46) makes sense to me - the ‘sheep’ are caring, while the ‘goats’ lack compassion. Sheep and ---

goats may superficially appear very similar (I understand that sheep and goats often run together in the Middle East and that it takes a skilled shepherd - or goatherd - to separate them) but they differ in essential and fundamental ways. I am sure that In His imagery Christ is arbitrarily assigning the animals' characteristics –he's *not* suggesting that goats *as goats* are damned! The passage is about doing what your *heart* tells you is right – not necessarily because the *law* tells you. So, happily, it looks as though our questions, perspectives and objections won't in themselves place us on the road to Hell – phew!

Given that Christ's only commandment to us was, 'Love one another' – indiscriminately and without reservation - I guess that it's no surprise to find that in this passage He's expressing a distaste for those that have shown an inclination not to love. However, my personal faith makes me believe that, despite His words, *He* would not condemn the 'goats' to eternal damnation. His challenge to us to, 'Love our enemies' must surely include trying to love the *unloving* as well as the more easily recognisable *unlovely*?

--- ooOoo ---

"Goodbye, and thanks for all the fish."

Given that this will be my last offering to, 'Contact' I would like to take a moment to thank Joy, her predecessors and the whole, 'Contact' team for their many gifts to us during the past decades. 'Contact' has been funny, thoughtful, interesting and always (in my opinion) loving. Over the years it has reflected well the 'Spirit of St John's' – accessible, non-judgemental, willing to be controversial, useful and refreshing.

Thank you, 'Contact' – I shall miss you!

Paul Gribbin

One of Paul's favourite quotes....



God lives in a box all week and comes out on Sunday in funny clothes to talk about money.

Sean Michaels, aged five

Looking forward to 2025

Several events are now in the calendar, pop them into your diary and please come along to help if you can.

Wine and Wisdom Quiz - 22nd February - 7.00pm

See the advert elsewhere in Magazine

Craft and Table Top Sale - 22nd March - 10am to 1pm

Tables £12 (supplied) - **Bookings Open on 8th February**

To book a table, call Joy (515293)

or email: events-stjohns@mickleoveranglicans.org.uk

June - Deventio Brass Band Concert

Saturday evening - date + times tbc

There are also a few more dates to look out for

Craft and Table Top Sale - 18th October

As well as

Craft and Christmas Fair - 29th November 2025!



Best Wishes for Christmas and The New Year

from the Magazine Team

Joy, Geraldine, Andrew and Lesley

**A big thank you to our wonderful team
of distributors and doorstep deliverers!**

Farewell

It has been a tremendous privilege to keep you informed and share thoughts, poems, stories and events with you for the past 30 years.

I wish the new team well and hope you will all continue to enjoy receiving and reading the new Threefold magazine.

Don't forget.... If you want a PAPER copy of the new magazine,
fill in the reply slip and pop it into the post box in The Link **by 15th December**
(Can't find your reply slip? There's some spare slips next to the box.)

Joy

WHO'S WHO in ST. JOHN'S

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Friday is Peter's day off. Please try and avoid contacting him on this day,

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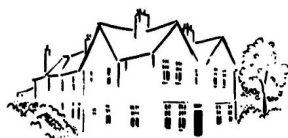


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