

# Welcome to our Churches

[www.mickleoveranglicans.org.uk](http://www.mickleoveranglicans.org.uk)

## All Saints

Etwall Road, Mickleover,  
DE3 0DL  
01332 510446



## St Andrews

School Lane, Radbourne,  
DE6 4LY



## St Johns

Devonshire Drive, Mickleover,  
DE3 9HD  
01332 513363



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## Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2025

### Services In Our Churches This Sunday

- Breakfast Church at All Saints, 8am.
- Morning Worship at All Saints, 10am. Peter Walley will be speaking.
- Holy Communion at St Johns, 10am. Dawn Perry will be speaking.
- Holy Communion at St Andrews, 11am. Led by Clare Owen.

Link for Sunday's service: <https://mickleoveranglicans.org.uk/you-tube-services/>

### Midweek Services

- Tuesday: Prayers, 8am at All Saints.
- Wednesdays: Holy Communion, 9.30am at All Saints.

### Collect

Heavenly Father, at the Jordan  
you revealed Jesus as your Son:  
may we recognize him as our Lord  
and know ourselves to be your beloved  
children; through Jesus Christ our Saviour  
Amen

### Sunday's Reading

Acts 8: 14-17, Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

### Next Sunday's Reading

1 Corinthians 12: 1-11, John 2: 1-11

**St Johns Internet Café** – Mondays 10am - 12pm in the Link. Free help with laptops, tablets, smartphones and other technology. Free Wi-Fi.

**All Saints Café** - Join us for a friendly chat, coffee/tea, cake and biscuits every Wednesday in the Centre 10am - 12noon. Everyone welcome!

**St Johns Rest Stop Café** - Fridays 10am-12pm in the Link. Join us for Tea/Coffee, friendly conversation, and delicious home-made cakes. **Brunch** follows the café from 12.15 – 2.30pm. We join with others for a cup of soup & sandwich followed by discussion on life, faith and a bit of Bible study.

## Talk by Clare Owen

'We three kings of Orient are'. These famous words begin that much loved Carol which recounts the feast we are celebrating today, and these three kings are central to the nativity scenes found in homes and towns across our country. But who were they? And why was their visit so important?

Each day across the world, people take gifts to newborn babies, and many of us will have experienced the joy of choosing a gift for a much longed for child. I am also certain that we would not have chosen frankincense, myrrh, or (even if we were wealthy enough) gold. Most gifts given to children throughout the ages are not recorded; yet the gifts presented to the baby Jesus are still remembered nearly 2000 years later. Why? It is not simply because they were unusual choices of gifts for a baby, but because they tell us who Jesus is.

The birth story of Jesus is only recorded in the gospels of Luke and Matthew, and each has a different focus. In the gospel of Luke, we find the shepherds being told of the birth of Jesus, whereas Matthew provides us with an account of the visit by these wise men from the east. The reason for these differences is that the two writers wrote with specific (and different) audiences in mind. Luke was concerned with taking the news of the life of Jesus to Gentiles (people who are not Jewish), and we see throughout his writings a particular attention to those on the very margins of society. This is why it was important for him to highlight the visit of the shepherds, as Jesus' birth was for people just like them. Matthew wrote primarily for a Jewish audience, and his account cannot be separated from the context of the Hebrew scriptures which came before. The fulfilment of the book of Isaiah 60, made recording the visit of these wise men and their gifts, so important.

The Christian feast of Epiphany has been celebrated since at least to the 4th century, which makes it one of the earliest established Christian festivals. 'Epiphany' is a Greek word meaning revelation or manifestation. It is used because the visit of the Magi from the east revealed the true nature of Jesus to the world. The account of the visit in Matthew's gospel is only 12 verses long, but those 12 verses tell us so much.

From Matthew's perspective, what is important about the Magi is that they were not Jewish, as this meant that the Messiah, and the fulfilment of Jewish scripture, was being recognised by people from outside the Jewish community as well as those from within it. The Magi were guided to Jesus by a star sent from God and could return to their homes to acknowledge Jesus for who and what he was, to a wider world. The gifts they bring with them are highly symbolic. Gold was the signifier of kingship and told of the kingship of the infant Jesus. Incense emphasised Jesus as a living God, as it was through the burning of incense at the temple in Jerusalem that prayers were made to God. In fact, using incense as a way of sending prayers to God was common to many other societies, and as such, when the Gospel of Matthew was taken far and

wide, the importance of this gift would have been instantly recognisable to its hearers or readers. Myrrh was a resin used in embalming (preparing the bodies of people after they died). As such, we might see this as perhaps the most unusual gift for a baby. But for this particular child, whose death would mean so much for humanity, and our relationship with God; Perhaps nothing could have been more appropriate. This gift of Myrrh signified to the readers of Matthews Gospel, that Jesus was born with one purpose - to die. And when read with the rest of the Gospel, to save humanity from the sins of the world!

One of the very earliest depictions of the Magi to survive is a Byzantine mosaic on the wall of the basilica in Ravenna, and dates from around the year 565. This Church was dedicated to Christ the Redeemer (Christ coming to save the world), and the decision to depict the Magi and their gifts would have helped the people of Ravenna understand why Jesus was born. The term Magi had been in use in the Greek world for at least 400 years by the time Matthew was writing and referred to a priestly cast of people from Persia (today Iran). These families were responsible for undertaking religious duties within their community, and from Matthew's perspective, could help to spread the true identity of Jesus to the wider world.

There are many traditions associated with the feast of Epiphany. In some countries gifts are exchanged on Epiphany not 25<sup>th</sup> December. In some countries children put out shoes filled with Grass. A gesture of leaving out food for the Camels upon which the Magi travelled. In the morning, the children wake to find the grass replaced with sweets, in gratitude for their gift.

There is a very old tradition, still practiced in many areas of our country and around the world today, of which I am particularly fond, and would like to introduce you to if you are not already familiar. This is the tradition of using chalk (which has been blessed) to mark the entrance of your home. Above, or to the side of the doorway you write the numbers of the year – Today 20 at the beginning and 25 at the end, and the letters C, M and B, with each of these divided with a Cross. This year's mark would be 20 + C + M + B + 25. The crosses symbolise Jesus, and the letters, (depending upon tradition), either symbolise the traditional names of Magi (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthesar); or the Latin blessing 'Christus Mansionem Benedicat', which means 'May Christ bless this house'. This tradition recognises that we are saved through Christ (and remembers that God saved the Jewish People from Pharo when they marked their doors in Egypt). It also invites God's blessing into your home, and a blessing upon all who enter your home during the coming year. It also remembers the welcome given by the Holy Family to the travellers who visited them on the first Epiphany, and reminds us, as Christians, to offer hospitality to others. There is also prayer of blessing, which you can say either before or after chalking your door. This is done either on 6<sup>th</sup> January itself or any other day before Candlemass on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. It is a tradition I

really appreciate, as every time I walk through my door it is a very visible reminder of the importance of Jesus to my life.

Even if you do not chalk your doors, I would like to encourage us all, to not simply see 6<sup>th</sup> January, as simply the day you traditionally take down your decorations, but A day to really focus upon the fact that Jesus was born for everyone, and Epiphany was the first time that was recognised by people not from his own earthly family.

Amen.

I prepared chalk and prayers to be handed out at the end of the Service at All Saints. I still have plenty left over. Please do let me know if you would like some.

*Yours in Christ Rev Clare*

## Notices

**St Johns PCC Meeting** – Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm

**Our Love Prayers & Sympathy** - To the family of Harry Bedborough. The funeral will be on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January at 11.30am at St Johns followed by committal at Markeaton Crematorium.

**All Saints PCC Meeting** – Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January, 7pm in Church.

**Wine & Wisdom Quiz Night** – Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February at St Johns Church Hall at 7pm. Complimentary glass of wine, table snacks and interval cake. £6 per person (teams of 4). Registration deadline is 14<sup>th</sup> February. To book please contact [events-stjohns@mickleoveranglicans.org.uk](mailto:events-stjohns@mickleoveranglicans.org.uk)

**Homegroup at The Vicarage, Etwall Road** - Wednesday every two weeks at 7.30pm. We are starting to meet again next Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January and we meet every fortnight, so the following group will be Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January. We will be looking at a study on Heaven by Paula Gooder, with notes and video provide at each study. We are a relaxed group who enjoy refreshments together, a short study, prayer for one another finishing usually by 9pm. If you would like to join us, please contact Helen Walley

**Threefold Magazine** - the first issue of our new monthly magazine for All Saints', St Andrew's and St John's, Threefold, will be available online and in our churches over the weekend 1/2 February. People from St John's who have asked to continue to have a printed copy delivered will receive these as usual. The deadline for contributions is Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January. Please pass to Rebekah or email to [threefold@mickleoveranglicans.org.uk](mailto:threefold@mickleoveranglicans.org.uk)

**"The Bible Comes Alive"** - at 10am, Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> January. 1 John 2, 18-25 - Steadfastness in Conflict. All welcome. Contact the office for meeting details.