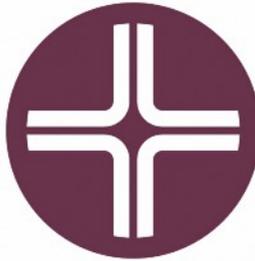




St Alkmund's
Duffield
Parish Magazine

September 2020

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The Vicar's Letter

JAMES HUGHES



Dear Friends,

As we move in September towards the end of summer and the beginning of autumn, there is always a sense of new beginnings and a new start. This is probably programmed into us from school days and continues, as so much of life still works on the school year.

But this year feels different. The schools have gone back, and we give thanks for the efforts of teachers, parents, pupils and many other behind the scenes in enabling this to happen and pray that it will continue. But lots of other things are staying the same (sadly not the weather).

We are moving back to normal, and Church services have resumed, but we probably feel a long way away from it. We have things that we want to do, and a longing for things just to get back to what they were. We have a sense that this will take a long time. We may even wonder if things will ever be the way they were before.

What should we do with this sense of dislocation, and frustration with the present? It's been with us for a while (that's part of the problem!) I talked in July about our discontent with the

present, and the promise of the future. Back in our June issue we saw how God doesn't change, even when the world is very different, how Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever as Hebrews chapter 13 tells us.

So, in the midst of the challenges we continue to face, it is to Jesus that we can turn to find true comfort. Where we can find rest, and peace. As he tells us in Matthew's gospel:

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew chapter 11 verses 28 to 30)

Jesus invites us to find rest in following him. During difficult times, at all times, here is where rest can be found. Our world is different. Jesus is the same.

Do join us Sunday by Sunday, at church or online, as we continue to explore what it means to find rest in Jesus Christ. (And you can always catch up on our YouTube channel.)

I look forward to 'seeing' you.

Blessings,



Keeping on Keeping on— *reflections approaching my 12-month anniversary...*

This coming autumn will see the 12-month anniversary of my being Trainee Minister at St Alkmund's Duffield, having started the position on 4th November 2019. To say it has been an “*interesting*” first year would be something of an understatement, as I've still not yet had what one might describe as a ‘normal’ week in the post...!

When one is commencing a new role, friends and relatives can sometimes trot out those well-worn (if kindly meant) clichés along the lines of “...*hit the ground running...*”, “...*in at the deep end...*” and so on and so forth. Little did I know that barely five days into my new job, I'd literally be “*running in the deep end*” as I and the rest of the church's Staff Team were frantically relocating all of the contents of our rapidly flooding Church Hall to higher and (even though the church itself was later affected by more limited flooding) drier ground inside church on Friday 8th November



The flooded St Alkmund's churchyard

2019, when major floods hit! By the time we left the church at lunchtime, we had to wade through knee-deep water across our car-park (which later on rose even higher still) in order to get out!

For several Sundays (including last year's Remembrance Sunday service) we had to meet in one of the local primary schools in the village; whilst we were extremely grateful for the use of their premises, it was however somewhat of a logistical challenge, as one might imagine! Although thankfully



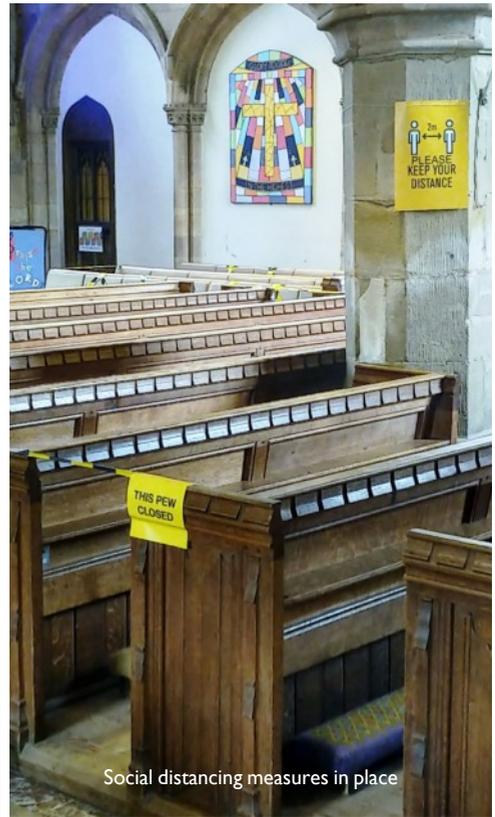
The flooded link to the church hall

we were at least able to be meeting back in the church building just prior to the Christmas 2019 season, the substantial flood-damage to the hall has meant that extensive repairs to the hall are only just now finally approaching completion as of September 2020.

So a considerable number of our usual events as a fellowship (such as our monthly “First Sunday Special” evening services, which are held in the hall) have been unable to take place since last November, owing to the hall being out of action. Then of course (seemingly just as we were ‘pausing for breath’ following the flooding), Covid-19 hit and in common with everyone else in the country, we had to rapidly adjust and adapt to online services whilst the church was closed for just over four months (or almost 35% of 2020!).

But we are carrying on as best we can and are gradually taking tentative steps back to something approaching normality, as far as safety and social distancing allows, of course. We have been holding morning services back in St Alkmund’s church building since 19th July 2020, alongside livestreaming the services for those still unable to attend in person. And at the time of writing, we are currently looking at how we might be able to safely restart some of our other activities too, including our children’s work and our monthly prayer meetings, for example (and we’re also hoping to be able to shortly re-open our sister church, St Paul’s Little Eaton).

So it has indeed been an ‘interesting’ and challenging first year, to say the least! But, as Hebrews chapter 13, verse 8



tells us: “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever*” and the hope of salvation the Lord Jesus offers to all holds fast through any and every circumstance. Despite floods, Covid-19 and whatever else might lie on the horizon, the ‘good news’ of the Gospel—that is, what God’s done for us through Jesus and His death and resurrection, in order that we can be reconciled with God to have a restored relationship with Him still stands. Do join us each Sunday (either in church or via <https://www.youtube.com/c/TheUnitedBeneficeofDuffieldLittleEaton>) to find out more.

James Rollin

Impressions of a Vicarage

Bring your imagination. That is the advice offered by the National Trust to visitors of Duffield Castle. The same notion could apply to people seeking actual vicarages in towns, villages and cities; even street names such as Vicarage Road, Lane, Avenue or Gardens may not include a 'functioning' vicarage (Vicarage Lane in Duffield actually does). Visitors to Vicarage Road, a stadium in Watford, Hertfordshire, and the home of football club Watford since 1922, perhaps have shown an interest in the history of the local area and given thought and imagination to any church house that may have previously existed.

Put simply, the noun 'vicarage' is the official residence provided by a church for its parson, vicar or rector, but some vicars reside in accommodation which is located in streets with a totally different name. Nevertheless, over the years vicarages have provided stimulation for creativity and personal interpretation.

Rebecca Boxall's novel *Christmas at the Vicarage* is set in Devon, and Kate Hewitt features the Holley sisters of Thornthwaite (a village in Cumbria) in her fiction books *A Vicarage Christmas*, *A Vicarage Wedding*, *A Vicarage Homecoming* and *A Vicarage Reunion*. Rupert Brooke wrote the poem *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester* in 1912. This was the poet's occasional residence and his knowledge

of the subject and the Cambridge-shire village is well stated. The influential



Rupert Brooke's statue at the Old Vicarage, Grantchester

Vincent Van Gogh (1853–1890) created his painting *The Vicarage at Nuenen* in 1885, based on his parents' home in the Dutch

province of North Brabant. Van Gogh's father was a pastor in this small Netherlands town.



Vincent Van Gogh's painting: *The Vicarage at Nuenen*

Ysenda Maxtone Graham learned much about vicarage life whilst researching her book *British Summer Time Begins*, in which she describes British childhood holidays in the mid-20th Century. I was particularly interested to read about 'Vicarage Swaps'. She writes: 'The deal was that vicars and their families went to live in another parish vicarage for a fortnight, and took over not only their house, but their whole job: services, baptism, funerals, worry.' Whilst it was a simple, cheap way for a clergy family to have a change (some would say not a relaxing time; perhaps you can imagine the stress-induced situations before, during and after the 'break'), it did provide revelations into other people's life-style.

Bring Your Imagination! Well it is clear with the development of former vicarages into new establishments, such as houses, schools, public houses and care homes, imagination, endeavour and business acumen have been put to good use. For instance, the Old Vicarage School in Darley Abbey was established in 1933 as an independent nursery and preparatory school for girls and boys. Previously the late Victorian building was used as a vicarage for Saint Matthew's Church. A former old vicarage in the village of Peterchurch in Herefordshire is now a holiday cottage managed by Sykes Cottages Holiday Limited. Located next to the river Dane, a former 17th Century vicarage and listed

property has been transformed into a country public house, restaurant and hotel in Holmes Chapel, Cheshire. There is The Old Vicarage public house in Whetstone, Leicester, and many Old Vicarage restaurants to visit, including one which attracted my attention in its marketing. I quote *“The Old Vicarage (Ridgeway Village near Sheffield) sings a hymn to the seasons with its faultless cuisine served against an enchanting Victorian backdrop.”*

Clearly, Vicarages form a valuable part of our heritage and identity (and indeed many famous people, including actresses, broadcasters, composers and politicians have grown up in one). And whether still used for their original purpose, or imaginatively developed into new establishments for new purposes, as we’ve said, they still have a role to play in the life of the nation.

Sent by Paul Wiggins

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SOME OF YOU may have noticed Alkmund hasn’t been seen so much in the church magazine lately—indeed, some eagle-eyed readers complained he wasn’t in the magazine at all last month! Well, this is because he’s been enjoying an extremely “good lockdown”!

Alkmund has been, and indeed continues to be, splendidly looked after by his very good friends, John Birkby (one of our church organists—John’s been giving Alkmund music lessons!) and John’s wife Mary. In fact, we think Alkmund has actually been lodging at John and Mary’s long before lockdown, having first sneaked off to their house after the church was flooded last November! He might not want to come back to his job as the Office Bear at church!!

Anyway, Alkmund says he’ll see everybody again soon, he hopes that going back to school has been OK, and reminds us to stay safe and keep on washing our hands! (And paws!)

#Where’stheBear #Workingfromhome

Where’s the Bear?



‘The Aftermath’ or

“Why should the devil have all the good music?”

The week following the Music Quiz began well enough, but then got a bit awkward, to say the least.

First of all, there were some weary eyes at the morning service the day after the party. Even Paul the vicar looked a bit tired: I think many of us were realising that we were not as young in body as we liked to be young at heart!

Audrey raised an eyebrow during a quiet “left-overs” lunch, and started on the post-match analysis.

“Do you think that there is going to be any grumbling about last night?” she asked.

I played it all innocently: “Why, whatever do you mean, my love?”

“Now, don’t come over all sweet and innocent, my dear Alan, upright Churchwarden no less! I saw you singing along with everyone else!”

“And what exactly was I singing, my dear?”

“I think the line goes, ‘I wanna hold her tight, get teenage kicks all through the night!’”

“Ah yes,” I grinned, “we’re a bit past that now aren’t we, but last night was pretty good!”

Audrey beamed; “Yes indeed, but please come back to the question!”

I paused to think; “Well, we know that Ralph and Rosemary cleared it with the Vicar first, and Paul seemed to be enjoying it as much as everyone else.”

“So what are we supposed to say to the Youth Group this week?”

“I think, ‘So what did you think of the 70s music then?’ might be a good start! Let’s see if any of them bat an eyelid before we start trying to repair any supposed damage.”



“Yes, that’s good, but what do you really think about it? Should we be encouraging that sort of music?”

“Well, we could try to separate ourselves from popular culture, but we won’t get very far. After all, it’s not just pop culture that raises difficult issues. Try *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* or *Mansfield Park* for seriously bad behaviour!”

Audrey grinned. “Ah yes, but that is *proper* ‘Culture’, so it must be OK, err, I mean ‘culturally appropriate’ for young people.”

— ooo OOO ooo —

I thought for a while. “After all, you know that our daughter was into Rammstein a few years ago? One of my colleagues told me that they were banned in their native Germany due to seriously dodgy lyrics: but if you don’t speak German you are none the wiser!”

“Yes, I agree, but that is a bit off the topic.”

“OK, so do you want to talk to Alan about it.”

“I’m tempted, but I really do think that we should be able to handle this one ourselves.”

“We know that Jesus liked a good party: look at the amount of wine he created at ‘the Wedding at Cana in Galilee’. I can’t

imagine that they spent the whole wedding reception singing Psalm 51 to the latest chant?”

“But Paul says ‘Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs’ in Ephesians?”

“Yes, but that is in a church context. He also says that we shouldn’t keep ourselves to ourselves, otherwise we will just isolate ourselves from the wider world.”

“So how should we set the boundaries?”

“I think we should think carefully what we listen to, and encourage the teenagers to do the same. It’s one thing to dance and sing along to a good record, but I think we may need to re-think our choices when particularly dodgy lines are pointed out to us. But of course, it does rather depend upon whether we know what the lyrics are talking about.”

“Perhaps we should advise changing them next time.”

“Mmm, I’m not sure about that. Do you remember when we went to a function with a visiting band, who realised too late that ‘Brim full of Asher’ had a dodgy line, and ended up with ‘Everyone needs a cushion for a pillow,’ I mean, really!”

“Well, I think we can handle the teenagers; after all I don’t think our musical tastes overlap at all, so any examples we give are likely to produce classic teenage stares!”

“Perhaps another time we should have a social event with church songs through the ages?—then we’re sure to be safe.”

“I don’t think that you have a very good memory. I’m not sure that I can still handle ‘If I were a Butterfly, I’d thank you Lord for giving me wings’, and going further back, what about ‘I love the flowers, I love the trees, but most of all, I love ... daisies!’”

— ooo OOO ooo —

“And so it comes down to what the event is about—Are we worshipping our Creator, or is it a party? Does it have a profound

meaning, or just a bit of fun?”

“It could be both—after all, ‘Let’s stick together’ is a pop song, but the argument is morally very strong. And some Christian songs sound OK, but can go seriously adrift of the theology.”

“I like the story about the theologian Karl Barth. He was once asked what was the most important lesson from a lifetime of studying theology. And he replied in the words of a children’s song: ‘Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.’ You can’t make it simpler than that.”

“I think that the key verse is this one: ‘...whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.’ (Philippians 4, verse 8)”

— ooo OOO ooo —

“Well, when all is said and done, we haven’t really touched on the subject to which we most want the answer, have we?”

“After all, aren’t you really most interested in ‘My best friend’s girl (but she used to be mine)’?”

“Ah, yes, was the girl in question really Rosemary? and more to the point, what happened next, and why did it take decades to resolve?”

— ooo OOO ooo —

Late on Tuesday night, we came into the house after an *interesting* Youth Group meeting. To say that we were ‘put through the wringer’ is putting it mildly. First of all, if you are going to pick songs to discuss, you need to know what they are talking about, but more so, pick songs that strike a chord for the youngsters, and which were composed after their grandparents were teenagers! Even The Spice Girls began almost a quarter of a century ago. →

→ They are a good bunch of kids—err, I mean young adults—but they were certainly taking no prisoners. So after some catastrophically old choices; ‘Why does the devil have all the good music?’, the discussion came alive with titles being thrown in from left, right and centre. Actually, some of it went really well, when the youngsters picked up on lines we didn’t know, and the arguments flowed back and forth without us having to comment much at all. We coped pretty well, but I was glad that they’d never heard of punk rock! I have a feeling that we’ll be coming back to this one again soon!

— ooo OOO ooo —

I was still mulling it all over when I went over to see Paul for our regular meeting. I told him about the Youth Group meeting, and he smiled reminiscently.

“Yes, every generation looks askance at the tastes of their predecessors and offspring. Words change their meaning: some become familiar, and others become completely unacceptable. And when Jane Austen talks about ‘making love’ in *Pride and Prejudice*, she didn’t intend us to read it with today’s viewpoint!”

“So,” I said, “what record from your youth reminds you most of how it felt to be a teenager?”

He paused, and looked wistful.

“‘Paranoid,’” he said, thoughtfully.



Andrew Jackson August 2020.

This story follows on from last month. The people and events in this story are mostly a work of fiction (none of the characters is based on anyone I know!), although a couple of the anecdotes are first hand! All of the song titles are real, although some are very dated. The Bible verse is taken from Philippians Chapter 4 verse 8.

Notice of Death



Molly Cox

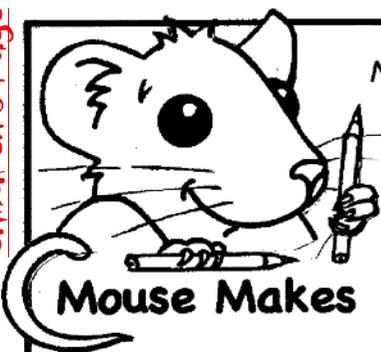
Molly’s daughter Louise Walker informs us that her mother sadly passed away on 15th July 2020. Her funeral was held on 10th August. Molly had lived in Duffield for over 60 years, was a beloved and cherished Mum and Grandma, and had a lot of friends in the area. Molly was also a long-standing reader of the parish magazine and all involved with this publication send their condolences regarding Louise’s sad loss.

It is hoped that a memorial service at St Alkmund’s can be arranged sometime in the future when normal attendances are once again allowed.

Music at Duffield Update

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus situation, Music at Duffield has regretfully taken the decision to postpone the concerts on the **12th Sept 2020** (Richard Jenkinson—cello) and **10th Oct 2020** (Bemrose Bursary Recital—Luke Jones—piano).

For the latest information on cancellations and re-arranged concerts, please visit the Music at Duffield website at www.musicatduffield.com



Mouse Makes

May all the peoples praise you, O God,
may all the peoples praise you!

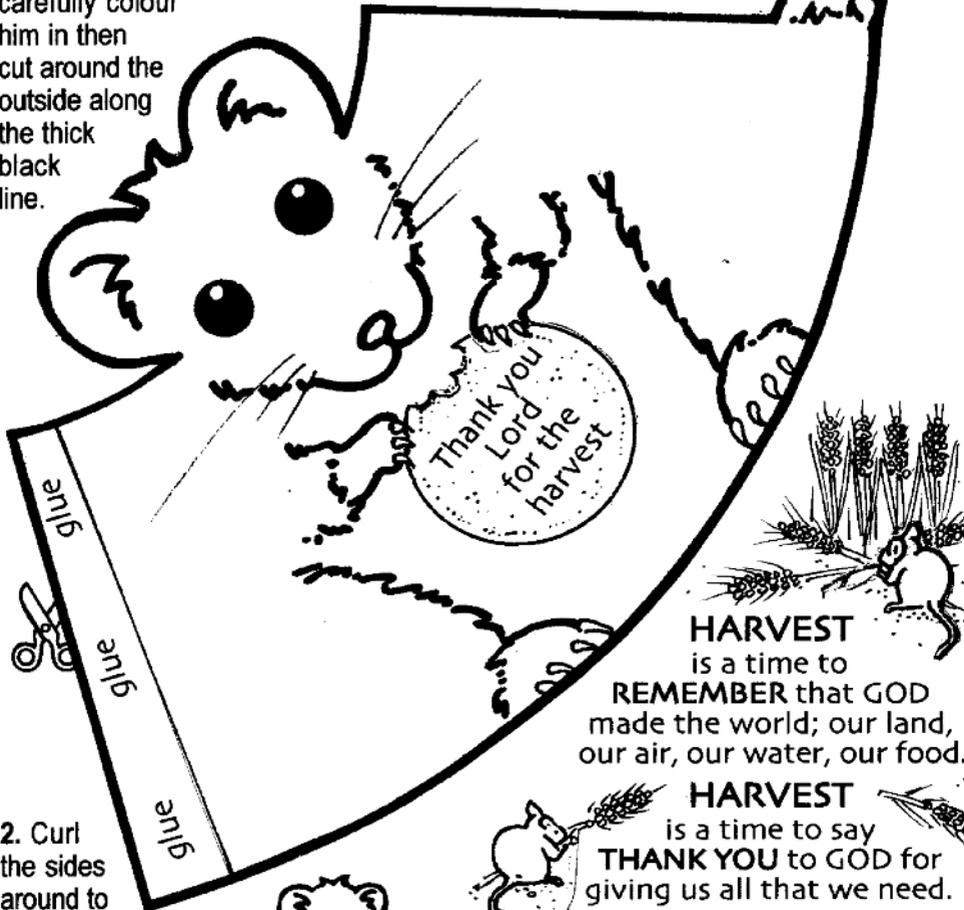
The land has produced its harvest,
God, our God has blessed us.

God has blessed us,
may all people everywhere
honour him.

Psalm 67:6



1. To make your **HARVEST MOUSE** carefully colour him in then cut around the outside along the thick black line.



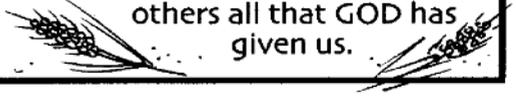
2. Curl the sides around to the back and glue the edges together to make a cone shape.



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HARVEST is a time to say **THANK YOU** to **GOD** for giving us all that we need.

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Youth and Children

One of the most amazing, mind-blowing and utterly incredible things about being a Christian is being able to pray. Prayer is something we often take as a given and rarely stop to think about what it really is. In one sense, Prayer is incredibly simple: It is just talking to God. We don't need to use magic words, or clever language. We don't need to be in a special place, or do anything unusual in order to pray, we just speak, and God listens.

But this is the very thing that makes this little activity of talking to God so utterly mind-blowing—God promises us in the Bible that whenever a child of his prays, he will be listening. That's right, the God who created the whole universe and everything in it, who sustains the world and holds everything in his plan, will give ear to someone like you, someone like me, whenever we pray. In fact, in the book of Revelation John gives us this incredible image of a scene in which the whole of heaven stops to listen to the prayers of God's people. Can this really be true? The king of the whole universe and all his throne room would take time to listen, really listen, to the mumbled, anxious and often petty request that someone like me would lift up to him?

Well, yes. This is how much God truly loves us; being a child of God means that God genuinely loves us like a father; in fact, he loves us *better* than any father can love their children. And that means that he loves to listen to us and spend time with us. *Even* when our prayers are muddled like a little child's story, or are repetitive and confused, or full of questions and worries or are simply inaudible cries from the heart, our father cares very much. He not only listens but promises to answer our prayers according to his will. He longs to share in life with us, delights in granting our requests and giving us good gifts. He cares about our pain, our sadness, the injustices that we meet and the mistakes that we make. He promises that one day he will set everything right, and until that day he will never leave us on our own. He is here, listening.

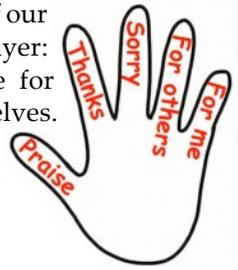
With such a promise from a listening God, it can be easy to feel bewildered about prayer. I mean, where do we even start?

Well, I'd like to encourage you to remember that this is our *loving* father whom we are speaking to; he will meet us where we are at. He even gives us help with praying. Romans 8 tells us that even when we don't know how to pray, the Holy Spirit speaks to God for us, and helps us when we pray.

So what can we talk to God about? The short answer is everything and anything! Our children and families have just spent the summer holidays thinking about prayer and learning a simple way of thinking through the different things that we can pray about. I thought I'd share this with you here, in the hope that it will be an encouragement to you.



We began with a simple idea: taking our hand we labelled each of our fingers with a type of prayer: Praise, Thanks, Sorry, Please for others, and Please for ourselves. Each topic also had an accompanying action to help us remember them.



Praise (thumbs up)—Prayers of praise are when we take time to tell God how amazing we think he is. Beginning with praising God helps us remember who we are talking to, and sets the tone of our prayers for our next topic...



Thank you (index finger)—Every good gift comes from God (James 1:17), our families, friends, pets, personalities, surroundings... we shouldn't just say thank you to God because it's the polite thing to do; we thank him because we have so much to be thankful for! The Bible talks about



developing a heart attitude of thankfulness—the more we say thank you, the more we are thankful, and the greater joy we will experience in our lives and bring to others.

Sorry—(middle finger bows)—because of Sin, we need to say sorry to God. Sin isn't just bad stuff we do, it's actually a heart attitude towards God. Sin is when we say in our words, thoughts or actions: Shove off God, I'm in charge, No to your rules. Because Jesus has paid the price for our sins, by dying on the cross, when we say sorry to our loving father, we can know that he will forgive us. Saying sorry to God or "repenting" is also how we turn away from living for ourselves and turn towards God himself, and God promises to help us become more and more like the people we are called to be: compassionate, kind, gentle, joyful, patient, good, faithful and self-controlled.



Please...

Of course, one of the biggest reasons that we tend to pray is when we need to ask God for something, and that's OK; remember, God loves to give us good things! However, it's important to remember that the gift giver is even more important than the gifts we ask for. And we know this because the greatest Gift God can ever give us is a relationship with himself!



Please for others (Ring finger) —

We can ask God to help, care and look after other people, and we can also pray for other people's relationships with God!



Please for Ourselves (Little Finger) —

We can also ask God for things that we want or



need for ourselves, and know that he will look after us as a good father would. Sometimes God doesn't always answer our prayers in the way that we want or expect him to, but he promises us that he is always working for the good of his people. This means that we can trust that he knows what is ultimately best for us as he possesses the whole picture of the world.

Finally, we spent a little time thinking about how we can enjoy prayer, and we got a little creative. If praying still feels a bit daunting for you, why don't you try praying through play! You can even do this as a family! Because if praying is talking to God, and he is always with us, then we can pray anytime, including whilst we're playing. In our sheet for the week that we send out to our church families (do get in touch with me at helen@stalkmundsduffield.co.uk if you would like a copy of any of these, they're free to anyone!) we offered lots of fun ways to get praying creatively, including through drawing, playing Jenga, using playdoh or Lego, baking, singing songs and much more.



If this has sparked your interest in prayer, you can find our children's talks on each of these topics on our YouTube channel, near the beginning of each morning service video throughout the summer.

I hope that you, dear reader, may be encouraged to get talking to God, the father who loves his children, and enjoy praying more and more over the next few weeks.

With love, **Carys and Helen**



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