

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024:** Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

*For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or some other suitable time.*



**StF 748 H&P 817 'Glorious things of thee are spoken'** by John Newton (1725 – 1807)

### Opening Prayer

Think of the past week and say both 'thank you' and 'sorry' to our loving God.

**Psalm set for today:** Psalm 48

### To think about

Pick out four words or phrases that strike you from today's psalm and ponder on them.

**StF 50 MP 199 'Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise'** by Steve McEwan

**Gospel Reading set for today:** Mark 6 v 1 – 13

**StF 404 'God's spirit is in my heart'** by Alan T Dale (v 1 & chorus) Hubert Richards (v 2 – 4)

**Epistle reading set for today:** 2 Corinthians 12 v 1 – 10

### Message from a Circuit Friend

Often we forget that the Bible only gives us snapshots of events not the complete story. Imagine how many other things Jesus said and did that we know nothing about (John 21 v 25).

To understand Paul's dealings with the rather troublesome church at Corinth we need to look for clues especially in 2 Corinthians and combine them with Acts 18 which gives a clearer picture. False apostles and teachers with a sense of their own importance had taken a hold in the Corinthian church and were belittling the ministry and teaching of Paul. His appearance and oratory were considered unimpressive (2 Cor 10 v 10). Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to counteract them. Today's passage gives us two intriguing insights into Paul's life. Paul is not keen to boast of his achievements (unlike others) as he feels everything he has achieved is Jesus working through him not from his own abilities. None the less he wants to explain that he had a special insight into God's plan in his 'out of body' experience. The third heaven was thought of as above the heavens over the earth. A place where God resided. Today we often see the expression 'asking for a friend' on social media when we know it's the writer asking. Paul similarly doesn't want to boast and uses the expression 'I know a man'. After Paul's experience on the road to Damascus in AD 35 he spent 3 'silent' years in Arabia, no doubt praying and working out his 'theology' before we hear of him again at the start of his ministry. Possibly the experience Paul describes happened then or perhaps a little later, but it left a profound lifetime impression on him which strengthened him through his life. Perhaps we can all think of events that have left us with a lasting sense of God's presence. When Paul mentions his 'thorn in the flesh' it shows us his humanity. We can all empathise. Was it a physical or spiritual problem or perhaps the false teachers themselves? Either way Paul had a problem and praying did not remove it. What it did however was bring him to a realisation that it made him turn to God not his own abilities. As it says in v 9 'My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness'. The whole message is summed up in a line from one of my favourite modern worship songs: 'Yet not I but though Christ in me'.

**Glyn Constantine (Local Preacher and member of the Walsingham Heritage Team)**

### Prayers of Intercession

We pray for our world... for the church... for our communities... for our families & friends...

**Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...**

**StF 660 'Called by Christ to be disciples'** by Martin Leckebusch (b 1962)

*(sing to tune of Blaenwern: Love divine, all loves excelling StF 503)*

**May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, and all those we love, this day and always, Amen.**

**Circuit News:** The recording of Rev Jonny's Ordination at Batley Methodist Church is still available on the Methodist website. The YouTube recording of last week's Big Sunday service is still available on the Watton Methodist website. The recording of the live Zoom service is available – ask for the link from Rev Jacqui, Glyn Constantine or Marianne our Administrator.