



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

TRINITY SUNDAY
Sunday 7 June 2020

“The Church building is closed, but the Church family continues”

As you are now all aware, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have announced the suspension of public worship in all Churches. The Government has also announced that all Places of Worship must close.

This means that there will be no more public worship at St Michael’s until further notice.

There is a message from Fr Geoff on the back page.

For your prayers this week:

Racial peace and justice in the US and a resolution of the unrest

People of ethnic minorities affected by coronavirus

Businesses restarting and preparing to do so

School teachers, children, parents and staff

High streets shops across our nation

Decisions on reopening Churches

NHS and Care Home staff

Decisions on reopening cultural and artistic venues

The travel and hospitality industries

The Ill and the Housebound: Especially Christopher Bilson, Janet Chandler, Audrey Dixon, Cynthia Dixon, Claire Dunning, Fr Robert Featherstone, Jemima Hill, Peter Hinchey, Mary Kearns, Keith Levinson, Craig McKay, Lisa Mills, Sylvia Obeng, Dorcas Ochola, Brian Rees, Christina Simon, Adelaide Tonkin, Peter White; and all who care for them

The Departed:

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity:

keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all adversities;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Isaiah 40.12–17, 27–31

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

¹² Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

¹³ Who has directed the spirit of the LORD, or as his counsellor has instructed him?

¹⁴ Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice? Who taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?

¹⁵ Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as dust on the scales; see, he takes up the isles like fine dust.

¹⁶ Lebanon would not provide fuel enough, nor are its animals enough for a burnt-offering.

¹⁷ All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God'?

²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

²⁹ He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.
³⁰ Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;
³¹ but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 13.5, 11–13

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

⁵ Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realise that Jesus Christ is in you? - unless, indeed, you fail to pass the test!
¹¹ Brothers and sisters, put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.
¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.
¹³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

GOSPEL Matthew 28.16–20

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

¹⁶ The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.
¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.
¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Homily

Today is Trinity Sunday, a day on which Vicars traditionally find it hard to preach. Once it has been said that we believe in one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, where do we go from there? This from a priest who was once Vicar of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, Halifax! In essence, I think the idea simply reflects human experience. When have people felt that they have met God? People have often felt they have met God in the Creation, so the understanding of God the Father as Creator. The disciples and early Christians were convinced that they had met God in Jesus, so God the Son, the Redeemer. People felt they had met God when they were filled with the gifts of the Spirit, of love, joy, and peace, so God the Holy Spirit, the Lifegiver. Our faith in the Trinity is not so much about theology as it is about the ways we meet God. Love and prayers, Fr Geoff

A Short Autobiography of Fr Stephen Mepham (Associate Minister at St Michael's)

'He looks like Winston Churchill' – the first words said of me in 1964 in the maternity ward of Southlands Hospital, Shoreham-by-Sea. I grew up in Brighton, well (as the saying goes) 'Hove actually'. My original life plan was to become a lawyer, however, during Sixth Form I felt called to the priesthood. I therefore went on to study Theology at King's College, London. Perhaps one of the most formative experiences of my life was a year spent on the wards of St Christopher's Hospice, Sydenham as an auxiliary nurse before moving on to a year as a parochial pastoral assistant at St Mary's Caterham-on-the-hill and then onto the now defunct Lincoln Theological College. While studying there I sang (and froze) in the Minster choir. Having developed a fondness for the East Midlands I served my title at the magnificent 14th Century parish church in Newark and then moved to our neck of the woods to the tiny daughter church of St Clement's, Turnford in the sprawling parish of Cheshunt. While there the church moved to conventional district status (a sort of half-way house on the way to becoming its own parish). St Clement's was next to a canal and the M25 and I kept this theme running when I moved to St Mary The Virgin, Rickmansworth. While there I also became chaplain to The Royal Masonic School for Girls for a short period to cover a vacancy as this was in the parish. It was here that I caught the teaching bug and decided to move into the world of education. I taught first at St Clement Danes in Chorleywood and then in 2017 moved to John Lyon, Harrow-on-the-Hill. There I am Assistant Head of Sixth Form, Head of Higher Education and Head of Religious Studies and Philosophy (a lot of jobs!). The greatest challenge and achievement of recent years (I guess) has been the completion of an MA in Philosophy.

We (my wife Fiona and son James) moved to Watford 10 years ago and have been members of St Michael's for several years – we are very happy here. Over the last couple of years, I have felt called to resume active priestly ministry and am delighted to have found a home at St Michael's and am very grateful for the welcome that I have received. I also have two other children, Harriet at Birmingham University studying History and Barney who has just finished his GCSEs. It's been an 'interesting' beginning to the resumption of public priestly ministry and I look forward to seeing a lot more of you (literally) in, God willing, the not too distant future. Stay safe and God bless. Stephen