



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

TRINITY 6
Sunday 19 July 2020

Welcome back to St Michael's. At 9.30am there is a eucharist with congregation in Church, music but no singing. There will be a limit of 40 people, and hygiene, social distancing, and track and trace will be in place, but most importantly, we are here!

The service will also be live-streamed on the YouTube channel "Geoffrey Calvert" for those who are unable to attend physically.

Following the service, St Michael's will remain open for private prayer until 12.00 noon.

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

For your prayers this week:

The Church: The Parish of All Saints Hertford in our Diocese.
Anglican Christians in the Philippines.

The Nippon Sei Ko Kai, the Anglican Church in Japan.

The World: The people of Colombia on their nation's Independence Day.
South American nations fighting high levels of COVID-19.
Employees restarting work, and their businesses.

The Community and Parish: Employees of John Lewis and Debenhams in
Watford..

Businesses reopening in Watford.

Watford Churches reopening.

The Ill and the Housebound: Especially Lorna Barson, 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, Catherine Stone,
Adelaide Tonkin, Peter White; and all who care for them.

The Departed:

Collect

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding:

pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; 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 Genesis 28.10–19a

A reading from the book of Genesis.

- ¹⁰ Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran.
¹¹ He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place.
¹² And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.
¹³ And the LORD stood beside him and said, 'I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring;
¹⁴ and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring.
¹⁵ Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.'
¹⁶ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the LORD is in this place – and I did not know it!'
¹⁷ And he was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'
¹⁸ So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.
¹⁹ He called that place Bethel.

SECOND READING Romans 8.12–25

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

- ¹² Brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh –
¹³ for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.
¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!'
¹⁶ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
¹⁷ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

18 I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the
glory about to be revealed to us.
19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God;
20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one
who subjected it, in hope
21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the
freedom of the glory of the children of God.
22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now;
23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan
inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.
24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for
what is seen?
25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

GOSPEL Matthew 13.24–30, 36–43

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

24 Jesus put before the crowd another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared
to someone who sowed good seed in his field;
25 but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat,
and then went away.
26 So when the plants came up and bore grain then the weeds appeared as well.
27 And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good
seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?"
28 He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us
to go and gather them?"
29 But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with
them.
30 Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the
reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the
wheat into my barn."
36 Then Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him,
saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.'
37 He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man;
38 the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds
are the children of the evil one,
39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the
reapers are angels.
40 Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the
age.
41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of
sin and all evildoers,
42 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and
gnashing of teeth.
43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone
with ears listen!'

Homily

Today's Gospel is the "scary" one of the parables to do with sowing seeds. This parable speaks to that experience of puzzlement we often have when we see that people who live lives of wickedness seem to make good money out of it, while good people sometimes struggle. It is as though God is not interested. God is interested, but he is interested in our souls, in our growth as real and authentic human beings. The kind of life that is nurtured by faith, hope and charity is real and eternal life, whereas the life that is nurtured by wickedness is essentially fake and leads nowhere.

Love and prayers
Fr Geoff

Apologies to those who logged in to the live stream last Sunday, and got 30 minutes of sound but a frozen picture of an empty Church! I hope to do better this week!

St Michael's Church is now open for private prayer on Wednesdays, 10.00am – 12.00 noon, and Sundays 10.45am – 12.15pm. Hygiene and social distancing procedures are in operation for your protection. All very welcome.

HISTORIC CHURCHES BIKE & HIKE 2020

The Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trustees have told me that this year's event will take place on Saturday 12 September, but in modified form as some churches may not be open. However, St Michael's should be able to open on that day for the event.

At this stage, I should like to know if there is anyone who wishes to cycle or hike or use any other form of transport to visit churches and chapels. I have yet to receive sponsorship forms of any kind.

I shall write further in due course. In the meantime, I hope and pray that all of you are well.

Stay safe
Robert Bilson

If you would like to donate to St Michael's during the pandemic, there is a JustGiving page at:
<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/stmichaelandallangels>