



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT 15 November 2020

During lockdown, our Services at 9.30am on Sundays, and 10.00am on Thursdays, will still take place, livestreamed on our YouTube channel “St Michaels Church Watford”, but the Church will not be open for a congregation to attend in person.

The Church will be open for private prayer on Sundays from 10.45am – 12.00noon and on Wednesdays from 10.00am – 12.00noon. Food Bank will still be operating on Wednesday mornings. We meet for a Zoom Coffee Morning on Saturdays at 11.00am (contact us for the link), and other Zoom meetings will take place and will be advertised, including weekly Morning Prayer and an Advent Course.

We may be locked down, but we are still a Church family, called together in prayer, worship and loving fellowship

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

For your prayers this week:

The Church: The Parish of Knebworth in our Diocese.
The Church of Ceylon.

The work of “Christians against Poverty”.

The World: Monday 16th – International Day for Tolerance.

Thursday 19th – World Toilet Day – pray for hygienic provision across the world.

Friday 20th – World Children’s Day – pray that children are fed, educated and protected

The Community and Parish: Places of worship in Watford.

Faith Leaders in Watford.

People living with dementia in our area.

The Ill and the Housebound: Especially Christopher Bilson, Janet Chandler, Audrey Dixon, Cynthia Dixon, Claire Dunning, Fr Robert Featherstone, Jemima Hill, Blossom Hutchinson, 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

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:
grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure;
that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom;
where he is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Zephaniah 1.7, 12–18

A reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah.

- 7 Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests.
- 12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will he do harm.'
- 13 Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.
- 14 The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there.
- 15 That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.
- 17 I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the LORD, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.
- 18 Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

SECOND READING I Thessalonians 5.1–11

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

- 1 Concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you.
- 2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.
- 3 When they say, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape!
- 4 But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief;
- 5 for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.

6 So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober;
7 for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night.
8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and
love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.
9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord
Jesus Christ,
10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him.
11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

GOSPEL Matthew 25.14–30

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

Jesus said to his disciples,

14 'The kingdom of heaven is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and
entrusted his property to them;
15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his
ability. Then he went away.
16 The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and
made five more talents.
17 In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents.
18 But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and
hid his master's money.
19 After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.
20 Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more
talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more
talents."
21 His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been
trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of
your master."
22 And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over
to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents."
23 His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been
trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of
your master."
24 Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I
knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where
you did not scatter seed;
25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is
yours."
26 But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap
where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter?
27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would
have received what was my own with interest.
28 So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents.
29 For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but
from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.
30 As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be
weeping and gnashing of teeth."'

HOMILY

Today is the last day of Interfaith Week 2020. I have been an active member of Watford Interfaith Association since I came to St Michael's, and took the chair for 4 years. Interfaith work recognises that we are different, and we don't try to water down our beliefs to fit in with others. Often, talking with people of other faiths can strengthen our own, not weaken it. We understand our own faith better through explaining it to others. There are certain commonalities and many differences between the faiths. Each of the mainstream faiths, however, stresses the need to do good in the world, and to make a positive difference to the existence of all human beings, not just their own adherents. We should remember such things as Watford Interfaith Association when people tell us that religion causes hatred and warfare.

Love and prayers *Fr Geoff*

WE AT WATFORD AND THREE RIVERS REFUGEE PARTNERSHIP are always so very grateful for the donations SMAA church gives for our clients - from under the "Angel Tree". This year we are packing our Christmas boxes on 4th and 5th December so we are hoping to collect donations during the month of November. My latest count makes it 117 households whom we are supporting: of those 76 are families with children, 27 are single men and 14 are single women. If you are at all able to donate then, to "play safe" I would suggest concentrating on consumables such as toiletries, including children's soaps etc, crayons and felt tips for all sizes, playdo, bubbles, dot-to-dot etc and colouring books, sticker books, sleepwear and painting aprons, reading books for all ages, and avoiding large toys or games/puzzles involving lots of small parts (many of our families have to keep moving home and live in cramped conditions). Truly grateful for whatever you can give. *Sue Ellison*

WATFORD INTERFAITH ASSOCIATION'S INTERFAITH PILGRIMAGE

takes place this Sunday at 4.00pm. This year it is taking place online, with videos from many places of worship, including St Michael's! Zoom Link available from the Watford Interfaith Association Facebook page or from Fr Geoff. This is a wonderful opportunity to experience other places of worship, even if virtually, and it has enabled many more places to be part of the pilgrimage this year.

BIKE & HIKE 2020: For information, I have sent to the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust a cheque for £240.00, this being the total raised by the congregation of St Michael's. May I repeat my thanks to all who contributed.

In due course, the Trust will donate £120.00 to St Michael's. Thanks again to those who qualify, for their willingness to Gift Aid their contributions.

Hopefully, the 2021 Bike & Hike will be back to normal when churches and chapels will be open, with a better opportunity for cycling and hiking sponsorship.

I hope and pray you all remain safe and well. *Robert Bilson*

OUR CHRISTMAS DINNER AT WEST HERTS COLLEGE on 1st December is unfortunately now cancelled due to lockdown.

Website: <http://www.stmichaels-watford.org.uk>
St Michael and All Angels PCC is a Registered Charity No 1132010