



# THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

*St Michael and All Angels*

Watford

**ADVENT SUNDAY**  
**29 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.

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## **For your prayers this week:**

**The Church:** The Parish of St Matthew Oxhey in our Diocese.  
The Lusitanian Church of Portugal.

Churches planning their reopening after lockdown.

**The World:** The people of Scotland on St Andrews Day (Monday).

All AIDS sufferers on World AIDS day (Tuesday).

An end to discrimination against people with disabilities (Thursday).

**The Community and Parish:** Our plans for restarting public worship.

The people of Watford as we move into new tiered restrictions.

Businesses reopening in Watford.

**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:**

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**Collect**

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;  
that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal;  
through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**FIRST READING Isaiah 64.1–9**

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

- <sup>1</sup> O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence –  
<sup>2</sup> as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil – to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
<sup>3</sup> When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
<sup>4</sup> From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.  
<sup>5</sup> You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
<sup>6</sup> We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
<sup>7</sup> There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.  
<sup>8</sup> Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.  
<sup>9</sup> Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity for ever. Now consider, we are all your people.

**SECOND READING I Corinthians 1.3–9**

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

My brothers and sisters:

- <sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has  
5 been given you in Christ Jesus,  
6 for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of  
7 every kind –  
8 just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you –  
9 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of  
10 our Lord Jesus Christ.  
11 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the  
12 day of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
13 God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus  
14 Christ our Lord.

## **GOSPEL Mark 13.24–37**

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

Jesus said to his disciples:

24 'In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will  
25 not give its light,  
26 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be  
27 shaken.  
28 Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and  
29 glory.  
30 Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from  
31 the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.  
32 From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and  
33 puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.  
34 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the  
35 very gates.  
36 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have  
37 taken place.  
38 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.  
39 But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the  
40 Son, but only the Father.  
41 Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.  
42 It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in  
43 charge, each with his work and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.  
44 Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house  
45 will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn,  
46 or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly.  
47 And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

## HOMILY

Advent is particularly poignant this year. Already we have had to do a lot of waiting – waiting for a vaccine, waiting for the latest restrictions to be announced, waiting for the ability to do so many of the things we love. Perhaps it gives us a new slant on the time of waiting which the Church encourages us to enter into during Advent. Jesus comes to us as past, present and future. He has already come, at the first Christmas, he comes to us now in our worship and prayers, he will come again to heal and right wrongs. We can draw on his strength to strengthen us as we look for a world that is not just a replay of what we have had in the past, but a better place.

Love and prayers *Fr Geoff*

St Michael's Church is now open for private prayer on Wednesdays, 10.00am – 12.00 noon, and Sundays 10.45am – 12 noon. Hygiene and social distancing procedures are in operation for your protection. All very welcome.

There will be a series of Advent Reflections and Discussions on four Thursday Evenings beginning on 26th November. They will be using the Advent Course from St Martin in the Fields, which uses paintings to guide reflections on the themes of Advent, and will take place on Zoom. Please let me know if you would like to join, and I will send the link.

**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>

**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*

**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