



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

EPIPHANY
3 January 2021

CHURCH OPEN FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL. At 9.30am there is a eucharist with congregation in Church, music but no singing. Tier 4 restrictions indicate no interacting with anyone outside your household whilst in the Church.

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 our YouTube channel "St Michaels Church Watford" for those who are unable to attend physically. Following the service, St Michael's will remain open for private prayer until 12.00noon.

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

For your prayers this week:

The Church: The Bishops of St Albans, Bedford and Hertford.
Church leaders giving New Year Messages.
The Church's mission to the world in 2021.

The World: World Peace in 2021.
The Coronavirus Vaccination programme.
Access for the poorest to vaccination.

The Community and Parish: Our life as a Church family in 2021.
All those facing separation from loved ones/
Encouragement and hopefulness for all of us.

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

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth:
mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face;
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 60.1–6

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

- ¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
- ² For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.
- ³ Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
- ⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.
- ⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
- ⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

SECOND READING Ephesians 3.1–12

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

- ¹ I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles –
- ² for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you,
- ³ and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words,
- ⁴ a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ.
- ⁵ In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:
- ⁶ that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

7 Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was
given me by the working of his power.
8 Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to
the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ,
9 and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God
who created all things;
10 so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be
made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.
11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ
Jesus our Lord,
12 in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

GOSPEL Matthew 2.1-12

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

1 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men
from the East came to Jerusalem, asking,
2 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star
at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.'
3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him;
4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of
them where the Messiah was to be born.
5 They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:
6 "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers
of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel."
7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time
when the star had appeared.
8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child;
and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him
homage.'
9 When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the
star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child
was.
10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.
11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt
down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him
gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own
country by another road.

HOMILY

At most New Years, we enter January not knowing what we will face. This year we know more. The first few months are going to be hard, and we are not looking forward to them. The snowdrops will still come out, the daffodils will still come up, the blossom will appear on the trees, buds will still appear on branches, and Christ will be risen at Easter time. The signs of hope and new life are there in the world God has given us, if we only have eyes to see. As always, we look forward in hope to new life, only this year more so rather than less.

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.

If you would like to donate to St Michael's during the pandemic, there is also a JustGiving page at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/stmichaelandallangels>