



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

ADVENT 3

Sunday 17 December 2023

We are now able to receive the wine at communion. There will be a chalice on your left for those who wish to receive by drinking, and on your right for those who wish to receive by dipping their wafer in the wine. You are also welcome to just receive the bread.

Welcome to our service today.

Hymns for Sunday are: 34 On Jordan's Bank, 24 Come, thou long expected Jesus, 31 Lo, he comes, 58 Long ago, prophets knew.

For your prayers this week:

The Church: The Parish of North Mymms in our Diocese
The Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea
Church Schools.

The World: The people of Israel and Gaza
Achievement of climate change aspirations set at COP28
The National Health Service under winter pressure.

The Community and Parish: Laurance Haines School
Our visitors at Christmas time
All our families.

The Ill and the Housebound: Especially Jean Alexander, Violet Allen-Smith, Julie Alvarez, Janet Chandler, Jemima Hill, Owen Hutchinson, Lisa Mills, Brian O'Riordan, Valerie O'Riordan, Josephine Stadden, Catherine Stone, Fay Storey, Adelaide Tonkin, and all who care for them.

We give thanks that all the surgery Kristine has had has been successful.

The Departed:

Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Isaiah 61.1–4, 8–11

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The servant of the LORD said:

- ¹ The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;
- ² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;
- ³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
- ⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.
- ⁸ For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
- ⁹ Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
- ¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
- ¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

SECOND READING I Thessalonians 5.16–24

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

- My brothers and sisters,
16 Rejoice always,
17 pray without ceasing,
18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
19 Do not quench the Spirit.
20 Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything;
21 hold fast to what is good;
22 abstain from every form of evil.
23 May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
24 The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

GOSPEL John 1.6–8, 19–28

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

- 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.
8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.
19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’
20 He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, ‘I am not the Messiah.’
21 And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’
22 Then they said to him, ‘Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’
23 He said, ‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord,”’ as the prophet Isaiah said.
24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.
25 They asked him, ‘Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?’
26 John answered them, ‘I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know,
27 the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.’
28 This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Our service today is available to attend in person
or via livestream on our YouTube channel
“St Michael’s Church Watford”

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8GTx0MfiICGmcDUkXTGFSw>

The 10.00am Eucharist on Thursdays is also available to attend in person, and livestreamed.

The Church will be open for tea and coffee on Wednesday mornings from 10.00am – 12.00 noon.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

17 December, 6pm-7.30pm, Carol Service with mulled wine and mince pies.

24 December, 9.30am, Sung Eucharist, Advent 4.

24 December, 4pm, Crib Service – all ages welcome

24 December, **9.30pm**, Midnight in Bethlehem (please note time)

25 December, Christmas Day, 9.30am, Carols round the Crib with Communion.

Carol Service Tonight at 6pm with mulled wine and mince pies.

Donations of mince pies would be very welcome.

Parish Giving Scheme (PGS)

St Michael's joined the Parish Giving Scheme three years ago and it has been very successful in making donations easier to handle administratively. We would encourage all members of the congregation who are kind enough to make regular donations to church funds to consider signing up. You will find a leaflet and application form on the table by the Parish Information noticeboard or you can obtain a digital copy from simon.fowle@ntlworld.com. or you can talk to a member of the PCC for help.

PGS is a direct debit based system which is much easier and more efficient for us to process than standing orders and cash. But it is entirely optional and all forms of donation are more than welcome.

At the same time, if you can see your way to including SMAAA in your will, as an expression of gratitude and thanksgiving towards God, that would be deeply appreciated. If you would like further information and guidance, in confidence, Fr Geoff and the churchwardens will be able to help. Every gift that is left to our church can make a lasting difference.

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