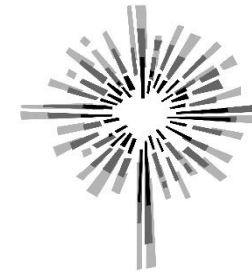


NOTICES

PLEASE NOTE: The Parish Office will be **closed** for Christmas for general and hall booking enquiries for an extended period **from 12.00 p.m. on Thursday 21st December until 9.00 a.m. on Monday, 8th January 2024.** The clergy are still working however, so for any pastoral parish business please contact Jonny on vicar@parishofstmichaels.org.uk and Fr John on johnlbannister@gmail.com



St Michael with St Mary

Christmas Retiring Collections at St Michael's Church will support:

Carol Service: 17th December

Children of Peace: Conflict resolution among children and young people in Israel and the Palestinian territories (Registered Charity Number 1112301)

Crib Service: 24th December

Keech Hospice Care: Local hospice care for children (Registered Charity Number 1035089)

Midnight /Christmas Day: 24th/ 25th December (Split 50/50)

Living Room: Addiction Support (Registered Charity Number: 1080634)

Centre 33: Homelessness Support in St Albans (Registered Charity Number: 1146438)

St Michael's Tots (previously Tiny Tots) is going to restart in January in the same Tuesday morning slot (9.30-11am). We're having a **spring clean** of all the toys and equipment on the **9th January**, with the **grand re-launch on the 16th**. If you would like to help by joining the coffee rota for this on even an occasional basis, send Jonny an email, on vicar@parishofstmichaels.org.uk. Do also please spread the word about our restart and pray that it serves well as a resource and support for the very young people of this parish and their carers.

Sacrament and sustenance. Each Wednesday at 10.30 we continue to celebrate a mid-week Eucharist. This now has a hymn, a homily and is followed by tea, coffee, biscuits and lots of chat. If you don't already, do come and join us!

Services this week

All services take place at St Michael's unless otherwise stated.

Sunday, 17th December 2023: Third Sunday of Advent

8.00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
9.30 a.m.	Parish Eucharist
4.00 p.m.	Lessons and Carols
6.00 p.m.	Evensong (St Mary's)

Wednesday, 20th December

10.30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
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Sunday, 24th December: Christmas Eve

8.00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist - <i>please note there will be no 8.00 a.m. service on Christmas Day</i>
9.30 a.m.	Parish Eucharist
11.30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist <i>Fosse House</i>
4.00 p.m.	Crib Service - <i>dress up as a Nativity character and relive the story of Christmas</i>
6.00 p.m.	Evensong (St Mary's)
11.00 p.m.	Midnight Mass

Contact Information:

Vicar: The Rev'd Jonny Lloyd: vicar@parishofstmichaels.org.uk
Parish Office: Georgie Ray: admin@parishofstmichaels.org.uk
Telephone: 01727 835037 Website: www.stmichaels-parishchurch.org.uk

Welcome to our worship this morning. Today Junior Church tells the story of Christmas in the nativity play. After each act we will all sing some verses of carols which are found in this notice sheet. The children's corner contains themed-worksheets, books and toys if you'd like to keep little people busy- but there is no obligation to use it! If you need privacy (e.g. nappy change) the Tower Room is available and has sound relay of the service.

Toilets are available in the Parish Centre at the east end of the churchyard; please see a steward for access. All are welcome to stay for **refreshments** after the service in the Parish Centre. If you are new, we would love to meet you!

Collect

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son:
give us courage to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice,
and to suffer for the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord

Carols during the nativity play

The angel Gabriel from heaven came, his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame; "All hail," said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary, most highly favoured lady." Gloria!	"For lo! a blessed mother thou shalt be, All generations laud and honour thee, Thy Son shall be Immanuel by seers foretold, Most highly favoured lady," Gloria!
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<i>(children only)</i> Away in a manger, no crib for a bed The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.	<i>(All)</i> The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes. I love you, Lord Jesus, Look down from the sky And stay by my side until morning is nigh.
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While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground, the angel of the Lord come down, and glory shone around.	'Fear not,' said he (for mighty dread had seized their troubled mind); 'glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and all mankind.'
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Hark! The herald-angels sing "Glory to the newborn king; Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled" Joyful all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies With th'angelic host proclaim "Christ is born in Bethlehem" Hark! The herald-angels sing "Glory to the new-born king"	Christ, by highest heaven adored Christ, the everlasting Lord, Late in time behold Him come Offspring of a Virgin's womb: Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity Pleased as man with man to dwell Jesus, our Emmanuel Hark! The herald-angels sing "Glory to the newborn King"
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Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

Gospel Reading: John 1: 6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 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. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Prayer Over the Gifts

Lord, may the gift we offer in faith and love be a continual sacrifice in your honour and truly become our eucharist and our salvation. Amen.

Please remember in your prayers:

- all who are preparing their homes for visitors
- our vocation to follow John the Baptist in being heralds for Jesus Christ
- those who are **ill**, including: Jacqui Follett, Debbie Greenwood, Helen Huson, Rachael Hymas, Ingrid Kluckova, Sam Mahoney, Alison Munro, John Polhill, Alice Reardon, Pat Stroud, Cora Marie Varshney
- the recently departed, including Jo Barnes, Suzanne Cavanagh, Mark Jefferson, and those who mourn them
- this week the diocese asks us to pray for: *all Church Schools*