

# Advent at St Michaels



When I was at primary school we used to chant in the queue for lunch this ditty: *'Why are we waiting? We are suffocating'*. Apart from being exceptionally rude to the catering staff, it did also express our genuine hunger! When one reads the prophetic books of the Old Testament, one gets this same sense of both waiting and hunger. There is a feeling of oppression that needs release, of sin that needs forgiveness, and of hope that needs fulfilment. At the same time, there is a real hunger and desire for salvation embodied in a person called the Messiah, whose coming was long expected.

The prophets are a central aspect of Advent because they express that longing, hunger and desire for salvation that we share as we prepare for Christmas. However, they also speak of some kind of future and ultimate completion to our longing, whether we call that the Second Coming, the Last Judgement, or 'meeting our Maker' at the end of our lives.

This Advent our worship, sermons, reading and prayers focus on the prophets, and particularly the Major Prophets of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Isaiah, all of whom have something to say to us in this season about our individual and corporate waiting for Christ. It is their words that shape the background to the story we will celebrate on December 25th and beyond. This Advent I pray that the prophets of old may increase your longing, hope and joy for the coming of Christ.

*Father Stephen*

# Advent Reading

## Advent Scripture

The passages below are selected from the prophets with particular reference to the coming of a Messiah and the nature of prophecy itself. Try reading these passage each week during Advent as part of your own prayer and preparation for Christmas.

**Week 1:** Jeremiah 33.14-6, Ezekiel 2.1-2 with 3.1-4

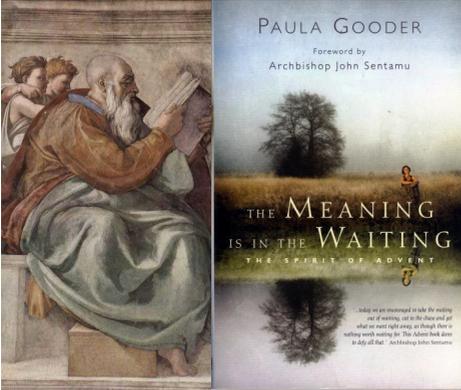
**Week 2:** Isaiah 2.1-5, 11.1-10, 35.1-10

**Week 3:** Daniel 7.9-14, Zephaniah 3.14-end, Micah 5.2-5

**Week 4:** Malachi 3.1-4, Mark 1.2-8

## Advent Book

Theologian Paula Gooder explores the significance of waiting (something we are not good at in our modern culture), focusing particularly on the prophets who waited for judgement, and John the Baptist waiting in the wilderness. It offers a profound meditation on the spirituality of waiting as the active doing of nothing which brings us closer to God. Copies of the book are available after church on Sundays and from the Parish Office (£10).



## Advent Sermons

On each Sunday our preachers will focus on one of the Major Prophets and their relevance to the season of Advent.

### Advent 1 (2nd December): Jeremiah

Father Dan Trott, Curate, St John's, Upper Norwood.

### Advent 2 (9th December): Isaiah

Fr Matthew Knox, Chaplain, St Paul's School, Barnes.

*Today we are joined by members of St Paul's Christian Union.*

### Advent 3 (16th December): Daniel

Father Justin White, Chaplain, Winchester College.

### Advent 4 (18th December): Ezekiel

Father Stephen, Vicar.



# Advent Worship

During Advent, as well as our Sunday services, there are some special services and events that pick up on the spirituality of the season.

## **Advent Carols      Sunday 2nd December, 4.00pm**

This beautiful service of poetry, choral anthems, hymns and scripture readings starts off the Advent season. It is attended and organised by members of all the churches in Barnes, and is followed by refreshments in the Community Centre.

*Please note the new and earlier time.*

## **Daily Prayer**

Advent is a time of watching and waiting as we pray and prepare for the coming of Christ. You are invited to join in with the regular prayer that takes place every day in church.

## **Morning Prayer**

Every day at 9am (except Friday). A short service (lasting c.20 mins) and a wonderful way to begin the day in peace and contemplation.

## **Mass during the Week**

Wednesday at 12 Noon (followed by lunch) and on Saturday at 9.30am (followed by coffee).

## **Open Church**

Quiet and waiting are important aspects of the spirituality of Advent. We can do this anywhere but you might find it helpful to spend time in the peace and quiet of the church, which is normally open every day (except Friday) from 8.45am until about 6pm.



## **Advent Prayer**

### **An Advent Collect to pray every day:**

Almighty God, who in many and various ways spoke to your chosen people by the prophets, and has given us in your Son the fulfilment of the hope of Israel; hasten we pray, the coming of that day when all things shall be subject to his just and gentle rule; who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Prompt me, God;/But not yet. When I speak,/Though it be you who speak/Through me, something is lost./The meaning is in the waiting.

R. S. Thomas





‘The days are surely coming says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the House of Israel, and the House of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.’

*Jeremiah 33.14-15*

*The image on the front cover is a painting of the prophet Isaiah by Marc Chagall.*

*The image on the back cover is an early Christian image of the prophet Daniel.*

## **The Parish Office**

(In the Vestry at church)

c/o The Vicarage, 39 Elm Bank Gardens

London SW13 0NX

020 8876 5230

[admin@stmichaelbarnes.org](mailto:admin@stmichaelbarnes.org)