

Advent 2020

Saint Michael & All Angels



LITURGY OF THE ORDINARY

We've all been spending a lot more time at home this year and probably will be for a little while to come. The Advent themes of watching and waiting in hope feel particularly resonant as we all wait for some kind of salvation from the predicament of pandemic. This time has been very difficult for many of us, but it has also had some surprising and even positive consequences. One of these has been a return to praying at home whether on our own or with our families. With church services unable to take place for long periods, or households self-isolating, Saint Michael's has been livestreaming worship and it has been a joy to discover how much comfort these services have meant to so many people, even if they can't replace being together in the church itself.

But domestic prayer is about more than watching services online. There's been a renewal of the whole concept of praying at home as an expression of Christian faith. There's an old expression, 'the family that prays together, stays together'. That's not always true, but there's something to be said for the idea of expressing our faith in a way that brings us both closer to God and to each other. I am reminded of the famous poem by George Herbert which many of us know as the hymn 'Teach me my God and king' in which the author seeks to make the most ordinary of daily tasks an opportunity to serve and encounter God when he says 'who sweeps a room as for thy laws/Makes that and the action fine.'

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Advent Reading

Advent Reading

This year we are recommending two Advent books for different purposes and needs:

‘Liturgy of the Ordinary: sacred practices in everyday life’ by the American priest Tish Warren is our main book and the focus of our Advent sermons and book groups. The chapters of the book reflect the ordinary patterns of our daily lives from rising in the morning to going to sleep at night, and seeks to connect our domestic lives with the liturgy of the Church so that we can discover the sacred in the secular. Accessible and practical, each chapter also suggests a spiritual practice that might help us to pray at home whether on our own or with others.

Our other Advent book is a collection of Bible readings and thought-provoking reflections and questions prepared by the Irish Jesuits. **‘Sacred Space: Advent and Christmas’** also seeks to help us pray at home and might particularly suit those who want to spend time in quiet meditation on their own.

Both books are available to order online, but the Parish Office is very happy to order books on your behalf. Sections of ‘Liturgy of the Ordinary’ relevant to each week’s sermon will be sent out in advance for reading, with some hard copies available in church.



Advent Sermons

This year we keep our Advent sermons ‘in house’, whether taking place in church or not, all services are live-streamed. Each sermon will focus on a chapter of the book ‘Liturgy of the Ordinary’, connecting what we do in church with an aspect of daily life.

Advent 1 (29th November)

Fr Stephen on ch.2 ‘Making the bed’ and how our morning rituals on waking reflect other rituals of our lives such as the liturgy of the Church.

Advent 2 (6th December)

Mthr Judith reflects on ch.3 ‘Brushing Teeth’ about living in the body and ch.10 ‘Drinking tea’ on savouring and sanctuary.

Advent 3 (13th December)

Fr Martin on ch.9 ‘Calling a Friend’ on being called into community and ministry.

Advent 4 (20th December)

Fr Stephen on ch.7 ‘Blessing and Sending’ about the ubiquitous and often challenging use of online communication such as emails and social media and the end of Mass when we are sent out to be a blessing to the world.

Advent Worship and Prayer

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 29th November, 4.00pm

The Advent Service moves online in a different format as a short service of Advent Evening Prayer. At a time when we are unable to worship in church and feel somewhat isolated, it is perhaps even more important to join together with Christians from across Barnes to express and share our hope in the coming of Christ. Please consider joining this service, which includes some music pre-recorded by St Michael's Choir.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88580888610>

Meeting ID: 885 8088 8610

Daily Prayer

At the time of going to press public worship in church is suspended and services have moved online. You can find out how to access these below but we hope that some of these restrictions might be lifted at some point during Advent.

Morning Prayer on 'Zoom'. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88998801204>

Every day at 9am (except Friday). A short service (lasting about 20 mins).

Mass during the Week livestreamed on You Tube and Facebook, follow links below. Wednesday 12 Noon. and Saturday at 9.30am.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTExOrxD97ng8MF8LKSg9CQ>

<https://www.facebook.com/saintmichaelbarnes/videos>

Open Church

Quiet and waiting are important aspects of the spirituality of Advent. 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 9.30am until about 6.30pm. Currently, the church is also briefly closed when services are taking place (see above for times).

Confessions may be heard by appointment at any time during December.



**‘Teach me my God and King/In all things Thee to see/And what
I do in anything/to do it as for Thee.’**

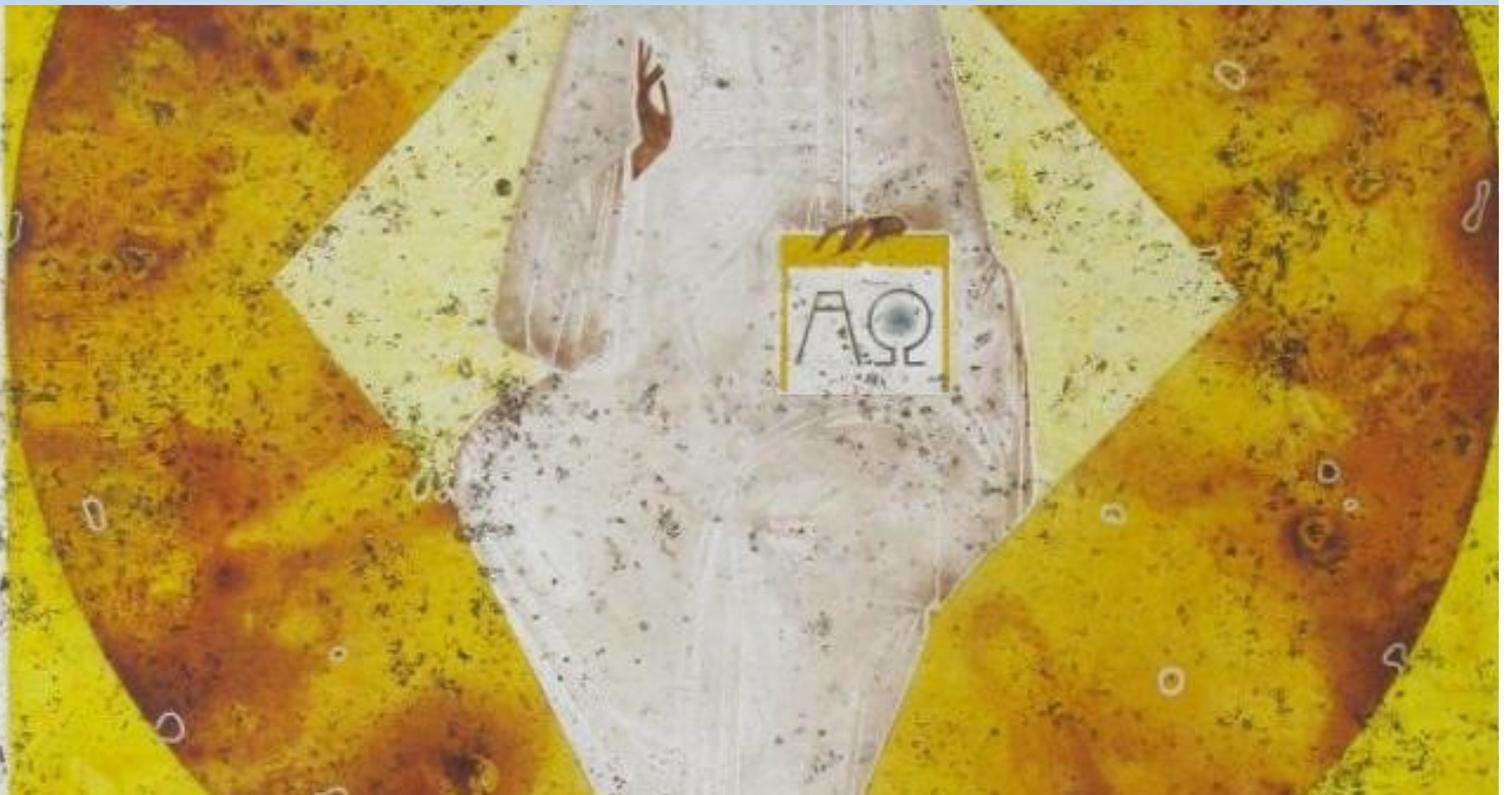
The Elixir, George Herbert

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Our Advent theme picks up on this idea of prayer and spirituality at home. Our sermons, books and discussion groups seek to help us connect our faith with the daily practice of living, to see the sacred in the secular and the secular in the sacred. After all, the Christian faith is the most radically domestic of faiths. We speak of a God who was born into a human family, and lived in a home in Nazareth, and it was in such a setting that the divine life of God became manifest in the person of Jesus Christ.

This Advent, as we wait with longing for release from corona virus, and seek the hope that Christmas brings into the world, let our homes become places of prayer and worship. Let this intimate place of our dwelling reflect the Advent preparation of our hearts as a dwelling place for the Lord when he comes.

Father Stephen, Vicar



Advent Book Groups

Would you like to discuss and reflect on the Advent reading with others? Please consider hosting or taking part in a book group. These will probably take place online via 'Zoom'. To express an interest please email the Parish Office using the details below.

The Parish Office

(In the Vestry at church)

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