

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS

70 Sycamore Road, Amersham, HP6 5DR
01494 - 726680

Thursday 19 December
Nine Lessons & Carols - 7pm

Saturday 21 December
Messy Church - 11.30am-1pm

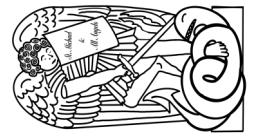
Sunday 22 December
Advent 4 - 8.30am & 10am

Tuesday 24 December
Family Crib Service - 4pm
Sung Christmas Mass - 8pm
(8pm includes choir & incense)

Wednesday 25 December
Christmas Day - 8.30am & 10am

5 January
Epiphany - 8.30 & 10am

All Welcome



ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS — Parish Church of Amersham on the Hill

DEC '24/JAN '25

NEWSLETTER



Who's Who at St. Michael & All Angels

70 Sycamore Road
Amersham HP6 5DR

Church Office: 01494 726680

Office@stmichaelsamersham.org.uk

www.stmichaelsamersham.org.uk

(10 am—1 pm Monday—Wednesday & Friday)



Ministry Team

Vicar

The Revd. Debbie Oades

revdebbieoades@gmail.com



Associate Priest

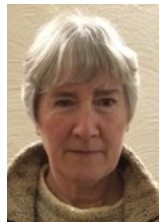
Fr. Peter Binns

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Licensed Lay Minister

Katherine Hyde

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Church Administrator

Hazel Miller

office@stmichaelsamersham.org.uk

Churchwardens

Roger Leslie

rogerleslie25@gmail.com



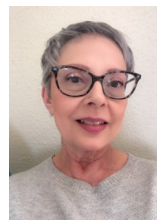
Roland Gillott.

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Safeguarding Officer

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Communications Officer

Rebecca Olsen

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"Does anyone have a light, please?"

Downing Street has announced that the Revd Canon Mary Gregory has been nominated as the next Bishop of Reading and the Revd Canon Dave Bull has been nominated as the next Bishop of Buckingham.

Mary is currently Canon for Reconciliation and the Arts at Coventry Cathedral. Dave is Team Rector of Marlow and Area Dean of Wycombe.

Full details of both candidates can be found on https://www.oxford.anglican.org/news/bishop-of-buckingham-and-bishop-of-reading-announced.php?utm_source=Diocese+of+Oxford+Mailing+Lists&utm_campaign=6005b0b2ab-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_06_07_04_41_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5e6b832234-6005b0b2ab-339828905.

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St Michael's Vision Statement

As a Christian community, we seek to engage with the world around us and to be a place of welcome and acceptance for all on a journey to God – believers, doubters and those who are seeking.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Vicar, PCC or the official policy of St. Michael's Church.

The Newsletter is published monthly (with the exception of January and August).

Please email material for inclusion in the next issue to communications@stmichaelsamersham.org.uk, for the attention of Rebecca, by 23 January 2025.

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Angels are not just for Christmas!

*Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.*

As the opening verse of one of my favourite Christmas Carols proclaims, angels are seen within scripture at the point of creation through to and beyond our Messiah's birth. It might surprise you to realise that not only are angels prominent within the traditions of the three Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam but also within Persian Zoroastrianism and many other religions.

Within the Old Testament scripture angels are present at the point of creation; indeed it is a fallen angel of which there are many, that tempts Adam and Eve to rebel against God leading to their expulsion. A cherubim is now said to guard the gate to paradise to prevent our return by brandishing a flaming sword. Prior to this scripture there is a source within Zoroastrianism, of the universe being divided into two, that of good and evil being fought over and protected by angels from both sides.

Continuing within the Old Testament it is angels who tell Abraham and Sarah that they will have a child; an angel prevents Abraham from sacrificing his son Isaac and an angel protects Abraham's illegitimate son, Ishmael. Jacob a son of Isaac sees angels going up and down ladders between heaven and earth and he also wrestles with an angel. Generations later Moses is sent by God to rescue God's people from slavery and they are accompanied on their travels by an angel and a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. Elijah is fed by an angel and Daniel is protected by angels.

By the time we get to Jesus, Israel has been conquered and occupied by the Romans. An angel is sent to Mary to declare God's favour at the annunciation, Joseph is told by an angel to take Mary as his wife and angels announce the birth of Jesus to shepherds. Angels accompany Jesus through his life and both good and fallen are present at

the Temptation. After Jesus' death and as the early Church grows, angels also protect Jesus' followers, think of Paul's release from prison as just one example. By the time of St. Paul there was almost a sort of cult regarding angels that St. Paul condemned. There is however a text by Dionysius the Areopagite a disciple of St Paul, which is the first attempt at categorising the various angels mentioned in the Bible. Accordingly the First Order angels are the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. The Second Order angels are the Dominions, Powers and Virtues. The Third Order angels being the Principalities, Archangels and Angels. Angels proclaim, praise, shelter, warn, fight and protect.



This leads us then to the Book of Revelation to which our church is linked being dedicated to God through St Michael and All Angels. It is angels led by St Michael that take part in the final battle between good and evil. They will be fully engaged in every aspect of the final end of the earth and the coming of God's direct rule; a high commission indeed. It seems fitting then that the stained glass windows either side of our main church doors are of angels and the painted icons displayed within are of angels; St Michael to the left of the altar as we face

it and St Gabriel representing all angels to the right. The primary roles of angels are to praise God for his love and be messengers of God, 'Angel' coming from the Greek *angelos* meaning messenger. Therefore an angel is a being sent on an errand or mission from God. I say 'being' as this can be interpreted to be a traditional other worldly angel or simply a person.

After the Bible angels have often been a subject of both music and art. Being a musician and a lover of art in general, there is an image drawn by Fantin-Latour (1836-1904) of Berlioz conducting the Requiem. The artist has sketched the conductor surrounded by angels playing instruments. As I look at it I wonder is the musician being inspired by the angelic forces surrounding him or have the angels joined in because of the glorious music dedicated to God. Either way it reminds me of the feeling that can be experienced by either playing or listening to music, its ability to transform into something other worldly, praise of God beyond words alone.

Angels are not just of the past, they are of the future and of the present. For most of us angels will remain within written text; daubes of paint or reached for in song. For some however meetings with angels have profound effects, Teresa of Avila for example. If you meet someone who has had an experience of an angelic presence they continue to hold something of that presence within them, a knowing of something beyond every day life. Fear, awe, humility, joy, a pouring of love are words often used to describe an encounter. Throughout time angelic beings of differing forms have appeared and interposed within our human world. Their existence as like that of God, cannot be proved or disproved; it will remain I expect a matter of faith.

James Hooker a seventeenth-century theologian in 'The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity' says of angels:

'Beholding the face of God, in admiration of so great excellency (ctd. on Pg.2)

(Ctd. from Pg.1)

they all adore him; and being rapt with the love of his beauty, they have cleaved inseparably for ever unto him. Desire to resemble him in goodness maketh them unweariable and even insatiable in their longing to do by all means all manner of good unto all the creatures of God, but especially unto the children of men....'

The work of angels from the brief examples I have given, show that they are not the sweet cotton lace doilies that they are often made out to be in Christmas decorations. In biblical terms the angels, the whole created order, and we are caught up in the actions of God to bring us back to Himself. With so many wars and disasters abounding at the moment, it may feel that the darkness of evil is outweighing the goodness of the light of Christ, but the Bible doesn't see evil as a power any where near the power of the loving goodness of God. We all long for comfort, protection and a sense of security and people who have encountered angels describe a sensation of been deeply held in safety, but this cannot last. If this continued we would remain as children, never learning to try things anew, take risks or understand or recognise danger.

As the angels once more sing of the conduit of God's love in the birth of Jesus Christ we have choices; to wilfully ignore everything the angels point us towards; just select the bits we like or step into a world of song proclaiming the beautiful, endless, joyful and occasionally terrible love of the God that sent his only Son to save us.

May we this Christmas aspire to praise God for all His goodness, be messengers of His love for all, and proclaim His Word in Jesus Christ our Saviour not just at Christmas but every day of our lives.

Peace, Love and Blessings to you all this Christmas.

Revd. Debbie

Presentation of Harvest Appeal Proceeds to Carers Bucks In St. Michael's Church on 6 November 2024



From left to right: Jenny Barker, Beth Sawyers, Revd. Debbie Oades, Jo Harrington, Andy Connor

This year the Harvest Appeal was for Carers Bucks and came to £1,250.63 including gift aid.

Beth Sawyers, the representative of Carers Bucks who had previously given the Harvest Appeal presentation to the congregation, came back to St Michaels Church to receive the donations from the Rev Debbie and members of the Charity Giving Group, Jenny Baker, Jo Harrington and Andy Connor.

During her presentation, Beth explained that Carers Bucks supports adult carers with information, advice and emotional support. They make referrals into other services and provide support groups especially in four hospitals in Buckinghamshire and in GP Practices. They can provide emergency planning and give advice on benefits, employment and financial information. There is a Carers choir.

In particular, Carers Bucks supports young carers and young adult carers with activities, trips, one to one support, targeted support focusing on specific aspects of the caring role, and support in schools. They support young adult carers with balancing their caring role whilst transitioning into adulthood.

Currently Carers Bucks has registered over 1,300 young carers, aged 5-16, and nearly 300 young adult carers, aged 16-25.

St Michaels Harvest Appeal will be used towards core costs to pay for support groups, refreshments and support to young and adult carers.

ADVENT PRAYER SWAP – Sunday, 1 December-Christmas Day

Please join the 2024 Advent prayer swap. All are welcome from St. Michael's, the Amersham Free Church, and the whole community. The swap will start on 1 December. when Advent commences. All that is required of you is that you give your first name and email address to Rebecca via communications@stmichaelsamersham.org.uk (if you don't use e-mail, please leave a message with the office). On Thursday, 28 November, you will be given the first name of someone to pray for daily throughout Advent and someone will be given your name so you too will be prayed for daily.

Those who joined in last year thoroughly enjoyed themselves!

CHOIRS COFFEE & CAKE for Wycombe Homeless Connexion

This year five choirs, including one playing ukuleles, will be singing some of our favorite Christmas songs and carols at St. Michael's to raise money for Wycombe Homeless Connexion. **Please come along with your friends to support this event**, which promises to be an incredible event embodying the warmth of Christmas with the joy of giving.

The Knights of Harmony are an exciting, fun, friendly male A cappella choir based in Chesham. They take singing and performing very seriously, but maintain a sense of fun for their members and audiences alike. **The Amersham Community Choir** have fun singing and enjoy each other's company in addition to raising funds for charities and worthy causes. **Amchor** is a friendly and well-regarded choral society, with around 60 singers. They are always keen to welcome new members who share their enjoyment of choral music. **The Heatherton Singers**, run by David Cook, have been singing and entertaining others together for years, and **The Ukeholics** have been playing together for several years. Playing their ukuleles and singing together brings them great enjoyment and fun, which they transmit during their performances.

Many of the choirs are open to new members joining, so if you like what you hear please do consider chatting with the choir members between choirs to find out what they do and how to join them.

You might also like to support Wycombe Homeless Connection through their 'Gifts for Christmas' programme, which list items they are seeking to have donated to help with the Winter Shelter. Some items can be ordered to be delivered to the Wycombe Office, some are items people may have at home. All the info is here: <https://wyhoc.org.uk/support/give-goods>.

Saturday, 7 December – 10a.m.-3p.m.
St. Michael's & All Angels, Amersham

10a.m. The Heatherton Singers.
11a.m. The Ukeholics
12p.m. AmChor
1p.m. The Knights of Harmony
2p.m. Amersham Community Choir



READING A GOOD DETECTIVE STORY

By Barry Olsen

As a retired priest my conscience troubles me if I am not reading something serious – my unread Hooker’s ‘Ecclesiastical Polity,’ for example. But I am a fan of Donna Leon and her policeman, Commissario Brunetti, of the Venice Police Department. I have just finished ‘Blood From A Stone’ and, on reflection, I was delighted to find that, although it wasn’t Hooker or the Bible, I had learned several lessons from it.

In the story there is a former priest of whom she writes: ‘Don Alvise seemed a man who gazed on all he saw with

approval and affection, who began every interchange with deep and abiding regard for the person in front of him.’ What lovely Christian attitudes.

Aren’t we taught to see our Lord in everyone?

And the Commissario’s highly intelligent wife has a confrontation with their teenage daughter who had referred to the murdered man as ‘*only* a street hawker’. It was that *only* that had distressed her mother and she can only hope that the girl will grow out of such an attitude. Every human being deserves respect. As Christians we would say that that is so because we are all children of God and loved by God.

The street vendor was black, and the Commissario, as he tried to place the

man as being from somewhere in Africa, had to acknowledge that he knew very little about Africa. I imagine that is so for many of us. How much do we know about African history and cultures?

For many years I’ve supported the work of the Church Missionary Society in various parts of Africa, but how little I know of the cultures that our workers try to relate to. And that set me wondering how comfortable people of African background are with our worship in church.

Donna Leon’s book touched on many other issues that challenged my Christian conscience. I shan’t feel so guilty about reading detective stories in the future.

A REFLECTION ON EPIPHANY By Rebecca Olsen

It wasn’t until I lived in Italy where Epiphany is a big deal that I noticed that it is rather swept under the rug in the UK. This always surprises me as Epiphany is such a major part of the story of the arrival of Jesus Christ; it is an acknowledgement of his importance. Three Magi travelled miles with gifts prepared for a King. It is a day that in one way offers the opportunity for profound reflection on our own journeys towards Christ. The story reminds us to be watchful, to take action, seek and acknowledge Jesus Christ’s arrival in our lives.

The gifts the Magi gave Christ also appear to be a reflection of the story of Christ; **Gold**: A symbol of kingship and royalty, showing his position in the world; **Frankincense**: A symbol of deity and divinity, used in worship in the Temple, showing his position as divinity; and **Myrrh**: A symbol of death and mourning, used as an embalming oil and burial ointment. The gifts show the path Christ’s life would take so he could light the way for those who choose to follow him to the Kingdom of God.

In Italy La Befana (the witch) brings gifts to the children during the night before Epiphany. The story goes that the Magi stopped at the impoverished place she lived in to ask for food and shelter. They asked the old lady if she would like to journey with them to see the Christ Child. She declined, saying that she had to catch up on her household duties.

During the night the old lady was woken by a bright light. The light startled her and, taking it as a sign, she set out to find the Magi. But she lost her way.

So, every year La Befana takes to the skies, on the eve of the Feast of the Epiphany, to continue searching for the Christ Child. She goes from house to house leaving treats for sleeping children in the hope that the baby Jesus might also be with them.

The fact that Italians celebrate Epiphany with La Befana has always confused me a little, but reflecting on this story I am reminded of the importance of responding to our spiritual calling rather than making earthly things our main purpose in life. -Epiphany will be celebrated at St Michael’s on Sunday, 5 January, at 8.30am and 10am.



Luisfraga — Vecteezy.com

WORSHIP

Eucharists:

Sundays 8.30am and 10am
(Gathered Round on the second Sunday of each month is especially designed for families)

Tuesdays 10.30am

Morning Prayer:

Tuesdays 9am in the Lady Chapel.

Special Services:

Thursday 19 December—Nine Lessons and Carols—7pm

Tuesday 24 December—Family Crib Service—4pm. Sung Christmas Mass—8pm

COTHA Joint Service—26 January

Messy Church: 21 December '24 & 18 January '25 (The third Saturday each month 11.30am—1pm, EXCEPT AUGUST)

St. Michael's is usually open to **ALL** for private prayer from 10am—4pm
Mon– Fri. <https://www.youtube.com/@stmichaelandallangels/streams>, will

WARDENS

1 Dec Andy Connor
8 Dec Claire Sinclair
15 Dec Roland Gillott
19 Dec Alan Bacon
22 Dec Roger Leslie
24 Dec Roland Gillott (CS)
Roger Leslie (MS)
25 Dec Alan Bacon
29 Dec Roland Gillott
5 Jan Roger Leslie
12 Jan Claire Sinclair
19 Jan Roland Gillott
26 Jan Andy Connor COTHA

Please see:
stmichaelsamersham.org.uk
for more details

ACTIVITIES AT ST. MICHAEL'S & BEYOND

POP IN & PAINT— 6 December & 10 January —10.30am-12.15pm, St. Michael's, Main Church

Join Jenny Thompson and Liz Grammenos from Simpatico. No experience needed. Materials provided.

A CRAFTY CUPPA—13 December & 10 and 24 January — 10.30am-12 noon—St. Michael's, Wheeler Room

A drop-in session for everyone who wants a cuppa and some company. Feel free to bring a craft with you.

WISE CHOICES FILM CLUB— 6 December & 3 January —2pm-4pm—St. Michael's, Wheeler Room

Films — THE SMALLEST SHOW ON EARTH and THE UNLIKELY PILGRIMAGE OF HAROLD FRY

LUNCHEBREAK – Amersham Free Church

Every Tuesday – 12noon-2pm Tea, coffee and soup available 1.10pm-1.30pm Music, a talk, or short service.

REPAIR CAFÉ – Saturday, 4 January – 10.a.m.-1p.m. Come along to SustainableAmersham.org's pop-up Repair Café. Volunteer repairers will help you fix your stuff for free.

Mondays **Tiny Talk—Baby Signing** 11am (Tel: 07809 157 428)

Mature Movers 1.45pm-2.45pm

Stay Steady, Stay Strong 3pm-4pm (Tel: 07951 294178)

Amersham Dance Studio Children from 3+. 4pm-10pm
(email: emma@amershamdancestudio.co.uk)

Tuesdays **Tuffney Performing Arts Academy** 5pm-6pm

(Email: office@tuffney.com)

Yoga with Shiv 6pm—8pm (Science based approach, open to all. Tel: 07815132157).

Amersham A Capella 7pm-11pm (<https://www.amershamacappella.com/>)

Wednesdays **Karate Club** 6.30pm-8pm (Tel: 07951 024 397)

Badminton Club 8.15pm-10.15 pm (Tel: 01923 264791).

Tuffney Performing Arts Academy 4.45pm-5.45pm

Thursdays **Badminton** 1.30pm-3.30pm

Amersham Dance Studio Children from 3+. 4pm-7pm
(email: emma@amershamdancestudio.co.uk)

Fridays **Stay Steady, Stay Strong** 1.30pm-2.30pm (Tel: 07951 294178)

Saturdays **Popstars Academy** 9.30am-12pm (email: hazel@popstarsacademy.com).

Please see stmichaelsamersham.org.uk if you would like to book the hall.

For information about **Little Learners Nursery** please see <https://littlelearnersamersham.co.uk>

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES IN THE HALL

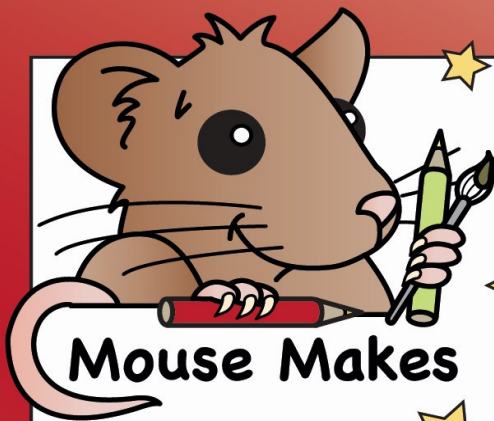
Saturday, 21 December & 18 January, Messy Church

will be on in St. Michael's from 11.30am to 1pm. Fun activities followed by a short interactive session about the story behind the activities, and lunch, which is provided for all. No need to book, just turn up. All welcome. This activity is free but donations are welcome to cover costs.



CARDS FOR GOOD CAUSES

is open every Monday-Saturday, from 10a.m.-4p.m. (21 December 1.30p.m.-4p.m.) and some Sundays from 11.30p.m.-4p.m., until 21 December, in the South Transept.



Mouse Makes

★ "Jesus said,
I am the ___ Y
and the ___ U ___
and the ___ I ___.
No one comes to the Father
except through me."
John 14:6

"The child to be born
will be called
H ___ , the
___ of ___"
Luke 1:35

★ "For unto you is born
this day a
S ___
who is
___ R ___
the ___ R ___"
Luke 2:11

THE GREATEST GIFT

"She will bear a son,
and shall call his name

for he will save his
people from their sins."
Matthew 1:21

★ "Jesus said,
I am the

and the life."
John 11:25

B L I G H T L O
R A Y W O J J R
E M M A N U E L
A B Y J E S O
D S A V I O U R
S A V R J S D

O H O L Y O R C R T U
S O N O F M A N H A R T
N L S H E P H E R D U
O Y A E P E R G I F T G
C H R I S T M A S T H S
R E S U R R E C T I O N

JESUS
—
THE
GREATEST
GIFT
OF ALL!

P R O P H E T I
R E D E E M E R
I E M I L I G
E M E S S I A H
S R M E G F T
T E A C H E R E

E V E R L A S T I N G
K I N G O F K I N G S
I N K I G W F D O U
S E S O N O F G O D D
S E W O C O U W O R D
C O U N S E L L O R U

EMMANUEL • MESSIAH REDEEMER • KING OF KINGS • WORD
SON OF MAN • EVERLASTING • SHEPHERD • PRIEST • PROPHET • TEACHER
LIGHT • BREAD • VINE • DOOR • LAMB • COUNSELLOR • CHRISTMAS • GIFT

Find the words from the Bible verses too!

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