

4 WHAT'S ON AT ST MICHAEL'S

SERVICES IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY

St Michael's is a Church of England Church, and our main morning service is at 10.30 am. The first Sunday of the month is a shorter all age service, and on the other Sundays children leave for Sunday school after about 15 minutes. There is a crèche for under 3's. On the second and fourth Sunday of the month the service includes communion.

The evening service at 6.30pm is quieter and more reflective, with communion on the first and third Sundays of the month.

We have Raise the Praise on the third Sunday of the month, a half hour service specifically designed for children under 8 and their families, which is followed by tea in the hall.

Special dates

January 10th 10.30 am: The Archdeacon of Lewisham and Greenwich, Christine Hardman will preach at morning service.



ST MICHAEL'S CRÈCHE

"Have you ever longed for a quiet moment in church, no children at the apron strings and time to concentrate on one thing for more than a minute? Then help is at hand. St Michael's has started up a crèche for children between 0-3 years old. It runs from 10.30 - 11.45 a.m. on every Sunday morning (except the first in the month). It is open to all whose parents who are going to the morning service. Welcome!"

*The sermon this morning:
'Jesus walks on the Water.'*

*The sermon tonight:
'Searching for Jesus.'*



At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

THE COFFEE SHOP...

...is flourishing and becoming more popular week by week. If you feel like a refreshing cup of tea or coffee and an absolutely delicious home made cake drop in. It is in the church hall and is open from 1.00 - 4.00 every Friday afternoon. You will be sure of a warm and friendly welcome and a relaxing break.

St Michael & ALL ANGELS

FROM THE REGISTERS

Thanksgivings

August - Tye Lorèn Matthews
October - Elijah Leslie Victor Murrock

Baptisms

November - Harrison Garrett Wood,
Barnabas James Lee

Weddings

5th Dec
Terence Allen and Katie McGinley

Funerals

October - Richard Chiesman
Ronald Jennings

ASK SEEK KNOCK

Prayer at St Michael's

Why do we pray together? Because Jesus told us to. What do we expect when we pray together? Jesus says "ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you". Because prayer works.

The next prayer meetings will be on Thursday 3rd December and Thursday 7th January at 8.15 - 9.30 pm in the Church Hall - you are welcome.

If you have any specific requests for prayer or would like someone to listen and pray with you, please do contact Sandy Christie, our Vicar on 020 8852 5287. All calls will be treated in the strictest confidence.

The Messenger is published by St. Michael's Church bi-monthly on the last Sunday of the months of January, March, May, July, September & November. It is delivered free of charge by members of the congregation.
Printed by: ISIS Office Ltd, Woolwich.

THE MESSENGER

What Christmas means to us



just come to it full of wonder and excitement.

Christmas is for children we say. They take a naïve joy in all it brings, unlike the rest of us, who worry about the expense, the family tensions and the negotiations about who to spend it with. Children

Perhaps they have something to teach us. Jesus said let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

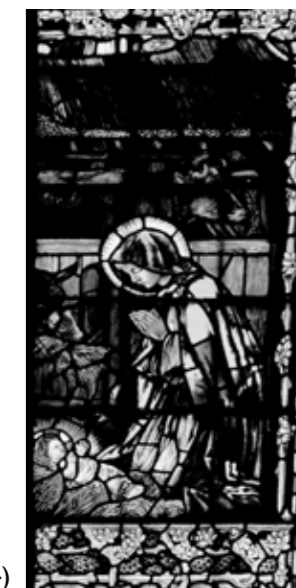
Children see the world differently. They don't have our fixed ideas of reality. When they hear the Narnia stories they press the back of the wardrobe to see if there is a secret entrance. They peer anxiously at the narrow chimney wondering if Santa will get stuck. And in Stephen Spielberg's film it was the children, not the adults, who accepted ET and invited him into their home.

Children also know how to receive a gift. They are used to being dependent, and accept what they are given unselfconsciously. We grown ups worry about being in someone's debt, and what we can offer in return, but Jesus says anyone who will not receive the kingdom of heaven like a little child will never enter it. Their key word in that sentence is the verb - receive.

If the Creator of the universe really did come to us in a cradle in Bethlehem, perhaps only a child-like spirit will allow us to open up and receive the greatest gift of all.

Sandy Christie

"WHEN THE TIME HAD FULLY COME, GOD SENT HIS SON, BORN OF A WOMAN".
(GALATIANS 4:4)



Stained glass window by Christopher Whall (1849-1924)

reproduced with kind permission of Canterbury Cathedral

Christmas in Australia:
A Snapshot of Childhood Memories
By Lenore Gerschwitz

Summer dress and sandals
Decorations hanging limply over gum tree twigs propped up in a bucket.
Sweat sticking my bare legs to the church pew
The rattle of a pedestal fan
Heading to the creek for a picnic lunch
Sprawled in a folding chair in swimmers and floppy hats
Cold ham and chicken, boiled eggs, coleslaw, potato salad, lettuce, cheese, tomato, beetroot slices, pineapple rings...
Grannie's crusty home made bread lathered with butter.
Tongue tingling from fruit punch spiced with ginger beer.
Laughing, joking, and playing with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.
Lazily slapping away the flies
Smell of sunscreen and insect repellent
In and out of the creek all afternoon.

St Michael's: making time for the things that matter

St Michael & All Angels Church
1 Pond Road
London SE3 9JL
www.se3.org.uk

Vicar
Rev. Sandy Christie
2 Pond Road
London SE3 9JL
020 8852 5287
ar.christie@virgin.net

Youth Minister
Helen Butt
020 8297 8997
youth@se3.org.uk

Careforce Worker
Peter Bogнар
020 8297 8997
youth@se3.org.uk

Administrator
Marion Lane
020 8852 1205
church@se3.org.uk

Editor
Jane Bendall
editor@se3.org.uk
Technical Support
Peter Bogнар

2

ON THE GRAPEVINE



Enoch Adamu from Jos in Northern Nigeria is in London to study at the Cornhill Training Course in Borough, to hone his skills on oral Bible exposition. A friendly and impressive man, Enoch has taken a courageous decision to travel to London for a year, as he left his wife Ruth, two sons and newly born Tirmon (meaning God's daughter) to travel to a totally unknown destination. At home he is a Hospital Chaplain and also, four years ago, he helped to set up and run the Training Pastors International. Their aim is to train pastors with such necessary skills as bible study and God based leadership. In his "spare" time he preaches at local churches. If that is not enough Ruth runs a school for 200 children of local missionaries. The school is free – and when asked, Enoch explained that food, clothes, books always arrive thanks to the goodness of God and the children never went to bed hungry. This is what strikes one immediately about Enoch – his spirituality and burning faith, coupled with a belief that God will provide and protect. Sometimes the situation in Jos is dangerous; tragically there is on going trouble and hostility there between Muslims and Christians. Enoch has been linked to St Michael's during his stay so we shall have many opportunities to meet him and to hear him preach. He will welcome any opportunity to talk to you and even perhaps visit your home.

COLOURFUL CHRISTMAS

by Charles Aki-Bell

Sierra Leone was a British Colony and most of the celebrations which the colonial masters left are still being practiced there. The Church will start the celebration by organising Carol singing at Advent to raise funds and to bring the festive season into the whole community. Before the carol singing, letters are sent to reputable people in the community- stating the day and approximate time of the visit. The carol singing will be extended to include the sick and house bound. On Christmas Day, families come together from far and near to celebrate the occasion in Church, which will be packed full. Friends from other faiths will attend in anticipation of the house parties that follow. Cultural dressing is what stands out as the women and children will be colourfully dressed in their traditional attire of lace and well tailored cotton dresses from head to toe in matching colours! Not to be out-done, the men will also be dressed in their flowing gown of lace and cotton-this sets the scene for the eating and drinking after the church service. Throughout Christmas Day, there will be invited and uninvited guests calling to wish merry Christmas and no-one will be sent out empty handed. Some Christians invite non-Christian friends because they cannot get other Christians to visit as they are also entertaining...in addition there are endless streams of cultural masqueraders performing house to house collecting money and goodies.

St Michael & ALL ANGELS

REHABILITATING DRUG ADDICTS

by John Clark

Ever since St Michael's was built the congregation has had a close connection with the Church Mission Society an agency committed to sharing Christian faith in action and in word across the world. Today that link is maintained through support for Alison Giblett, seconded to ISAAC (International Substance Abuse and Addiction



Coalition) which encourages, connects and equips Christians fighting addiction around the world. Kiev is the base for her work as a trainer with centres in four regions - Ukraine, Moldova, the North Caucasus and St Petersburg. This involves teaching, personal visits and facilitating training and networking events. She is also part of a local team called Reach Global encouraging churches to respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis in Ukraine. One example of her work: in mid-October she was involved in training leaders from the many church-related drug and rehabilitation centres in the states that emerged from the former Soviet Union, followed by a week's social work training course to equip church members to serve in the various church based ministries such as rehabilitation, street kids outreach and prison ministries. St Michael's links with Alison provide a link with a difference – and highlight some of the huge social needs that exist in our own continent – and ways in which the church is addressing them.

3

MUSIC AT ST MICHAEL'S

Music has been an important part of the life of St Michael's for generations. Although the days of the robed choir are long gone (and still mourned by some!), music remains at the heart of our worship together. In all our music in church our aim is to give glory to God and to enable us to join together in worship. Whilst the character of God is unchanging, the expression of our worship evolves and flourishes and the range of music, both in style and heritage, reflects the great diversity in our congregation and we hope enables every person to join in worship that resonates with their own lives and experience of God.



The current music group which leads the musical worship most Sundays is a collection of volunteers, young and old, experienced and novice, who seek to use their talents for God in this way. The wonderful organ still resounds as often as possible and the combination of electric piano, guitars, woodwind and strings supports our range of worship songs and hymns.

At Christmas in particular we cherish the traditional and our rather ad hoc choir meets on Saturdays in the weeks running up to the carol service on the Sunday before Christmas to rehearse the old favourites and one or two new pieces for the service of lessons and carols. All are most welcome to join in our efforts – if you would like to be involved in the Christmas choir please contact Rachel Adams through the church office.

If you would like to be involved in the music at our regular Sunday worship, either as a musician or singer, please contact Tim Keeler, on tim.keeler@btinternet.com or Jonathan Croucher, our non-stipendiary curate, on revjec@hotmail.co.uk.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday 6th December

10.30 a.m. Worship Together including Nativity & Toy Service - this includes an informal Nativity presentation plus our annual "Toy Service" when we collect toys to give to local homeless families.

Sunday 20th December

6.30 p.m. Carol Service

Christmas Eve

3.30 p.m. Christingle Service
11.15 p.m. Midnight Communion

Christmas Day Services

9.00 a.m. Communion service
10.30 a.m. Worship Together Service

FOLLOW THE DONKEY

Following the donkey has become an established and much loved Blackheath custom over the past 25 years. The event is arranged by Churches Together in Blackheath and the churches take turns in providing a Mary and Joseph. If you have never been, do come - the procession leaves St Mary's Cresswell Park at 4.30 p.m. and winds up through the Village onto the heath where we all sing carols beside All Saints Church. It is a very special and moving occasion – last year over 1,200 people joined in – giving real meaning to the Christmas message rather than the usual frenzy of last minute shopping!

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

The candlelit celebration which places children at its heart
Christingle this year is again on Christmas Eve at the slightly earlier time of 3.30 p.m. – to allow everyone time to "Follow the Donkey" afterwards. The Christingle itself is made up of a lighted candle, symbolising Jesus Light of the World mounted on an orange (representing the world) and red ribbon round the middle of the orange symbolising the blood of Christ. The cocktail sticks bearing dried fruit or sweets signify the four seasons and fruits of the earth. There will be a collection in aid of the work of the Children's Society.

St Michael & ALL ANGELS