



# Saint Michael's Messenger, Newsletter, December 2016

**The Eucharist is celebrated every Sunday at 10.00 am followed by refreshments**

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

Sunday	4th December	10h00 Eucharist – <i>Advent 2</i> 11h45 <i>Danish Lutheran Service</i>
Sunday	11th December	10h00 Eucharist – <i>Advent 3</i>
Sunday	18th December	10h00 Eucharist – <i>Advent 4</i>
Wednesday	21st December	18h30 <i>Anglo-French Carol Service</i>
Saturday	24th December	11h00 <i>Danish Christmas Eve Service</i> 19h00 <i>Blessing of Crib &amp; Eucharist</i>
Sunday	25th December	10h00 Eucharist – <i>Christmas Day</i>
Wednesday	28th December	10h00 Eucharist – <i>Holy Innocents</i>
Sunday	1st January	10h00 Eucharist – <i>Naming of Jesus</i>
Sunday	8th January	10h00 Eucharist – <i>Epiphany</i>

## **FATHER'S NOTES...**

**'The whole of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord had come down on it... (Exodus 19:18)**



I have often mentioned why it is important to offer our human faculties in worship to God – *with all your heart, soul, mind and strength* - otherwise we would be withholding gifts he has given to us with which to praise him. At St Michael's we are very familiar with using our voices for prayer and song, and our ears to listen to the Word of God and to inspirational music. We also have moments of silence to contemplate with our thoughts. We have become more accustomed to movement and gestures within the liturgy and have recently made developments in the visual aspect with new lighting and seasonal or festive displays on the aisle altar. However, there is one particular sense, often neglected in liturgies and churches, which we should be trying to use as well.

The sense of smell is a powerful gift; it can help us differentiate between what is good or bad, or give us warning of danger or make us feel comfortable. It is a sense that can evoke strong memories and therefore feelings. We talk of smell as though it were tangible – the smell of victory or success – and smell can affect us as though we were actually tasting something. In ancient religions smell was represented in the smoke of burnt sacrifices and incense; the burning of incense continuing in many different faiths, including Christianity, to the present day.

The smoke of incense used in church is considered to be a visual symbol of our prayers, *Let my prayer be directed as incense in thy sight: the lifting up of my hands, as evening sacrifice... (Psalm 141:2)* and the aromatic smell transports us spiritually to the *golden bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people... (Revelation 5:8)*. There will still be some people who object to the use of incense in a church but they are perhaps forgetting its scriptural, liturgical and spiritual value.

Saint Michael's follows the rituals of the Church of England in which incense can be used for Morning Prayer, Evensong and Night Prayer; but it is most effectively used on special occasions when it contributes to the solemnity of the celebration. Our Christmas celebration is made all the more special with this practice that is both ancient and contemporary; it is a reminder of the Frankincense brought to the Christ-child and of the traditions of the religion into which Jesus was born and which, therefore, we hold dear.

**Fr Tony**

### **'THE VIEW FROM THE PRESBYTERE...**



Peace on earth and goodwill to all men... how often do we see these words on Christmas cards? And isn't this a sentiment that we hear about, talk of and wish for throughout the Christmas season?

I absolutely love Christmas. I love the build up and the preparations. I love seeing the church change with the appearance of the advent wreath, the crib, the decorations; I love singing carols; sending and receiving Christmas cards; mince pies and gluhwein; the shops and the lights... I could go on and on, but I'm sure you're getting the picture! And whilst I miss being able to spend Christmas with my family, I know I'm blessed to have a loving

family to share all this peace and goodwill with, even if it is from a distance.

And so, as Christmas approaches I will be remembering in my prayers all those in difficult circumstances - the sick, the poor, the homeless, the dying and the lonely, and as I do so, I will absolutely be counting my blessings.

I've been greatly troubled by some of the rhetoric that has been bandied about around the world over the past year, which seemed to demonstrate a hardening of some people's hearts towards anyone who is different. This year has seen some major voting decisions, which even before they're implemented have had an impact on some people's conduct. So, when we send Christmas greetings, when we wish a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, and especially when we spread those glorious words of the gospel 'Peace on earth and good will to all men', we should most definitely remember that they are not meant to be just for Christmas.

And on that note, I wish everyone who is reading this a happy, peaceful, holy and blessed Christmas.

**Fiona**

### **IAN CORRIE R.I.P.**



We were very shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Ian Corrie in Tunisia at the age of 66, according to press reports he was murdered. Many will remember Ian who was the verger at St Michael's for many years. He also helped some of our community with his work as a handyman and occasional driver. In recent years he has lived mostly in Tunisia but returned to Beaulieu from time to time.

We have fond memories of Ian and our thoughts and prayers go out to his family. May he rest in peace

### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

#### **Mince Pies:**

Is anyone travelling from UK before the carol service on 21st December? If yes, could you fit some mince pies into your luggage? The mini ones are best. Or if you are already here let Nicola know if you would like to make some small ones for the carol service.



## Reminder:

**Christmas cards** and **Gingerbread** will be on sale at St Michael's just before Christmas .



## WE NEED YOU!



When we come into the church for a service, it's always clean and tidy and therefore there are no distractions. Unlike in our house, where apparently the pixies do the cleaning, it is Tony, ably assisted by a small number of our congregation who come in regularly, without banners or fanfare, who do the jobs that need doing and who keep the church in good order. Only twice during the year do I appeal for everyone's help to give the church a really good clean. And this is one of those appeals. Please put **Tuesday December 20th at 10 a.m.** in your diary. Come and help to get the church and grounds ready for Christmas. The more who help, the easier the job, the quicker it's done. As we don't employ a church cleaner we all have a responsibility to do what we can when we can. So if you are able, please come along and lend a hand. Thank you in advance!

**Fiona**

## ST MICHAEL'S SALE OF CHRISTMAS PRESENTS AND PROMISES

### Last chance for a great Present - SPECIAL OFFERS AVAILABLE!

First of all a huge thank you to the many donors and buyers. We have sold a large number of the items and promises with all the proceeds going to St Michael's for its upkeep and maintenance.

We still have some of the amazing paintings, prints and books available for home or as gifts - WHY NOT make **an offer** on one of these?

A special reduction has been made on the 'Opera in Holland Park' - now available for €200.00. A fantastic bargain and a great present!

The brand-new garden settee is still available.

**The sale closes on December 23rd.**

Thanks again to all our supporters,

**Jeremy**



**WISHING YOU A PEACEFUL, MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND SAFE NEW YEAR**

### Want to get in touch?

Editor Jo: [news@stmichaelsbeaulieusurmer.org](mailto:news@stmichaelsbeaulieusurmer.org)

Our website: [www.stmichaelsbeaulieusurmer.org](http://www.stmichaelsbeaulieusurmer.org)

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