

NEWSLETTER

October 2021

from the Church of St. Michael's Bray



The Parish Church of Bray with Braywood, Holyport &
Moneyrow Green, Fifield, Touchen End and Oakley Green



Website: www.braystmichael.co.uk

Dear Friends,

What is Advent?

In the Christian Church, Advent is a period of preparation extending over the four Sundays before Christmas. It also starts a new Church year liturgically. We begin afresh in the unfolding story of Christ's birth taking us through to Easter and beyond.

The word *Advent* comes from the Latin *advenio*, "to come to," and refers to the coming of Christ. And the term *the coming* includes three references: first of all, to our celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas; second, to the coming of Christ in our lives through grace and the Sacrament of Holy Communion; and finally, to his second coming at the end of time.

Our preparations, therefore, should have all three comings in mind. We need to prepare our souls to receive Christ at Christmas.

First We Fast; Then We Feast

Advent has been called a "little Lent," because it traditionally has included a period of increased prayer, fasting, and good works. Although the Western Church no longer has a set requirement for fasting during Advent, the Eastern Church (both Catholic and Orthodox) continues to observe what is known as Philip's Fast, from November 15 until Christmas.

Traditionally, all great feasts have been preceded by a time of fasting, which makes the feast itself more joyful. Unfortunately, Advent today has been supplanted by "the Christmas shopping season," so that by the time Christmas Day comes, many people no longer enjoy the feast or even specially mark the next 12 days of the Christmas season, which lasts until Epiphany (or, technically, the Sunday after Epiphany, being that the next season, called ordinary time, starts on the following Monday).

The Symbols of Advent

In its symbolism, the church continues to stress the penitential and preparatory nature of Advent. As during Lent, priests wear purple vestments, and the Gloria ("Glory to God") is omitted during the Eucharist. The only exception is on the Third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday, when, in some churches, priests wear rose-coloured vestments. As on Laetare Sunday during Lent, this exception is designed to encourage us to continue our prayer and fasting, because we can see that Advent is more than halfway over and we are nearly there!

The Advent Wreath



Perhaps the best-known of all Advent symbols is the Advent wreath, a custom that originated among German Lutherans but was soon adopted by others. Consisting of four candles (usually three purple or blue and one pink) arranged in a circle with evergreen boughs and a fifth, white candle in the centre, the Advent wreath corresponds to the four Sundays of Advent. The purple or blue candles represent the penitential nature of the season, while the pink candle calls to mind the respite of Gaudete Sunday. The white candle represents Christmas./continued

Celebrating Advent

We can better enjoy Christmas—all 12 days of it—if we revive Advent as a period of preparation. We can incorporate customs such as the Advent wreath, into our daily life, and we can set some time aside for special scripture readings for Advent, which remind us of the threefold coming of Christ.

Holding off on putting up the Christmas tree and other decorations is another way to remind ourselves that the feast is not here yet. Traditionally, such decorations were put up on Christmas Eve, and they would not be taken down until after Epiphany, in order to celebrate the 12 day Christmas season to its fullest.

Compline during Advent

During Advent there will be a short service of Compline or Night Prayer on **Sundays at 9.00 p.m.** On Zoom using the usual Sunday link:

Join Zoom meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85342025466?pwd=RHFJQXRabElyTGIYK01NdXhLbHdUUT09i>

Compline is the service the Church has used since ancient times as the final prayers before sleep. You don't need to know the service of Compline; you will be guided.

I hope to 'see you' at that service. Rev'd Ainsley

A message from Sian Adams – recent Churchwarden of St. Michael's



Dearest Friends,

Steve and I thank you for your prayers, messages, phone calls, flowers and cards - all so much appreciated. We were sorry to have to make such a sudden departure from all aspects of life at St Michaels: standing down from the Churchwarden role, hosting zoom, discovering the wonders of Minecraft and so much more. A stroke was never on the agenda but gentle convalescence seems to have worked!

I now have time to reflect on my chapter as Churchwarden - I just loved the surprises that each day brought: silent acts of kindness and generosity, unexpected visits up the tower or deep under exploring the old boiler, strangers became friends as we shared hopes, plans, blessings, real coffee , laughter and tears, music, rotas, even toilets! and quite simply concerns for each other: I just loved being part of your community, and will never forget the many ways in which I was encouraged to be a Churchwarden .

More recently, whilst convalescing, Steve and I also sold our house, planning to downsize and make life easier. We shall move temporarily to Taplow but eventually still live in Bray, enjoy listening to the beautiful 🦉 🦉 and hope to reconnect with you all in due course.

I cannot close without expressing particular thanks to Ainsley , Penny and Helen for support, friendship and for filling in the small gaps created by my departure. I've really missed the prayerful fun we had together and sooo grateful for your amazing commitment especially with the recent Covid challenges.

Fondest love and thanks to you all. Siân



The logo is a decorative title for 'Music at St Michael's Church Bray'. The words 'Music at' are in a large, elegant, black script font at the top. Below them, 'St Michael's Church' is written in a smaller, similar script on the left, and 'Bray' is on the right. In the center, there is a small, detailed illustration of a church tower. Musical notes and a treble clef are integrated into the design, with some notes appearing to float around the text.

We are all delighted that Sunday afternoon recitals have restarted, after such a long lay-off. Relf Clark's excellent playing of the church organ on 12th September and the amazing pianist Hao Zi Yoh on 10th October were both well received by pleasingly healthy audiences. On 14th November we will welcome Korean pianist Yoon Chung, when he will be playing Chopin's *Three Mazurkas Op 59*, and *Sonata No. 4 in Eb K282* by Mozart.

Sunday 12 December will see the return of Music at Bray's Christmas Concert in St Michael's at 3.00pm. This is not a church service, but a celebration of the yuletide season in popular songs and carols, with perhaps a reading or two and a little seasonal serious music.

This year we are raising money for Duchenne UK, a charity supporting children with muscular dystrophy.

And here is where we need your help, please! The Christmas songs will be performed by the Community Choir, where anyone who enjoys singing gets the chance to join with the church choir for the afternoon; no expertise or experience required, just a wish to sing.

We'll be inviting all who have joined before to come back, but if you would like to be a part of this fun exercise, please email jimtucker@talktalk.net.

The Community Choir will be rehearsing from 8.00pm to 9.00pm on Fridays 19 and 26 November, Thursday 2 December and Friday 10 December, but we will understand if you can't make all four dates.

We look forward to singing with you.



Church Energy Usage

The Church of England has recognised the need for all of us to play our part in the move toward carbon neutrality. The diocese, in line with this, have suggested that all churches should carry out an approved energy audit with a view to achieving something close to carbon neutrality by 2030. The St Michael's audit took place in August last year and the results were interesting but not too surprising.

Gas is the prime source of heating in St Michael's and this accounts for 96.6% of the total energy used in the church but it is estimated, sadly, that less than 25% of this energy actually reaches the congregation as heat, the rest being lost to the roof areas and the general fabric of the church. In all around 100,000Kwh of energy per year is being used to achieve no more than 'background heating' and this is largely in an attempt to reach a reasonable temperature during the period before the congregation arrive (normally 8 – 12 hours).

An answer, as suggested by both the auditors and the diocese, is to introduce electric pew heating. This can be switched on 15 minutes before a service starts and off again as the congregation leave. The power required to heat all the pews amounts to approximately 40kw and if we use this over 40 weeks of the year at 4 hours a weekend then the total energy required totals approximately 6,400 Kwh per year, just a fraction of the energy presently used. Even if the gas boiler were used, at 50% of the present rate, together with a full complement of pew heaters, a 40% reduction in energy could still be achieved. This assumes a full church, of course, whereas in practice the heaters would be switched on only where pews were occupied.

Most of you will be aware of the recent increases in fuel costs and, with this in mind, recognise the importance of reducing the amount of energy we use in the church. Electricity will probably remain considerably more expensive than gas but, looking again at the example given above, we can see that even with electricity prices at four times that of gas we still stand to make cost savings of between 25 and 50%.



The importance of reducing our carbon footprint with regard to climate change remains paramount.

The church has looked at investing in solar panels but the problem here is that we are rarely able to use the energy at the time it is produced. A part solution would be to install batteries but the cost of PV array with batteries would prove prohibitive at this point. Satisfying the responsibility for sourcing green energy in the church could, however, be passed on to suitable supplier of green energy. There are not many of these companies around at the moment, thanks to the recent gas shortages, but let's hope this situation improves over time.

We are in the process of costing a possible installation of pew heaters.

Ian Murray



Upcoming Events and Services

Sunday 7th November

All Souls' Day; commemoration of the departed service at 4 p.m.

If you would like the name of a loved one to be read out during the service please let Linda Shepherd know: Email: lindashepherd0@gmail.com. Also, it would be helpful to know if you intend to come to the service so that we know how many people will be there. Even if you are unable to attend, your loved one's name can still be read out if you request it.

Sunday 14th November

Remembrance Day Service at 10.45 a.m.

And Music at Bray Recital at 3 p.m.

Saturday 11th December

Christingle Service at 4 p.m.

Sunday 12th December

Music at Bray Community Carol Concert at 3 p.m.
a Charity event in aid of Duchenne UK

Sunday 19th December

Traditional Carol Service at 4 p.m.

We also plan to go ahead with our customary Christmastide services, as follows:

Friday 24th December

Midnight Mass at 11:45 p.m.

Saturday 25th December

Christmas Day

Holy Communion at 8 a.m.

Sung Eucharist with carols at 10 a.m.

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