Advent 2025

Saint Michael & All Angels Barnes

TREE OF FAITH

THIS Advent, our theme is the Nicene Creed as we mark its 1700th anniversary since its composition at the Council of Nicaea in 325AD. It arose out of much controversy at the time, as Christians wrestled with complex ideas about the nature of God and the identity of Christ. Creeds are a particular feature of Christian faith, which defines itself by a shared belief, rather than any cultural, ethnic or national identity. It is easy to forget how radical that was and still is. The image above is known as a 'Jesse Tree' - it shows the ancestry of Christ through time from Jesse (one of Jesus' forebears), and from this image we get the concept of a 'family tree'. We become part of God's family tree through a shared faith as summarised in the Nicene Creed. We can think of the Creed is an inheritance of faith, borne out of many years of reflection and prayer. It is an ancient but also living text, a structure on which to hang our faith today, that connects us back to all the Christians who have lived before us. With this in mind, whatever our own questions and doubts, we are able to say 'I believe' when we say the Creed in worship. The 'I' that speaks is the whole Church speaking together, holding each person in a supportive network of faith. This Advent, our sermons, reading, discussions and worship are all focused on exploring the Nicene Creed. I hope that this will enable you to sing with renewed faith the famous Christmas carol 'O come all ye faithful' based on the Creed: *'God of God, Light of Light/Lo he abhors not the virgin's womb/very God, begotten not created.'*

Father Stephen Stavrou, *Vicar*

ADVENT WORSHIP

Advent Carols Sunday 30th November 6.00pm
Churches Together in Barnes holds its annual Advent Carol service at St Michael's; a glorious and moving selection of seasonal music, hymns, scripture and poetry. The service is followed by a drinks reception in the Community Centre.

Morning Prayer Every day at 9am (except Friday).
The busyness of the practical preparations for Christmas often crowd out Advent's essential message of watching and waiting. Restore that balance by coming to morning prayer - a short service (lasting about 20 minutes) and a peaceful way to begin your day.

Holy Hour *Silent Prayer with the Blessed Sacrament* Mondays at 7pm
Find rest and peace by coming for as long or as short a time as you wish during this period of silence in the Lady Chapel in the presence of Christ.

Mass during the Week Wednesday 12 Noon. and Saturday 9.30am.

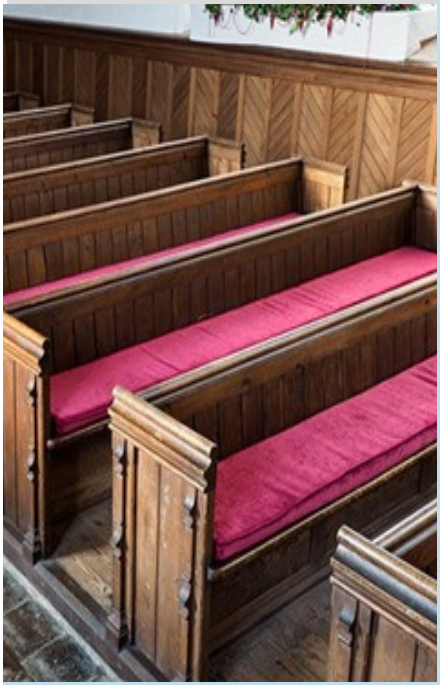
Confession *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*
Prepare spiritually for Christmas by making your Confession. Confessions may be heard by appointment at any time, but can be heard every Monday after Holy Hour at 8pm

For the list of Christmas Services see the publicity around church and on our website

ADVENT PRAYERS

"I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9.24)

A prayer to say when opening the door of an Advent Calendar
Jesus said: "Knock and the door shall be opened"
Lord Jesus, as I open the door of this Advent calendar,
open the door of my heart and be with me today.



THE GIFT OF COMFORT

Sponsor a pew-runner for St Michael's this Advent

Are you sitting comfortably? Parishioners have been complaining of hard pews for many years. Finally you have the chance to turn the other cheek and cushion the congregation by sponsoring a pew-runner . It costs £150 for a whole pew, or you can team up with one, two or more people to split the cost and bless a bum! An example runner is available to try out for yourself. Give the gift of comfort to St Michael's this Advent - let's hope everyone feels it! We hope to put in an order in January to rejoice in softer services very soon. Contact the Parish Office to record your sponsorship.

ADVENT BOOKLET

Reflections and questions about the Creed

We say the Creed every Sunday, but what does it mean to you? The clergy of the Barnes Team have put together a booklet of reflections on the Creed which can be read by individuals privately or (ideally) used as a starter for conversation as part of our Advent Groups (see box below). We hope everyone will find this a help to your spiritual life this Advent. *Copies of the booklet are online in the Advent and Christmas section of our church website, with hard copies available from the back of church.*

ADVENT SERMONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Our Advent Sermon series entitled 'We believe' mirrors the four-fold shape of the Creed

Advent 1 (30th Nov) '… in one God' - Fr Stephen Stavrou, *Vicar*
Advent 2 (7th Dec) '… in one Lord Jesus Christ' - Fr Stephen Stavrou, *Vicar*
Advent 3 (14th Dec) '… in the Holy Spirit' - Fr James Marston, *Associate Priest*
Advent 4 (21st Dec) '… in one Church' - Father Stephen Stavrou, *Vicar*

Alongside the sermons and booklet there are a number of groups taking place throughout Advent, some of which meet weekly and others only once or twice to discuss the questions in the booklet or anything else you want to discuss about the Creed.

Jan Black Tuesday 16 December 11am *followed by lunch. Please email the office to confirm your attendance for this group.*

Asha and Sue Pandit? Time TBC. Keep a look for more information in the pew sheet and *email the office for more information*.

You are welcome to join any of the above groups, but you'll need to contact the leader in advance (except for the Wednesday group in church) by emailing the Parish Office or speaking to that person directly.

Wednesdays 11am led by Fr Stephen *in the Lady Chapel/Community Centre (*4th, 11th and 18th Dec) Why not stay for Mass at Noon afterwards?

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

During Advent our worship for children and families each have a special theme

Advent 1: All Age Advent Mass (30th Nov) 10.00am
with giving out of make-at-home Christmas decorations to decorate the Children's Christmas Tree

Advent 2: Saint Nicholas Service (7th Dec) 11.30am Children's Mass.
A service to celebrate the original and real Father Christmas with giving of chocolate coins.

Advent 3: St Lucy Service(14th Dec) 11.30am Children's Mass
Celebrating the light of Christ through the Swedish custom of Sankta Lucia.

Note - There is no Children's Mass on Sunday 21st December (Advent 4)

MAKE AT HOME CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

making and praying at home together this Advent

At the 10am All Age Mass on Advent Sunday (30th Nov) we will be giving out packs of make-at-home Christmas decorations which you are invited to return to church by 9th December to decorate the children and families Christmas tree in our Tree Festival which launches with Community Carols on Thursday 11th December at 7.00pm

FOLLOW THE STAR

An Advent and Christmas Nativity Trail.

At Christmas, we remember the star which guided the wise men on their journey to find Jesus - but 12 twinkly stars have slipped out of church and hidden around Barnes - we need your help to find them! You never know where a star might be shining! **How to join in:**

- **Pick up an entry form** from the back of church or on our website.
- **Hunt for the 12 missing stars.** Keep your eyes peeled as you walk around the neighbourhood.
- **Write down their hiding places.** Each star has a number. When you find one, jot down the number and where you spotted it.
- **Send us your answers.** Return your completed form by email to children@stmichaelbarnes.org. or return to the box at the back of church.

The Parish Office
c/o The Vicarage, 39 Elm Bank Gardens
London SW13 0NX
020 8876 5230 admin@stmichaelbarnes.org