

Dear Friends,

Our celebration of Michael and All Angels today puts a question to us. Do we believe in angels? This can elicit an array of responses from both Christians and those who say they do not believe in God. Thrown into this mix are a host of different images we have of angels, drawn from stained glass windows, statues, art history, children's stories and popular culture. The more puritan and rational among us might dispense with angels all together as, at best, childish fantasy or, at worst, delusional imaginings. This is not to say that angelology does not at times border on the ridiculous; nor that it is exploited, with often spectacular creativity, by the consumerist agenda of the entertainment industry for whom angels sell stories. This is nothing new. The history of Judaism Christianity and Islam attest to a tension over angels and their place in God's plan of salvation. One effect of the Protestant Reformation was to side-line angels to focus on the direct relationship between each individual and God in Jesus Christ. Arguably, this was a much-needed corrective. Yet one outcome was to cut off a Catholic concern to celebrate how God's presence comes to us in the beauty of creation in all its mysterious depth. Banishing angels can go hand-in-hand with a so-called disenchantment of the creation God calls into being. This flattens the world's mystery, evacuating places, history, human identity and creativity, even worship, of their inexhaustible meaning. It also flies in the face of how scripture portrays a cosmos alive with spiritual beings.

Mounting a defence of angels, some modern theologians have spied an element of truth in the popular revival of angels – it emphasises the central role of the imagination in faith. Instead of seeing the contents of our imagination as simply down to ourselves or our culture, we should see them as our connection to divine inspiration communicated to us by God's agents. The imagination becomes the realm of a real spiritual struggle between good and evil; between, what Revelation says, are the angelic forces of Michael and those of the dragon. In this struggle we are beckoned to forge creative responses to suffering, injustice, violence in our own lives, society and culture. In our day, we have only to look to Ukraine to see this spiritual battle take on deadly reality with world-ending consequences. Here a lack of generous imagination; a blindness to the world's depth and value; a denial of the urging of God's messengers of peace are life-threatening. Today's Gospel gives us a vital key: Jesus is the gateway, the ladder, between heaven and earth. Thus, we recognise angels and their imaginative promptings as being from God insofar as they serve Christ's mission to share God's love and mercy with each person and enable us to do likewise in the imagination of our hearts and the work of our hands. Doesn't this encompass a Reformed and Catholic view? Better still, might it not make Anglicans out of the angels?

With my prayers and blessings,

Fr Angus

Dates - September

Monday 26th – St George's Tots

Tuesday 27th – WRAP Community Choir - 7.30pm to 9.00pm

Wednesday 28th - Said Mass - 11.30am in the Lady Chapel.

Thursday 29th – Said Mass - 9.30am in the Lady Chapel

Friday 30th – Last Friday Concert 7.30pm

October Sunday 2nd – Trinity 16 - our Dedication Festival Mass - 10:00am, there will also be a baptism during the service.

A New Call for Churchwardens: Now that the summer is over, Fr Angus and the PCC are putting out a new call for two churchwardens to be nominated and elected. Since there were no candidates for churchwarden at the APCM in May, the PCC has put together a set of documents which provide a description of the role of churchwarden and the expectations and support structures around it with an emphasis on making sure the role is not too onerous. One of the key changes has been to introduce the role of deputy churchwarden who share the responsibility for the Sunday service with the churchwardens and team of volunteers. The documents will be available in a folder at the back of church for anyone to look through. If you are interested in being a churchwarden, please speak to Fr Angus or the former wardens Geraldine Burrows and Jill Merry. Fr Angus is immensely grateful for those who have stepped up during this period of no churchwardens, but he is aware that this is not sustainable. A parish needs its churchwardens. Please do give this serious consideration and keep it as a matter for prayer.

Exciting News! The new outreach activity at St George's is all ready to commence on **Wednesday 5th October - 3pm – 4.30pm**, in the Centenary Centre, entry through the carpark behind the church, The name of the group has been confirmed as **WRAP-CHAT** (Whyke, Rumboldswyke & Portfield) All are welcome! Our first speaker to start the proceedings will be The Revd Dr Angus Reid, yes, our very own Fr Angus, his talk is entitled "*Fr Angus' journey from the day of the 9/11 attacks to Ordination*". Not to be missed! Admission £2 to include refreshments. We do hope you will be able to attend, and please bring a friend or two. We look forward to seeing you there and at future events on the 1st Wednesday of each month. Any query please have a word with Geraldine, Fr Bill Johnston or Fr Philip Meader.

News from the Diocese

Bishop Martin writes....

Thank you to everyone who has contributed in any way to the observance of the past 12 days. It has been a momentous and historic episode in our national life and on the international stage.

Thank you to clergy and laity who made churches available, offered condolence and support, devised appropriate forms of worship, and demonstrated the contribution of the Church of England to the people of this land.

And now we return to the tasks of daily life in a new reign. May God, from whom comes all authority and power, continue to bless and guide us.

+*Martin*

A link to Bishop Martin's sermon giving thanks for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, in Chichester Cathedral at the Requiem Evensong on Sunday 18th September, can be found here

(<https://anglican.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7a86e90c11bd11bb3e7fe22e6&id=33c63532fc&e=faea5ff59f>)

Last Friday Concert. Next Friday September 30th

Friday's concert in our Last Friday series is to be an organ recital by Richard McVeigh, widely recognised as one of the countries most accomplished and entertaining musicians, this is an event not to be missed. Richard's recital will also feature contributions from soprano Caroline Balfour, his wife [and a former pupil of Susan H-E].

Our Harvest Festival is being celebrated on Sunday 9th October and we are planning a Ploughman's Lunch after the morning service at about 12.00. The cost will be £5.00 for adults, to include coffee and cream - children free. After the lunch Fr Bill is going to amuse and entertain us with tales about Harvest & Food in Africa during which games will be provided for the children in the Church. To help us estimate numbers please sign the list at the back of the Church. Everyone welcome.

Events Sub Committee

If convenient would the members of the Events sub committee please attend a brief meeting in the Lady Chapel this Sunday, 25th, after the morning service. Thank you, Sue B.

Pet Blessing Service - Fr Angus is keen to gauge whether there is any interest in holding a Pet Service during which people are invited to bring along their pets to be blessed. This usually falls on or near the feast of St Francis (4th October). The current suggestion is to hold the service on Saturday 15th October at 2pm. There is a sign-up sheet at the back of church for those who are interested. Please, also speak to Fr Angus if you have any questions.

Contact details:

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