



The Easter Garden 2024 at St Michael & All Angels', Headingley.

Photo by J. Peckett.

TASTING THE BREAD OF LIFE

by Rev. Joshua Peckett

Dear friends,

During the Easter season, we hear many of the great 'I am' sayings of Jesus in the Gospel according to St John: 'I am the Good Shepherd... I am the resurrection and the life... I am the true vine...'

The first of these sayings of Jesus is 'I am the bread of life' (John 6.35-40) and it is a saying which always speaks to the need in our world and in our hearts which God addresses through his beloved Son.

There are few conditions of humanity as raw as hunger. If you've ever been truly, deeply hungry, the sting is unforgettable. From somewhere deep inside us, the emptiness makes itself known. It distracts us, drains us, and demands to be addressed. Try working when you're hungry and you'll know that soon your attention goes, until that hunger is satisfied.

It is shocking how many people around our world today continue to go without enough food, and we support endeavours which try to correct the horrendous inequality and greed which lead to this state of affairs. However, the hunger in the world isn't only physical. It is also spiritual. Deep within each of us is a hunger – a spiritual hunger not easily recognized but always present. Something missing. And this seems to be especially true in the modern, secularized West. Perhaps it is feeling unwanted or unloved, forgotten, a sense we cannot achieve what we desire. These are things so many of us know as our hunger. And they are as great a poverty as having nothing to eat, because we cannot live by bread alone.

This spiritual hunger often isn't satisfied. Because we try to fill the emptiness with hollow, material things or deny that it even exists. Jesus knew that behind all our hunger lies one cause: our estrangement from God that causes us to wander into danger and disaster. He warned his listeners that they should not work “for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life”, which Jesus himself will provide (John 6.27).

There is a long tradition in the Old Testament of the life-giving bread of God that nourishes the hungry, physically and spiritually. The Israelites, having escaped from Egypt, are fed by manna – heavenly food – during their desert wandering. Both the concept of Wisdom (the dynamic, creative aspect of God that teaches truth) and Torah (the Law and the way of life that flows from it) are seen as the bread of God. But this food is not enough. Instead, Jesus said: “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry” (John 6.35). In Christ, God extends an invitation to eternal life and asks that we feed upon one who satisfies the physical and spiritual hunger of the world.

In the Eucharist, we encounter the bread of life that satisfies all hunger: heaven and earth met in Christ – his own flesh and blood, taken, broken, blessed and given for our hunger and our thirst. Christ meets us in word and sacrament, bringing rest for the restless soul and fulfillment for the hungry in heart.

And yet, we may also find ourselves with a new appetite; a hunger for justice, for mercy, for freedom, for healing, for God. Wherever we meet and offer the Eucharist, Christ feeds us, giving himself into our hunger and drawing us into his, so that his body, given for the life of the world is not just the sacrament we receive, but the life we offer as we leave the church to be his body in the world.

To receive this bread of life, we do not have to work miracles. We simply have to extend our hands and receive Christ. The one thing God wants of us is that we believe in Jesus and, through our faith in him, God will work his wonders to satisfy our longing. We are often like hungry guests invited to a feast who stand outside, too afraid of the host, too afraid of ourselves, to enter. But hear Christ's words in the voice of one who truly loves you: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

As we trace the impact of Easter on the first Christians, hearing how the resurrection inspired them and the Spirit empowered them to proclaim good news throughout their world, I hope and pray that we may all feed on the bread of life and be likewise ready to speak into the hunger of our present age. Thank you to all who support the work of charities supplying food to those in need; thank you to all who give financially; thank you to all who spend time cheering and comforting the lonely; thank you to all who help those in trouble or who feel lost. Thank you to all who proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed. May God bless you all and prosper your work.

BAPTISMS, CONFIRMATIONS, WEDDINGS

If you would like to enter more deeply into your relationship with God, and are not currently baptized and/or confirmed in your faith, or you would like your child to be baptized, please speak to the clergy about Holy Baptism and Confirmation.

The clergy are always happy to hear from couples who are enquiring about getting married in church. The Church of England provides a very helpful website which covers aspects of planning a church wedding:

www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding

THE THREE MUSKETEERS PANTOMIME

by Kersten Hall

Snowdrops, daffodils, and pancakes may well herald the coming of spring for the rest of the nation, but Headingley has its very own local tradition to celebrate the end of winter – and a welcome one at that. Lighter mornings and evenings bring a much-needed boost to the spirits, but so too does the St Michael's Pantomime. And this year's performance in February did not disappoint in this regard. The classic adventure novel 'The Three Musketeers' has been made into numerous film adaptations, cartoons and video games (it has even provided the inspiration for a lyric by '80s pop-miserabilists 'The Smiths'), but this year, the Stage Group gave Alexander Dumas' classic tale some extra swash and buckle.

With a medley of lively musical numbers (sometimes accompanied by a sea of waving mobile phone lights from the audience), a vibrant set depicting the Parisian cityscape, and an energetic performance from all, the cast gave the story a very entertaining new lease of life reminiscent of 'Blackadder' meets 'Horrible Histories' - or perhaps, thanks to the villainous plotting of diabolical duo Richelieu (Alastair Marshall) and Comte de Rochefort (Arriel Grimes), 'Carry on Cardinal'?

17th century Paris made a perfect setting for double-entendres to fly thick and fast, particularly thanks to the mournful reflections of Athos (played with gusto by Ryan Lewis, who also wrote the script) on how lack of 'appiness' had blighted his life. (If it's not immediately obvious why Ryan's doleful pronouncements might prompt a chuckle, try reading that last sentence aloud to yourself in Gallic style making sure to drop the 'h' on happiness, and see if you can restrain a snigger.)

In an impressive display of stamina, the French accents never flagged – and nor did the energy of the cast in a performance peppered with some inspired moments of improvisation such as Cardinal Richelieu's seamless breaking of the 4th wall, or the on-stage appearance of Tilly the dog - who was notably better behaved than the 'crazy horses' upon which Porthos, Athos and Aramis galloped down the aisle of the church hall.

In previous years, the St Michael's pantomime has rivalled 'Spitting Image' for scathing political satire and parody. We've seen Goldilocks help the three bears confront persecution by an anti-immigrant populist politician; an egotistical halitotic Humpty Dumpty stoking tensions with crass boasts of 'building a wall' (as well as bearing a remarkable resemblance to Donald Trump); Boris Johnson in a cynical and Faustian collusion with the gold-spinning Rumpelstiltskin. This year, however, with the exception of a couple of mentions of Brexit and digs at our current regime, political classes were spared their usual (and often deserved) pummelling, but in place of political caricatures the audience was nevertheless left with a powerful message. For although the cry of 'One for all and all for one' may well have been intended to rally the musketeers against the dastardly plots of Cardinal Richelieu, it also resonates with us in 2024 as the perfect call-to-arms for building community and healing social division - especially so in a general election year. And as a glance at any newspaper headline or news bulletin will sadly confirm, it's a message that this bitterly divided world of ours could desperately do with hearing. Which is why, as I left the church hall smiling that night, it struck me that maybe this made 'The Three Musketeers' the perfect choice for this year's pantomime. Well done to everyone involved!



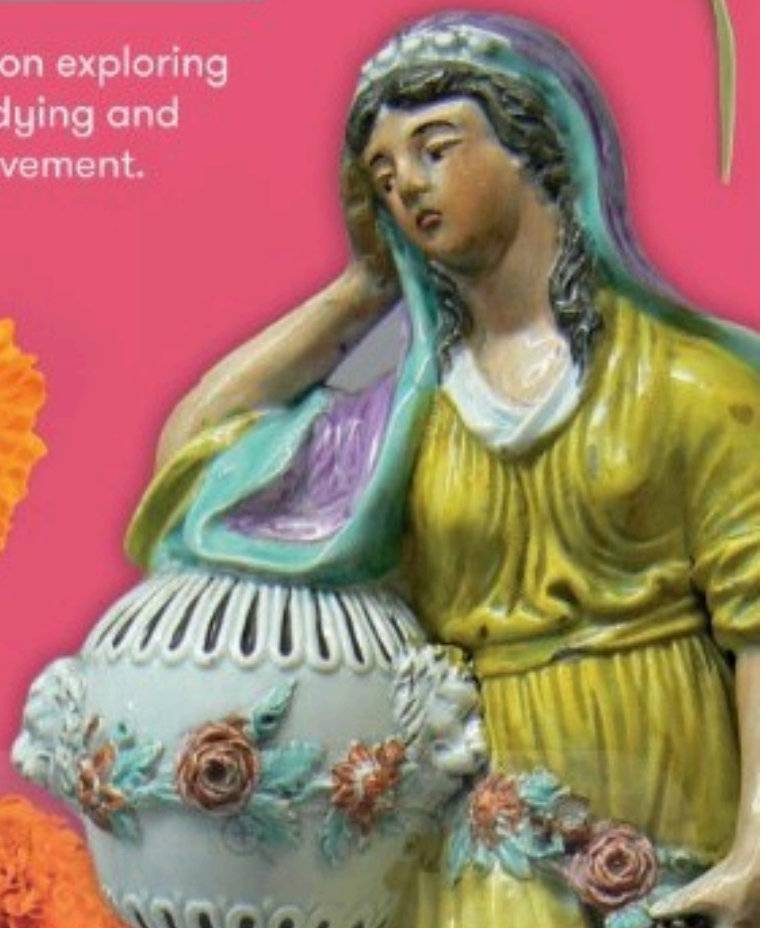
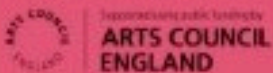
The Three Musketeers take to the stage. Left to right: Ryan Lewis, Luke Verrall and Deryck Piper. Photo by Alastair Marshall.

LEEDS *city*
MUSEUM

Living with Death

3 May 24 – 6 Jan 25

An exhibition exploring
death, dying and
bereavement.



‘LIVING WITH DEATH’ - A NEW EXHIBITION

by Rev. Joshua Peckett

There can be few subjects as uncomfortable as death. We know that it affects everyone, but it is often difficult to talk about. Most people in modern Britain avoid thinking about their own death until the last moment. They put off making wills, they do not leave clear instructions about the sort of funeral they would like, and they rarely make long-term plans for their final years. The ‘business of death’ is professionalized and hidden away from society - behind the doors of funeral homes and crematoria. Most people have never seen a deceased person’s body.

This is a stark contrast to past generations - families had to take a more intimate approach to caring for the elderly and the dying, and to preparing the deceased for burial. People were encouraged to consider what a ‘good death’ would look like and be prepared to put their affairs in good order - to die in a right relationship with God and their neighbour, and to state how they wanted their possessions passed on.

Now Leeds City Museum has launched a new exhibition, called ‘Living with Death’, which invites visitors to explore the different ways people experience death, dying, and grief. ‘Living with Death’ looks at how humans have developed knowledge and skills in response to life ending. The exhibition hopes to gently encourage conversation through personal stories, and objects from across the world and throughout history. A series of talks, workshops, and family-friendly events will complement the exhibition throughout the year. The exhibition has been developed with input from local communities - including a couple of contributions from St Michael’s - and is supported by Dying Matters Leeds, part of a national initiative promoting public awareness of dying, death, and bereavement.

I encourage you to visit the exhibition and to take time, whatever your age or state of health, to consider the questions it raises. What does it mean to have a ‘good death’ and how can we live well with death rather than avoiding it fearfully? If you would like to speak to the clergy about any matters relating to this, please do get in touch.



St Michael & All Angels'
Headingley

Dedication Festival
Sunday 7th July

10.00 - Sung Eucharist

*A special service of sung Holy Communion
celebrating St Michael's church.*

11.45 - 'Beating the parish bounds'

*An afternoon's walk (approx. 4 miles)
tracing the parish boundaries. Meet in church
after the morning Eucharist.*

16.30 - Afternoon Tea

*Join us for Afternoon Tea in church
- strawberries and scones galore.*

18.30 - Choral Evensong

*Evensong from The Book of Common Prayer
with guest preacher The Rev'd Alex Crawford,
Vicar of St Margaret's Ilkley.*

**www.stmichaelsheadingley.org
St Michael's Road, Leeds, LS6 3AW**

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Thursday 2nd May - Local Elections - Please remember that you will need to show photo ID (e.g. a passport or driving licence) in order to vote in person.

Thursday 9th May - Ascension Day at Wrangthorn - We will be celebrating the Ascension of Jesus Christ with St Augustine's Church, Wrangthorn (Hyde Park Terrace, Leeds, LS6 1BJ) at 7.30pm.

Sunday 12th May - Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon - The marathon will be passing through Headingley. The church will be open early to offer refreshments to passers-by. Please note that your normal route to church may be disrupted and you should plan ahead.

Sunday 19th May - St Michael's APCM - The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will be held at after the morning Eucharist in church, starting at 11.30am. This is a good opportunity to be updated about what is happening at St Michael's.

Thursday 30th May - Corpus Christi at All Souls' - We will be celebrating the institution of Holy Communion with an evening service at All Souls' Blackman Lane (Blackman Lane, Leeds, LS2 9EY). Time to be arranged - please check St Michael's pew sheets and website for more details as they are confirmed.

Sunday 23rd June - Leeds 10k - The 10k run will be passing through Headingley. Please note that your normal route to church may be disrupted and you should plan ahead.

Sunday 30th June - Bradford Cathedral Choir at St Michael's - We will be welcoming the Choir of Bradford Cathedral to sing Choral Evensong at 6.30pm.

Sunday 7th July - Dedication Festival - We will be celebrating the anniversary of the dedication of St Michael's church. See the poster opposite for more details.

Saturday 20th July - Brass Band Concert - There will be a brass band concert in church at 3pm.



St Michael's Choir


Come & sing!

Have you ever thought about joining a choir?

Singing is good for the mind, body and soul. And making music is a great way to be creative and express ourselves, as well as develop new skills, find support and have fun together. Why not consider joining the choir and help lead worship at St Michael's?

St Michael's Choir sing at St Michael & All Angels' church (Headingley) on Sundays at the 10.00am Parish Eucharist and at 6.30pm for Evensong, as well as occasional special services. Choir practice is held at 7.00pm on Wednesdays in church. All are welcome to join.

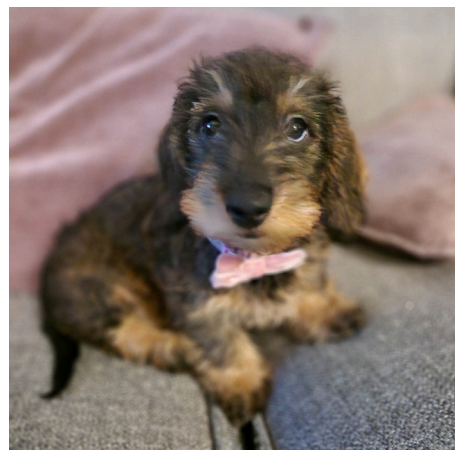
For more information, please contact the Choirmaster, David Walls, by email at: saintmichaelsheadingley@gmail.com

 www.stmichaelsheadingley.org

 St Michael's Road, LS6 3AW

DIARY OF A CHURCH DOG

Gosh doesn't time fly! I am now 6 months old and as yet I have not developed a singing voice like my predecessor. I have, however, gone where he was not allowed (Mumma says he was too naughty to do it). Yes, I made my first stage appearance in the St Michael's panto - 'The Three Musketeers'. I had enjoyed attending all the rehearsals and had watched and listened as their 'dancing' and French accents improved. Then come the time for the performances I slept, for the most part, in my basket backstage. However on the final night I decided that I had been backstage long enough and the only place for me was in the limelight. So after a small protest Mumma took me on stage in her arms and I absolutely loved it - all those people staring and adoring me was all I needed. I behaved exceptionally well and simply soaked up the adoration. Next year I will demand a part.



The panto itself was a riot of joyous exuberance. The music (a lot of Sondheim) was brilliant and the costumes were amazing, especially the Musketeers' tights! The acting was truly OTT, just what you need for a panto, and don't get me started on the accents! Mumma produces these every year and along with a hard core team of regulars, both on and off stage, plus newbies, the St Michael's tradition for a jolly good romp of a panto was most certainly upheld this year. Setting the classic Dumas novel as a panto was a step some might say impossible, but the characterization and indeed the truth to the original story was well done. Who knows, perhaps next year I could star in an adaptation of another classic novel... Snoopy the Panto? Call of the Wild the Panto?

DONATIONS

You can support the mission and ministry of St Michael's by donating using the QR code opposite:



REGULAR SERVICES

On Sundays

10am, Parish Eucharist - Our main weekly act of worship including music from our choir, sermon, the celebration of Holy Communion and followed by refreshments. This service usually lasts about 65 minutes.

6.30pm, Evensong - Traditional service of Evensong with the choir singing the psalm, canticles and anthem, as well as leading the hymns. Followed by refreshments. This service lasts about 45 minutes.

On Weekdays

10.30am, Said Eucharist (Every Wednesday) - A simple, reflective service of Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel, followed by refreshments. This service usually lasts about 35 minutes.

8pm, Compline (Second Tuesday of every month) - Contemplation by candlelight at the end of the day, before commending oneself to God and a peaceful night's sleep. This service lasts about 20 minutes.

WHO'S WHO

Clergy - Rev. Joshua Peckett, Assistant Curate - tel. 07869 162 110
or email joshua.peckett@leeds.anglican.org

Churchwardens - John Cowling & Ann Dudzinski

Director of Music - David Walls

Safeguarding Officer - Rebecca Crowson - tel. 0775 452 4507

Treasurer & Parish Hall Bookings Secretary - Janet Lewis

The **Parish Office** is open on Tuesdays (10am-3pm) - tel. 0113 275 4053

FIND US

Online: www.stmichaelsheadingley.org & on Facebook

In person: St Michael & All Angels' Church, St Michael's Road, LS6 3AW