

Creationtide
&
Kingdomtide

Michaelmas 2026

The Church of The Holy Innocents
Paddenswick Road, W6 0UB

Michaelmas

Traditionally there are four “quarter days” in a year: Lady Day (25th March), Midsummer (24th June), Michaelmas (29th September) and Christmas (25th December). On these dates servants used to be hired, rents became due or leases began. It was once said that harvest had to be completed by Michaelmas - the Feast of Michael & All Angels - so marking the end of one season of farming and the beginning of a new cycle. Michaelmas became the name for the first of three academic terms and one of four legal terms of year used by the Courts.

At some point in late August as the new school year and Michaelmas term approaches, there is often an almost imperceptible change in the atmosphere and we sense that the summer has ‘turned the corner’. The days become shorter, and while the sea remains warm the land is starting to cool, so there is more moisture in the air around us and the evenings are ‘drawing in’. We are approaching Keats’ ‘season of mists and mellow fruitfulness’ – a time that represents both the fullness of life and its transience. The ripening of things is part of the natural dying process which results in the beautiful reds and golds of autumn. Later, strong winds strip the trees of their autumnal glory and there can be a sodden smell of decay in rain filled, foggy air bringing with it a sense of decline and endings. The church year ends with a focus on these last things, as we remember our ultimate future, just as in the Advent we begin to await the past.

Creationtide

Creationtide, or the Season of Creation, was introduced in 1989 by the late Ecumenical Patriarch, Demetrios I, from the Eastern Orthodox church and observed from 1st September (the first day of the Orthodox church year) to 4th October, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. It is a period dedicated to honouring God as Creator and Sustainer of all life, encouraging us to reflect on humanity’s responsibility for the earth. As a shared idea between Western and Eastern Christianity, all churches and congregations are called to pay special attention to our shared responsibility for the earth and everything that lives upon it.

The World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation launches the season on 1st September. The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary is traditionally celebrated on 8th September, with the whole of creation jubilant because Mary’s birth is a

joyful prelude to the gift of salvation. In France, this feast day is known as 'Our Lady of the Grape Harvest' and the best grapes are taken to church to be blessed. In other countries around the world, local harvested crops are ceremonially prepared and distributed as part of the celebrations. In the United Kingdom on 8th September, we now mark Accession Day, the anniversary of the day when the Crown passed at the death of Queen Elizabeth II to her eldest child, Charles III, the current Sovereign, Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England – a day of prayer and reflection.

As we have already seen, the incorporation within this season of Harvest is rooted in the patterns and traditions of local communities. Ours has in recent times extended over the Sundays in October with our fundraising focus on the Upper Room. In contrast to the more familiar rural, agricultural themes, ours is an urban reflection of prayer around food security and community table, giving thanks for God's bounty and the capacity to share with the stranger and the broken (in others, in ourselves). Ours may be an urban harvest, but it is worth remembering that while 99% of the food consumed in London has to be brought in from outside, there are still urban farms here, a flourishing tradition for allotments that are much sought after, as well as local gardeners, including schools such as John Betts, planting flowers, food and herbs that also support wildlife to the benefit of all.

The well known and loved Harvest Festival is actually a relatively modern addition to the church year and only officially recognised in 1862. Its origins are usually traced back to the adaptation in 1843 of Lammas Day by the Revd R. S. Hawker, a parish priest in Cornwall. The rural feast of Lammas (or loaf-mass) was traditionally on 1st August and the first fruits of the wheat harvest would be offered, baked as a special loaf. Revd Hawker chose the first Sunday in October as a Christian response to coincide with an ancient, more secular 'harvest home' celebration. The final day of the harvest is celebrated with singing and decorating the village and the last sheaf of grain representing the spirit of the field is made into a doll, drenched with water as a rain charm and saved until the spring planting. There is evidence that a Christian thanksgiving service for the harvest was already relatively widespread by the time of Revd Hawker's decision in Cornwall, but he is attributed with the Harvest Festival we celebrate today.

This year our Harvest Festival falls on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on 4th October, but all such festivals have their roots in the biblical practice of giving to God the first fruits of every collaboration between human beings and the

rest of creation. From the instructions for the Festival of Ingathering in Exodus, to the details for celebrating Sukkot found in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, right up to Jesus' parables, agricultural references and pastoral imagery are a running thread throughout the Bible. Demonstrating that our connection with our environment is a wonderful, godly gift to be taken seriously; and our well-being depends on the well-being of our planet.

Kingdomtide

The period commonly named the Kingdom Season is between All Saints' Day and the First Sunday of Advent and is a time of celebration and reflection on the reign of Christ in earth and heaven. These final weeks of the church year also include All Souls' Day, Remembrance Sunday and Christ the King and all refer to the theme of God's Kingdom.

No Christian is ever alone. Through baptism we become members of one another in Christ and members of a company of saints whose mutual belonging transcends death. On All Saints' we celebrate our belonging and the lives of those saints who have lived before us, recognising that God's grace is powerfully at work in the most ordinary of circumstances as well as in the extraordinary times of our lives.

All Souls' is a time when we particularly remember those known to us who have died and our prayers remind us that we are joined with the Communion of Saints, that great group of Christians who have finished their earthly life and with whom we share the hope of resurrection from the dead.

Remembrance Sunday is the closest to 11th November, being the '11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month' when the 1st WW Armistice came into effect in 1918. Since then, we have particularly remembered the armed forces and recognise all those who have sacrificed their lives for others in some way. Yet for the previous 1,500 years 11th November was only celebrated as 'Martinmas', St Martin's Day - the Feast of St Martin of Tour. He was buried on 11th November 397, is venerated as the patron saint of France and soldiers and is considered the first great leader of Western monasticism.

Saint Martin chose his Christian faith at the age of 10 and was forced to join the Roman army because of his pagan father's connections, which he managed to petition his way out of citing his faith as 'Christ's soldier.' While still a soldier and catechumen (learner of the faith) he cut his cloak in half to share it

with a beggar and that night dreamed Jesus was clothed in the torn half of his cloak which was fully restored when he awoke. Moved by this vision and miracle he finished his religious instruction and was baptised at age 18. In art throughout the age he is most generally portrayed on horseback dividing his cloak with the beggar while still a soldier, and so is the most fitting Saint and Feast day for that 1st WW Armistice in 1918, and our Remembrance services ever since.

The Feast of Christ the King suggests a triumphalist fanfare to end the church year, which it of course is, yet all our scripture readings point to a humble king who rules by peace and reconciliation, not power and fear. Christ the King overturns all earthly kings and leaves us with the glorious humble calling to live in God's Kingdom right here and the eternity of God right now.

Creationtide Services and Programme

Parochial Church Council Meeting

Sunday, September 6 · 10:10

In the context of the Liturgy · Parish Eucharist

9-11 Memorial Concert, Southwark Cathedral

Friday, September 11 · 19:30

On the 25th anniversary of 9/11, The Outcry Ensemble presents a programme of American and British music reflecting on loss, memory and the human cost of violence. Tickets from £10.

London Excursion

Saturday, September 12 · 10:00

Uber Boat by Thames Clippers downriver. Meet at Putney Pier for the 10:13 departure, arriving at Greenwich Pier at 12 noon.

Holy Cross Day

Monday, September 14 · 19:30

Parish Eucharist

Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

Monday, September 21 · 19:30

Parish Eucharist

Michael and All Angels (Michaelmas)

Tuesday, September 29 · 19:30

Patronal Festival at St Michael and All Angels, Bedford Park

Francis of Assisi / Harvest Festival

Sunday, October 4 · 10:10

Parish Eucharist

The Harvest Appeal

Throughout October

Throughout the month of October we collect for the Upper Room Project. Please see the dedicated leaflet.

Albion Orchestra Concert

Saturday, October 10 · 19:30

Part of the chamber series Albion Up Close, featuring the world premiere of Gregory Rose's Trumpet Concerto, and gems of the string orchestra repertoire by Holst and Elgar.

Culture Trip: Ballet Black at Sadler's Wells

Thursday, October 15 · 19:30

A double-bill celebrating the internationally acclaimed company's 25th Anniversary. **Ingoma** (2019), the choreographic debut of former Company dancer, **Mthuthuzeli November**. Inspired by the 1946 South African miners' strike, and ...all towards hope. A joyful new commission from Alvin Ailey royalty **Hope Boykin**, a two-time Bessie Award winner, making her UK choreographic debut. Tickets from £15.

Edwardtide Pilgrimage

Saturday, October 17 · 09:00 – 16:00 (free entry)

The National Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Edward the Confessor, Westminster Abbey.

This annual day gives you the opportunity to visit the Abbey, experience its beauty in an atmosphere characterised by prayer. Pilgrims can pray at the Shrine of St Edward – the King and Saint who re-founded the Abbey – and in other spaces set aside in the Abbey.

Luke the Evangelist

Sunday, October 18 · 10:10

Parish Eucharist

Theatre Trip: Omnibus Theatre, Clapham

Wednesday, October 21 · 19:30

DOLLY, a darkly funny new play about a stand-up comic coping with injustice. By Charlotte Ashton, directed by Anthony Biggs. Tickets £10.

Simon and Jude, Apostles

Wednesday, October 28 · 19:30

Parish Eucharist

Kingdomtide Services and Programme

All Saints' / Founder's Day

Sunday, November 1 · 10:10

Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls')

Monday, November 2 · 19:30

Parish Eucharist

Johann Michael Haydn (1737–1806)

Missa pro Defunctis (1771) MH155

Requiem Archiepiscopo Sigismondo

A Progress With Our Lady

Saturday, November 7 · 10:30

A Quiet Day Pilgrimage to London sacred sites associated with devotion to Our Lady. Pre-registration required; meet at the Church.

Remembrance Sunday

Sunday, November 8 · 10:10

Parish Eucharist and Act of Remembrance

Charity Concert

Sunday, November 15 · 14:30

Supporting Grow To Know, a Community Interest Company that raises awareness of social and environmental injustice. Creators of the community garden Hands Off Mangrove (RHS Chelsea Flower Show).

Christ the King

Sunday, November 22 · 10:10

Parish Eucharist

Andrew, Apostle (in Advent)

Monday, November 30 · 19:30

Parish Eucharist

Further details about services and events will be available on the noticeboard and on our website: www.hisj.co.uk

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