



*St Michael with St Mary*

# **Annual Report and Accounts 2017**

including the Agenda for the Annual Meeting  
10.00 am Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2018 in St Michael's Church

UK Registered Charity 1132915

The Parish Office  
The Vicarage  
St Michael's Street  
St Albans, AL3 4SL

[www.stmichaels-parishchurch.org.uk/home.asp](http://www.stmichaels-parishchurch.org.uk/home.asp)

Governed by the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure (1956) as amended  
and Church Representation Rules



## **THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETINGS**

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

### **10am THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

- 1. Appointment of Clerk**
- 2. Election of Churchwardens**

### **10.10am THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. To receive the revised Electoral Roll**
- 3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017**
- 4. Delegation of Churchwardens' powers in respect of St Mary, Childwick Green to those elected as Deputy Churchwarden/s**
- 5. Election of Deputy Churchwarden/s**
- 6. Election of members to St Albans Deanery Synod**
- 7. Election of members to the PCC**
- 8. Election of St Mary's sub-committee**
- 9. Election of Stewards (Sidesmen)**
- 10. Election of Assistant Churchwarden/s for St Michael's**
- 11. To receive the Annual Report of the PCC including Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017**
- 12. Appointment of Reviewing Accountant**
- 13. Chairman's remarks**
- 14. Matters arising from minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017 or discussion of matters of general parochial interest – to be received in advance at [gdw451@gmail.com](mailto:gdw451@gmail.com)**
- 15. Date of Next Meeting**
- 16. Grace**

## Introduction

Introduction:  
Our Story in 2017

Kenneth Padley  
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By comparison with my other years as Vicar of St Michael's with St Mary's, 2017 seems remarkably 'normal': familiar patterns of parish life have continued and countless hours have been given in the Lord's service and witness. That said, nothing stands still: there are many things to celebrate as well as comings and goings, all of which it is the duty of this **Annual Report** to chronicle. Without treading on the toes of what is to follow, I would flag the following highlights from the previous twelve months.

2017 opened with the launch of our new **website**, a vital tool for contemporary communication. Throughout the year I have been hearing compliments about its attractiveness and accessibility. Now under the care of new webmasters Russell and Yolissa Palmer, the website was designed by **Mary Fisher**, shortly before her surprise announcement in late January that she would not be completing her curacy with us. We wished Mary well in her return to teaching.

Come the summer term, attentions turned to **St Mary's 150<sup>th</sup>** anniversary, centred on the wonderful flower festival during the Whitsuntide bank holiday. This celebration successfully shared information about St Mary's worship and facilities and kick-started debate about a potential toilet extension. Also during the summer months, the **Parish News** magazine made the important transition from paper to electronic distribution. Although this has been a challenging step for some, there is widespread appreciation of why this change has become necessary, an opportunity which has simultaneously slashed costs and more than doubled circulation.

In addition to the parish's summer maintenance schedule in our halls, construction work got under way in August on the **extension at St Michael's Lower School**. This is the first of a two-phase project to transform our Church primary into facilities fit for the twenty-first century, adding two extra classrooms at Top School and drawing a further sixty children and their families into the ambit of parish life. I hope that this second phase can be fully completed by the end of 2018.

Into the autumn and we saw heartening levels of interest in our **evening study groups**, both the five-week course on the Reformation organised through the Cathedral Study Centre and the three *Burning Questions* evenings on the Bible, medical ethics and global conflict. The autumn months were also a time of significant consolidation in St Michael's **musical life**, namely the appointment of the very promising George Throup to our Organ Scholarship, and the initiation of choral scholarships to augment the growing ranks of our adult choir.

Behind the soft capital, the numbers tell an encouraging story. We are a **growing church**: over the last few years we have seen rising attendance at festivals. In addition, 2017 witnessed a rebound in average attendance at a number of our services, including the main Sunday 9.30am. These figures represent a widening periphery - new people whom we should all encourage to delve deeper - *and* a strengthened core, regular faithful worshippers who are the vital lifeblood of any parish. In addition, we remain a genuinely **all age community**: our congregations on Christmas Day included at least one person born in 2017, one person born in 1915(!), and most ages in between.

Good news feeds off itself and flows through to other areas. Our fabric and finance are in excellent health and the accounts show a **small surplus on the General Fund**, the first time it has been achieved for many years.

So there is plenty to build on – not laurels to be rested. We go into 2018 with confidence not complacency. 2018 will be a year in which I hope to welcome **new ministerial colleagues**. We will also need to renew our five-year strategy, our **Mission Action Plan**; this will need to be simpler than previous plans and have an overarching focus on mission and evangelism, a pressing need for all churches amid the challenges of a secular age.

## Introduction

On a **personal note**, I remain grateful for parishioners' understanding and support for those things which I do beyond St Michael's and St Mary's: acting as a Bishops' Adviser at selection panels for prospective ordinands, sitting on two diocesan committees, and working with colleagues in the Deanery of St Albans to raise the profile of Church of England funerals in the locality.

As I have written elsewhere, I will be on **sabbatical** (Extended Study Leave) between April and June 2018 and I am grateful for the understanding of the Wardens and PCC as I head towards this opportunity for rest, reconnection with God, and (hopefully!) re-honing some of my ministerial skills.

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## Parish

Church Wardens'  
Report  
Graham Willey  
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Over the last few years the Church Wardens' report has necessitated a focus on big projects, work carried out to improve and provide sustainability to the utilities within St Michael's so it is rather a relief to focus on the 'normal' activity and particularly in a year of celebration, for St Mary's. The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary has brought a wonderful community together and our enormous thanks to Paul Barnes and his team for their meticulous planning and execution of the successful events throughout 2017. Further details can be found in Kenneth's and Pauls' reports.

*and*

Stephanie Rainbow  
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stephanie.rainbow@venture.co.uk

After years of clock winding Richard North and Stuart Vincent have finally been able to lay their winding tools down in favour of an auto-winding mechanism and pendulum regulator for St Michael's Tower clock. Our thanks to the benefactor enabling the purchase and installation of the mechanism, which was installed in June by Smith of Derby. A heartfelt thank you to Richard and Stuart for so many years of dedicated service and many stairs climbed, to ensure that St Michael's clock remained wound and chiming the hour across the district.

A legacy from Sue Oakey and family, in memory of her late mother, Barbara Hellier, provided for a new and easy access pathway to be laid to the Remembrance Garden. The new resin bonded path and new bench has enhanced the area and provided easy access for wheelchairs. Improving the path was something that the family felt was important to open up access to a peaceful space. Thank you to the Oakey family for a lasting legacy in Barbara's name.

It has been a year of electrical fixing, so of course, the call went out to Bob May who has carried out a huge amount of work including installing a new 360 PIR system in the porch and helping with the planning and faculty application to fix the clergy vestry lights and electrics. Kenneth & John no longer have to rely on a diet of carrots to help them prepare for services in the dark!

David Fletcher, our health and safety officer, carried out a survey of the churchyard and its memorials earlier in the year; there were 6 memorials that gave some cause for concern. Each memorial was tested for stability and resulted in one stone being extracted and laid flat to reduce risk to the public. The remaining 5 are of no immediate risk but we remain vigilant and further checks have been, and will be carried out on a 6 monthly basis. Any further issues will be reported by David accordingly.

We would also like to especially thank Roy Brooks for his meticulous crafting of footstool, wheelchair ramp, pallets for the high altar kneelers, clips to keep our wands tidy in the vestry, under-light for the organ (Colin can now see what his feet are doing!) and especially the new crib scene constructed for our Christmas celebrations together with Susie Biggar for the beautiful Bethlehem scene. Such craftsmanship and eye-for-detail in everything that he does for St Michael's is truly wonderful.

And so to the 'normal' ... as always the maintenance of St Michael's is a continual process, the churchyard working party is always kept busy, led by Jim Mann with his merry band of community volunteers – keep busy mowing, pruning, sweeping, digging, raking, cleaning gutters and much more to keep St Michael's churchyard looking so pristine. The internal cleaning teams, led by Jane Larman and Alison Ferreira meet without fail throughout the year to keep St Michael's bug and dust free. As always, a big thanks to Sue and Jane for keeping all teams fed and watered with coffee, cake and biscuits - the sustenance of all working parties! We are also very grateful to John Mathews, Peter Lindeman and their teams who respectively keep the Parish Centre and Memorial Hall running and continually implement improvements. Without all our hard-working volunteers, a Church Warden's life would be so difficult.

The quinquennial report was also carried out in the autumn and it will not be a surprise to learn that the top priority of work to be carried out is the redecoration of the main body of the church. This is a big project and will require fund-raising for this piece of work to be carried out – the next big project! Watch this space for fund-raising ideas and opportunities to get involved!

## Parish

Thank you as always to our teams of volunteers who decorate St Michael's for Harvest and Christmas, a special thank you to Wendy May who with her merry band of creative geniuses who transform the church, season specific, and enhances our worship in St Michael's with their beautiful creations.

Thank you to The Friends of St Michael's, who, with the support of Lord Verulam, has continued as a group and who kindly donated the AED installed in the Parish Centre – thank you to David Fletcher and team for your continued support.

Gill Huckerby has handed in her 'lunch club co-ordinator' hat, thank you Gill for taking the reins at a necessary time and ensuring that this important community group continued. Long may it continue with other volunteers taking up those reins! Our thanks also to Val Chiesa who has (almost!) retired from tirelessly running Traidcraft after establishing it at St Michael's and keeping us supplied for so many years with fairtrade goods from coffee to toilet rolls!

We were pleased to welcome and we thank our visiting preachers: Bishop Stephen Venner at morning Services, Rev'd Jos Perris at Evensong, Rev'd Martin Banister at St Mary's evening Eucharist, our Archdeacon, the Venerable Jonathan Smith, for his huge support in Holy Week at St Michael's and in May at St Mary's Festival Evensong. It is a pleasure and joy to enhance our worship with the wisdom and words of such a variety of preachers.

Our thanks to everyone who has supported us so wonderfully throughout the year, to Georgie and Danielle in the office, to Sue as the welcome co-ordinator and Gill our Treasurer for their guidance and support, and to Paul and all who support at St Marys, our Assistant Wardens Rachel & Chris. We welcomed a new Assistant Warden this year, Steve Argent who has seamlessly joined the team and allows us to share the duties on a Sunday across a wider team.

A huge thank you to these and to so many others who give their time and talents.

Finally, our grateful thanks to and for our Clergy, Kenneth, John & Mike and to our Director of Music Colin, and our choir for enhancing our worship with beautiful music.

We are blessed with the support and love of all members of the St Michael and St Mary community - -Thank you!

### St Mary's Deputy Wardens' Report

Paul Barnes  
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Central focus during 2017 for St Mary's was our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the building of the Church.

There were a number of events, mostly of a "PR" rather than specifically fund raising type with the notable exception of the flower festival weekend and special concert. All were well attended, supported and appreciated and in addition to reaching out, from which we are still enjoying the benefit, the flower festival and concert raised in excess of £6,000 over the Bank Holiday weekend.

This has allowed us to commission an architect to draw up plans and obtain planning approval for the project we are now embarked on to build a disabled internal toilet and lobby between the Church and the school room, plans of which are displayed in the school room. This will enable us to bring the facilities right up to date and to maximize the schoolroom potential, a key source of income.

During the year, and in time for the 150th events a "Friends' of St Mary's" group was started and we hope that this, over time, will grow to involve more of the community in the general care of, and appreciation of, the Church on the green in a physical rather than religious way.

At the very end of the year we had our quinquennial inspection and we will be addressing some of the points raised in the following report during 2018 and beyond.

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Our attendance held at steady numbers although our electoral roll numbers are slightly down unfortunately causing three funerals to be held at St Mary's.

The Church and school room combined on several occasions to provide an excellent "quiet day" venue to which it is perfectly suited.

St Mary's is now "open" quite frequently and many of the comments left in the visitors book are heartening, as too are some of the messages and prayers left on the "prayer tree"

We continue to be very well served and supported by St Michaels in general, the PCC, the choir, and in particular and of course the clergy who lead our regular and special services and in so many other ways; we are most grateful.

Overall it was a very busy and enjoyable year as we move towards embracing the future.



Parish
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PCC Members 2017 Members of the Parochial Church Council and Trustees of the Charity during 2017 were:

**Ex Officio**

Paul Barnes, Deputy Churchwarden

Mary Fisher (until 29<sup>th</sup> January 2017)

Kenneth Padley, Chair

Stephanie Rainbow, Churchwarden

Graham Willey, Churchwarden, Lay Vice Chair

**Elected to Deanery Synod**

*3 elected triennially at APCM and sit on PCC also:*

Sandra North

*2 vacancies*

**Elected to PCC**

*elected at APCM to serve on a rolling triennial basis:*

Chris Allen (until APCM 2020)

Lynn Ashmore (until APCM 2020)

Imogen Broad (until APCM 2019)

Sue Dyson (until APCM 2018)

Alison Ferreira (until APCM 2018)

David Fletcher (until APCM 2018)

Gill Huckerby (until APCM 2019), Treasurer

Jane Larman (until APCM 2018)

Fiona Males (until APCM 2020), Secretary

Rachel Naylor (until APCM 2018)

Bronwen Parr (until APCM 2019)

Colin Roberts (until APCM 2020)

Michael Tutt (until APCM 2020)

Nigel Voyce (until APCM 2020)

*One vacancy (until APCM 2019)*

**Co-opted**

John Hayton

## Parish

### Parochial Church Council Report 2017

Fiona Males,  
PCC Secretary  
01727 812436  
fionamales@hotmail.com

The PCC held 6 committee meetings during the year with average attendance of 15 people. These meetings are alternated each month by those of the three sub-committees:

- Pastoral and Worship
- Mission and Community
- Stewardship

The PCC also includes members of the Standing Committee (clergy and wardens), the St Mary's Committee, the Deanery and the Diocesan Synod. All of these committees report back to and participate in decision making for the PCC at the yearly six meetings.

Copies of the PCC minutes are on the notice boards in St Michael's Tower Room and St Mary's Schoolroom for anyone wishing to read them.

### Annual Meeting of Parishioners Minutes 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016 10.00 a.m.

Fiona Males,  
PCC Secretary  
01727 812436  
fionamales@hotmail.com

#### **Appointment of Clerk**

Fiona Males appointed secretary

#### **Election of Churchwardens**

Two churchwardens elected:  
Graham Willey  
Stephanie Rainbow

Kenneth expressed his gratitude and thanks for the past 12 months of service and looks forward to the next 12 months.

### **THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)**

### Annual Parochial Church Meeting Minutes 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016 10.10 a.m.

Fiona Males,  
PCC Secretary  
01727 812436  
fionamales@hotmail.com

#### **1. Apologies**

Chris Allen, Stephanie Rainbow, Sue Dyson, Peter Lindeman, Rachel Naylor, Russell Palmer, Yolissa Palmer, Janice Western, Mike Western, Imogen Broad, Geoff Warwick

#### **2. To Receive the Revised Electoral Roll**

Fiona Males presented the Electoral Roll for 2017 – defined as a list of eligible people to vote at such meetings.

189 total number on the Electoral Roll.

#### **3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

Minutes confirmed as an accurate representation of the meeting.

Proposed: Sandra North; Seconded: Colin Roberts; nem con

#### **4. Delegation of Churchwardens' powers in respect of St Mary, Childwick Green to those elected as Deputy Churchwarden/s**

Responsibilities of the Churchwardens to act for the whole parish but delegated to Deputy Churchwardens at Childwickbury.

Proposed: Michael Tutt; Seconded: Graham Willey; nem con

#### **5. Election of Deputy Churchwarden/s**

1 deputy churchwarden elected

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Paul Barnes      nem con

### **6. Election of members to St Albans Deanery Synod**

3 posts to be elected they will automatically be PCC members.

Kenneth expressed appreciation to Sandra North for standing the next 3 years. Nem con

2 vacancies remain – PCC to fill

### **7. Election of members to PCC**

First PCC meeting of the year will be 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017

PCC subcommittees are:

Mission and Community to raise profile

Pastoral and Worship to oversee pastoral supervision and care

Stewardship to dealing with fabric and finance and personnel

Thanks were offered for those who have stood down from PCC or the sub-committees in the last year: PCC - Sophie, Fiona; P&W - Gina Dunstan, Mercia Wallace; M&C - Gerdien Kendall

5 members elected to the PCC for 2017-2020: Chris Allen, Lynn Ashmore, Colin Roberts, Michael Tutt, Nigel Voyce

2 vacancies remain for the triennium until April 2019 – PCC to fill

Sub-committees are responsible for their own membership but indications are that:

P&W to include one or two elected members moving from M&C plus co-opts Gillian Davey, Louise Savory and Colin Hamling

Lynn Ashmore to join M & C; also co-opts Michaela Simpson, James Madeley, Alicia Holloway, Adam Styler

Richard North and Peter Lindeman – Co-opted to Stewardship

Thanks to all for getting involved for the next year

### **8. Election of St Mary's sub-committee**

This sub-committee supports the deputy warden in their day to day tasks at St Mary's; any substantial matters to come to the PCC

Members elected: Carolyn Barnes, Richard Craven, Sara Craven, Eike Davis, William Davis, Barbie Edwards, Charmian Highstead, Mike Highstead, Dick Rushman, Harry Woodruff, Rod Woodward.

### **9. Election of Stewards (Sidesmen)**

Election of Stewards to assist church wardens

Chris Allen, Steve Argent, Roy Brooks, Margaret Brooks, Anne Brown, Malcolm Brown, Val Carberry, Val Chiesa, Ann Dean, Gina Dunstan, Alison Ferreira, David Fletcher, Elizabeth Fletcher, Geoff Goodall, Bronwen Hewer, Gill Huckerby, John Hughes, Margaret Hughes, Penny Kent, Wendy Klein, Jane Larman, John Matthews, Sarah Mescal, Russell Palmer, Yolissa Palmer, Jenny Tarvet, Anthony Taylor, Sue Thompson, Maureen

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Voyce, Nigel Voyce, Mercia Wallace, Di Edworthy, Jacqueline Hoddy.

May 14<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> will be refresher training for stewards

Proposed: Ann Dean; seconded: Bronwen Parr; nem con

### **10. Election of Assistant Churchwarden/s for St Michael's**

The role is to take a lead at major services at St Michael's instead of the Churchwardens:

Rachel Naylor, Chris Allen and Steve Argent

Proposed: Richard North; seconded: Jane Larman; nem con

### **11. To receive the Annual Report of the PCC including Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016**

The annual report has been distributed

Kenneth expressed thanks to all involved in ministries at St Michael's and St Mary's and a significant thank you to Georgie Ray for organising the report and all she does in the office. Gill Huckerby as treasurer and all her preparation of the accounts, also Jennie Evans as auditor over the past year.

Gina Dunstan said

*I would like to add real appreciation and thanks to both Rob Milner and the kids in the Children's choir - who worked so hard - achieved so much - as they grew from tiny kids into an outstanding choir - giving us so much - delight - inspiration - over many years. A deep felt thank you to them all.'*

Happy to be received as a record of financial year 2016. nem con

### **12. Appointment of Reviewing Accountant**

Jennie Evans has reviewed the accounts for this past year and has kindly done so free of charge. Jennie is willing to continue through 2017. Should she be unable at any time to continue, appointment of an auditor will then fall to the PCC.

### **13. Chairman's remarks**

By tradition, the President's address always concludes that the State of the Union is 'strong'. But what in honesty might be said about the state of St Michael's and St Mary's?

Attendance at the 8am service has pursued a rapid downward trajectory throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, arriving at the current pattern of below 10 today.

Attendance at the 9.30am service has fluctuated over the last 40 years but appears very similar to the levels it was at in 2003 and 1973.

The service of matins fell to once a month during the last incumbency and stopped altogether in 2013.

Similarly, largely due to fewer Readers, evensong at St Michael's went down to once a month about a decade ago.

There is a slightly more hopeful pattern at the Wednesday 10am service and St Mary's 6pm service but even here the trend has been downwards.

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Like many churches then, St Michaels and St Marys face pressures which are substantial but not insuperable. So let's turn our attention to three aspects of parish life where we have seen significant recent strength and let us consider how to capitalise further.

Firstly, we have been successful at raising our profile. Increasing numbers in contact with our churches as visitors, via the web, as hall hirers, or as recipients of our monthly email. All these points of contact have grown very significantly in the last 5 years.

The magazine committee has - after much reflection - decided to go over to electronic distribution. At the back of church today is the last copy of the current subscription cycle; indeed it is the last hard copy of any subscription cycle. Many thanks to all who have been involved in producing and distributing the hard copy, especially Val Carberry who has collated and batched for the distributors. From June, the magazine will be delivered via the monthly email. This will make it available in colour, with hyperlinks direct to websites and emails. It will double its circulation, and it will do all of this for free. There are of course some practical upshots: if you don't get the monthly email, please contact the parish office with your email address. If you are not on email, please link up with someone who is, either to read their electronic copy, or for them to become your print buddy. More info in Sandie's editorial in the current edition.

Secondly, we do need more people to help open and shut both our churches. There is a particular opportunity here at St Michael's on Saturdays. If you could help with this ministry then let me or the wardens know. It need not be on a weekly basis, but to fit around your other commitments.

Enhanced communications and more points of contact with people have translated into growing attendances at festivals. This then is the second aspect of parish life in which I identify significant recent strength. Those who came to the main services on Easter morning were part of the largest Easter congregations in St Mary's for 15 years and in St Michael's for 20 years. Handing out those Christmas and Easter cards and getting people onto our email really does reap dividends – stick at it.

Growth at festivals is great. Wouldn't it be even better to see that converted into deeper year-round commitment? To this end, several points.

- \* We need to maintain our priority of welcome. We all need to focus on the newcomer, those with whom we are less familiar. Before and after worship, I want to be speaking with those whom I don't know so well. And you should too; please, please, welcome the person whom you don't know before thinking of speaking with your friends.
- \* And as I've said before, it's not just about welcome, it's about encouragement: encouragement to deeper levels of commitment and service. We can all do this. This is a basic building block of mission and ministry. Mutual encouragement can't be a me thing; it's an us thing. It must be about our culture, not your Vicar.
- \* To put some theory behind this, if God is the ultimate good and our ultimate goal, he needs to be at the heart of everything we do, as Christians and as a church. To counter the secular misnomer, Church is not another leisure activity, a little light relief from the daily grind. Faith is the context in which the daily grind makes sense and finds purpose. Church is a bit like dogs—not just for Christmas but for life.

Not entirely unconnected to our raised profile and growth at the periphery is my third aspect of parochial strength: robust finances. In an age when many parishes' finances are under unbearable and unsustainable strain, because of the outstanding Treasurer ship of Gill Huckerby, St Michael's and St Mary's are doing well at cutting costs and diversifying income. The headline figures for last year show a loss of £53K

## Parish

but that masks £95K of long term investment in the fabric of our buildings. I must also in this vein commend the truly stellar work of Danielle Argent who is providing a professional lead to our hall hire, increasing our income by drawing in new users and raising rates to realistic levels. Ladies and gentlemen, the state of your parish's finances is strong.

I should in this vein also tell you that I am due a sabbatical. The Church recommends that stipendiary clergy take one every ten years. This means I am actually overdue a sabbatical. I postponed this three month extended study leave into 2018 in the hope that the training curate we acquired in 2016 would be in a position to enjoy a quarter of unsupervised leadership. One of the knock-ons of Mary's unexpected resignation is that an opportunity for her has become a threat for the parish. This is particularly so because it is now very likely that the only window in which I can take three months will be April to June next year - at which time John Hayton is also largely unavailable. I rest my case about the paper thin vulnerability of our liturgical leadership.

Finally, in everything we do, we will need in the next quinquennium to be more consciously missional – individually and collectively. Need to be thinking daily, where are those conversations or acts of kindness that honour God and display a glimpse of God to those around me? Our churches do some good stuff – but keep asking yourself, how is God served and made known through what I do or through what my group does? Parish groups – from cleaners to choir, bell ringers to bonfire stokers – identify and cherish where God is at work in your ministry.

We look and yearn for a kingdom. And when we do this, we are reminded that the union is strong, because the union that really matters is not our attachment to buildings or ways of doing things, but the bond between Christ and the Christian within the community of believers, that endless Eastertide in which Jesus walks with his Church into eternity.

### **14. Matters arising from minutes of 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016 or discussion of matters of general parochial interest – to be received in advance at [Kenneth-padley@gmail.com](mailto:Kenneth-padley@gmail.com)**

None submitted

### **15. Date of Next Meeting**

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Kenneth pointed out that a window for his sabbatical will be around this time therefore a lay vice chair Graham Willey will be in place.

Bronwen Hewer noted that less people are around on a bank holiday weekend so possibly try and avoid.

### **16. Grace**

Vote of thanks for ministries and meeting

## Parish

**Public Benefit Statement** The Ecclesiastical Parish of St Albans St Michael (UK Registered Charity 1132915) exists to offer Christian worship, teaching and pastoral care. Our provisions are open to those of all faiths and none, and are free at the point of delivery. (Some occasional offices do incur statutory fees, although we strive to ensure that none are excluded on the grounds of economic or other disadvantage.)

**Kenneth Padley**  
**01727 835037**  
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During the past year, public benefit has been advanced in many ways, including:

1. the provision of regular and seasonal worship in sacrament, liturgy and song;
2. the provision of occasional offices - baptisms, weddings, funerals - to mark important stages in the journey of life;
3. the provision of opportunities to engage with Christian doctrine in public preaching, teaching, small groups and children's activities, both inside and outside of church, including in and for local schools;
4. the provision of services to vulnerable groups, including our Lunch Club for elderly parishioners and the Tiny Tots play group for pre-school children and their parents/carers;
5. the provision of training in musical performance and theory through our choir, organ scholarship, choral scholarships and bell-ringing;
6. the provision of numerous formal and informal acts of pastoral care;
7. the maintenance of St Michael's and St Mary's as buildings of listed heritage in stone, wood, glass and metal;
8. the supply of St Michael's as a venue for reflection, prayer, and tourism, open most days of the year;
9. the supply of St Mary's as a venue for reflection, prayer, and tourism, open some days of the year;
10. the maintenance and supply of the Parish Centre, Memorial Hall, and Childwick Schoolroom as spaces for community gathering and hire, including at discounted rates to partner charities;
11. the raising of funds for partner charities and donations in kind for FEED, St Albans Foodbank

Subsequent entries in this Annual Report expand on the above.

## Parish

Patterns of  
Church Life  
Kenneth Padley  
01727 835037  
kennethpadley@gmail.com

This chart gives some comparison of our current life against figures from earlier years. Statistics should neither imprison nor frighten us, but they do offer some indication of shoots of growth and broader patterns in society.

### Notes

- These figures are not the same as the 'Usual Sunday Attendance' (on which our Parish Share to the diocese is calculated) - that figure does not include anomalous attendance (e.g. at baptisms)
- Averages are rounded to the nearest whole

		1973	1983	1993	2003	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Weekly Services</b>											
Sunday 8am	Communicants	28	26	19	17	10	9	8	8	7	7
Sunday 9.30am	Communicants	65	126	92	69	72	76	76	75	69	75
	Attendance <16	N/A	N/A	N/A	16	19	23	25	24	19	21
	Attendance ≥16	N/A	N/A	N/A	75	79	86	83	82	76	83
Sunday 6pm	Attendance	N/A	27	22	18	14	15	13	11	13	12
Weds 10am	Communicants	14	13	11	12	7	7	8	8	8	8
<b>Festivals</b>											
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day	Total all age attendance					270	434	417	517	512	520
Easter Day	Total all age attendance					202	241	206	229	242	276
<b>Occasional offices</b>											
Baptisms	Parish	N/A	26	30	26	12	13	13	16	7	11
Confirmations	Parish	15	15	14	0	8	9	5	5	6	4
Admissions to Communion	Parish	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	8	6	8	4	9
Weddings	St Michael's	34	23	19	13	8	12	9	6	7	2
<b>Other indicators</b>											
Electoral Roll at APCM							199	199	197	196	189
Recipients of email [incl. magazine 2017f] at 31 <sup>st</sup> December		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	95	c.215	c.270	c.340	375	430



## Pastoral and Worship

### Pastoral and Worship Committee Report

Bronwen Parr  
01727 864645  
bron-  
wenparr@hotmail.com

Gillian Davey was the chair of this committee for a number of years until the APCM of 2017, a role which she fulfilled with efficiency, wisdom and sensitivity. We are pleased that she remains an active member of the committee.

The Pastoral and Worship Committee endeavours to assist the Vicar in presenting a range of opportunities for worship, study and reflection and in overseeing the different types of pastoral support within the parish.

Regular Sunday services are held at both churches; these range from formal said communion to interactive all-age occasions. Additional weekday services of Morning Prayer and Holy Communion are held at St Michael's. Full details of all services are given on our website.

Services and opportunities for study and reflection are planned with careful consideration to the seasons of the Christian year and to be accessible and meaningful. A formal report such as this offers the opportunity to invite reflection on the excellent quality of both liturgy and sermons.

Music forms an integral part of our worship. We are grateful for the major contribution and thoughtful guidance given by the Director of Music, Colin Hamling. His report below presents the musical activities of the year in more detail.

Our Lent Studies in 2017 focused on an anthology of poems edited by Janet Morley. Groups were held on the Tuesday evenings of Lent and also on Wednesday mornings after the communion service. Participants seemed to appreciate the chance to discuss a broad range of poetry and themes. As we continued the journey towards Easter, Dandy the donkey headed a large gathering in procession from Prae Wood School across Verulamium Park to St Michael's on Palm Sunday. In some interesting and informative evening meetings during Holy Week we learned from members of our congregation of Passiontide and Easter customs in different parts of the world. We were fortunate that Archdeacon Jonathan Smith agreed to preach on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. For some his reflections on the hymn "When I survey the wondrous cross" were particularly memorable.

The Autumn Programme included a series of five lectures on The Reformation given by the Vicar. These excellent lectures were a joint new venture with the Cathedral Study Centre and were presented at an academic level appropriate for some attendees studying towards certification. Later in the autumn there were three evenings of talks and stimulating debate in response to the "Burning Questions" raised by parishioners. Dr Jules Summerfield considered 'Issues in Modern Medicine', Bishop Stephen Venner, the former bishop to HM Forces, considered 'Religion and World Conflict' and the Vicar addressed the question 'Why is the Bible so hard to understand?' Since in 2017 we were celebrating St Mary's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it was fitting that a Reflective Day in October should be held at Childwick.

The Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving on All Saints' Sunday was attended by many who were thinking of friends and loved ones. Bronwen Hewer and her team continue to give much appreciated support those who have been bereaved.

The calendar year ended with services for Advent and Christmas including Carol Services, a Nativity Play and Crib Service. The St Mary's Carol Service had to be postponed because of heavy snowfall so the replacement Epiphany Carol Service in January ought strictly to be mentioned in next year's review rather than this one!

Our churches looked especially wonderful during the Christmas season. Thanks are due to Wendy May and Carolyn Barnes and helpers for their floral activity and creativity throughout the year.

We acknowledge the dedication of Ann Dean and the team of Sacristans whose efforts assist greatly in the smooth running of services.

## Pastoral and Worship

The PCC is mindful of its responsibilities with regard to Safeguarding and we are grateful to Alison Ferreira for her work as Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Pauline Wiley and a team of committed and enthusiastic volunteers ably run Children's Church and Jellies, the youth group. We thank them for their efforts in the planning and leadership of worship and activities for our young people.

Lunch Club volunteers have been ably coordinated by Gill Huckerby and we are grateful for all their efforts.

We are fortunate to have a group of dedicated Bell-ringers at St Michael's, led by Alison Evans, who herald services with tuneful melody.

The following reports give some idea of the roles of pastoral groups in the parish. Many volunteers are involved in many different ways and their work is greatly appreciated. In addition we acknowledge the invaluable support given quietly by individuals to members of the church community in offering friendship and practical help.

### Children's Church

#### Climbers

**Louise Savory**  
louise.savory@hotmail.co.uk  
co.uk

Climbers is a pre-school group which takes place downstairs in the Parish Centre. Children from birth to school age are welcome with a parent or carer until they move up to Explorers. It runs on Sundays at 9.30am, alongside the Church service, with the group joining the Church at 10.15am for Holy Communion (except for Family Service when Climbers are in Church).

The group is staffed by a number of volunteers, who assist in the delivery of the sessions on a rota basis. The theme for each week, where possible is based on the themes in Church. The group start with a prayer, which follows with a story or a discussion about a specific topic followed by an activity. Activities in the past have ranged from; drawing, painting, decorating cakes, making masks, doves, sorry and happy boxes (always tests the adults ability at making craft objects with the children!). At the end of the activity, if time allows, the children listen and dance to a Christian theme music before finishing off with a final prayer.

Children's attendance to the group is tracked as a means of encouraging regular attendance and awards are frequently given for reaching specific attendance milestones. Currently there are a few regular attendees with others coming on an ad hoc basis. Some weeks there may be 3-4 children and other times 6-8 children.

#### Explorers and Seekers

**Pauline Wiley**  
01727 868532  
pwiley@stmichaels.herts.sch.uk

**Jo Fabian**  
01727 752365  
jofabian@hotmail.com

Explorers and Seekers are the second and third tiers of Children's Church. Reception to year 2 are called Explorers while year 3 to year 7 are known as Seekers. We meet together in the school, providing both worship and teaching in a child friendly and fun way. We begin with a short worship service of hymns, reading, reflection and prayers, the children often raising the roof with some of their favourite hymns. We follow this with teaching when we often split into our groups for discussion at an age appropriate level. Seekers, after discussing the gospel, work on a challenging leaflet of puzzles and activities which help to explain the reading in more detail. We then take part in an activity, such as art, cookery or games. Explorers have their own little prayer which we all repeat aloud each week and when the groups split up we all gather around one table and have a brief, age appropriate discussion of the bible passage we have just heard read out. The Explorers activity leaflet is a simplified version and is often taken home to share with parents as most of our time is taken up with a simple craft activity linked to the weekly text.

This year's highlights have included the Good Friday workshop and outdoor service, our end of year party to which Climbers were also invited for the picnic section of the morning and the Harvest service during which we performed stewards' duties, read prayers and helped make and serve coffee. Our final meeting of the year is always our

## Pastoral and Worship

Nativity play, which this year was performed with almost no rehearsal due to heavy snow the previous week. We all enjoyed telling the story of 'A Christmas To Believe In' which focused on a child who was telling her friend that she was unsure whether she believed in the Christmas story but, through watching a Nativity play, gradually become immersed in the wonder and true meaning of the blessed season.

For a number of years we have had teenagers helping with our groups, often as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's award service section. This year we have been very fortunate that Alex McJannet and Jo Tarvet have been working with us. They have become so involved that they were commissioned as young leaders for children's church on Advent Sunday; it is such a pleasure to have them.

Our numbers remain fairly fluent due to the vast array of extra-curricular activities available to young people from sports clubs to sleep over parties, but we have over 25 children registered as members of our group. We welcome everyone to join us in school on a Sunday at 9.30am, during term time except for all-age service dates, and look forward to another exciting year.

**Jellies (Trailblazers)** We are a group of around ten teenagers from the St Michael's community who meet and explore our faith by reading the Bible and then debating various matters and how they link with the said Bible reading (topics range from war, to power and authority to how religion and politics relate). The session finishes with games and refreshments.

**Ella Pebody**

During 2017, we met on the last Sunday of almost every month. The group is run by four of our Mums, who take it in turns to host the sessions. One of the highlights of the group was the opportunity to help marshal the car park at this year's firework display in Verulamium Park. This entitled us getting hi-vis jackets, flashing safety wands and walkie talkies. For our hard but enjoyable work we received £350 from the organisers (the St Albans Cathedral)! We have spent some of the money on a fun night out at Zizzi's and are planning on giving the rest to charity.

We look forward to spending another interesting year together in 2018!

**Servers**

**Ben McJannet**

I have been a server for about 4 years. I love it. You get to help out by carrying the candles, the book or the cross down the aisle at the beginning and the end of the service. If you carry the book then you are also involved in helping with the preparation of the meal which feels very important. Serving is really fun because you get to be the first one to be given the bread and you are at the front so see everything from a different perspective. One of the best parts is being able to serve with your friends but also making new friends. It is a great experience and you feel really part of what is going on. In the peace offering you get to go around and shake everyone's hand which I really enjoy doing. It didn't take long to learn what you need to do when you serve but it took a while to remember to always turn in the right direction!

**Church Music**

**Colin Hamling**  
**01727 863453**

[colin@hamlingmail.com](mailto:colin@hamlingmail.com)

The main role of music at St Michael's is supporting the worship of the Sunday 9.30 service. Alongside the leading of the hymns, we have an established pattern of a motet or anthem during communion each week, and a portion of a psalm (either sung to Anglican Chant or Responsorial).

It is a privilege to be able to provide and select music, contributing and enriching the specific themes set in our lectionary.

I am delighted to report that we have gained a number of new choir members; I am grateful for the loyal support of all the choir, not only on Sundays, but at our Friday evening practices.

In September, Thomas Dilley, who had been organ scholar at St Michael's for two

## Pastoral and Worship

years, was successful in gaining a one-year organ scholarship at Hampton Court, after which he will move on to study at Queens College, Oxford.

We were delighted to welcome our new scholar, George Throup, who attends St Columba's School, and is studying the organ with Andrew Lucas. George had also been a chorister in the Cathedral Choir.

In July we launched the St Michael's Choral Scholar scheme. This is aimed at giving students in school-years 11, 12 & 13 experience in Anglican choral music, and broadening their experience before they perhaps apply to be choral scholars whilst at university. The scheme has been self-funded by generous sponsors from our congregation to whom I am very grateful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to consider becoming a sponsor, or to propose a potential scholar.

The choir and scholars played a key role in the Advent and Christmas Carol services at St Michael's. Due to snow the Christmas Carol service planned at Childwickbury was cancelled; however it was replaced by an Epiphany Service in January. For those of us who attended all three services, it was rewarding to experience the continuity of the liturgy, readings and music for the three major feasts.

Our monthly service of Evensong is well supported by the choir, and included in 2017, a visit to Childwickbury to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church building.

I remain grateful to Revd. Kenneth Padley for his support and cooperation.

### Bellringers

Alison Evans  
01727 856845  
alison.evans@btinternet.com

WE NEED SOME NEW RECRUITS! We still have six ringing members but, due to illness, we are more dependent than ever on help from other local ringers in order to be able to ring for services and practices. We had to cancel Sunday morning ringing eight times in 2017 and we couldn't raise a band for Evensong at all, although we only missed two practices because there weren't enough people.

I have endeavoured to raise our profile wherever possible, in the hope of generating interest in learning to ring, including two articles for the parish magazine and one in the local press. We also rang before the start of the Folk Evening on 5<sup>th</sup> July but there were no volunteers.

The ringing itself has been enjoyable. We have mainly been limited to six-bell ringing but we continue to expand our repertoire and have learned some interesting and tuneful new methods.

Our finances remain stable and we have made a donation towards the new plaque commemorating the five parish Great War dead whose names are not on the existing memorial. Twice during the year, we rang half-muffled for service in memory of St Michael's ringers who died during the conflict, on the hundredth anniversary of their deaths.

We continue to take our turn on the coffee rota. We only rang for two weddings this year, but welcomed four visiting bands, and hosted the District Meeting in July. We rang before a lecture in church, The Bell Tower and its Inhabitants in the Mediaeval Imagination, given as part of the International Organ Festival. We had dinner together at the Six Bells in April and our successful October outing was to five towers in North Hertfordshire and South Cambridgeshire.

### Sacristan Team

Ann Dean,  
01727 867664

Once again I write on behalf of the invisible band of helpers that, every week, "set out" the communion table, those who "clear away", others who wash the linen, replace the candles and mend the frontals. A small job some may say, but important we think in the life of the church.

## Pastoral and Worship

d.dean868@btinternet.com But years pass and people retire, so I am asking for more volunteers to join us. The duties are not onerous, the most one hour on a Sunday morning a month and the occasional attendance at weddings or funerals. If you can help, please contact Ann or a Church Warden.

To all my fellow Sacristan's, may I say thank you for your support over the last year.

**Flowers** Flower and foliage decoration has been provided and maintained at the main altar throughout the year apart from the Advent and Lenten seasons. Costs have been kept to a minimum through use of garden foliage and flowers when available. The Easter, Harvest and Christmas "splashes" were well supported and the addition of a "Garden of Gethsemane" was appreciated by those attending the Easter Vigil.

**Bob and Wendy May**  
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postmaster@i-c-  
a.demon.co.uk

All eyes are now on the Flower Festival taking place on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018 which will be part of St Michael's weekend of Celebration and Commemoration, marking the centenary of the end of the Great War. St Michael's has been lucky enough to have Anita Lindeman take on the role of Flower Festival Organiser and Artistic Director and it is hoped that as many members of the congregation as possible will step forward to help.

There is an enormous amount of behind the scenes work involved both in the run up and during the festival. Not just flower arranging, either, but the physical hard work of putting on a show! If you feel you would like to help please give Anita your contact details on 07906655641 or [anita.lindeman@ntlworld.com](mailto:anita.lindeman@ntlworld.com) – everyone is included!

**Pastoral Visiting Team** Our visiting has again focused on Fosse House, a residential home within the parish. Phillip and Bronwen Parr have visited, usually two or three times a week, making contact with a number of different residents. In addition, Bronwen has organised simplified services approximately monthly. There is a Bible reading and singing of familiar hymns, accompanied by Phillip on an electric organ. Residents are able to receive Holy Communion. The service is followed by a chat over coffee and biscuits. The opportunity to share in worship is clearly valued by the residents and some of their relatives. People who seem rarely to communicate can sometimes join in contentedly with singing hymns and familiar words in the service. Occasional afternoon sessions of practising and singing hymns have been introduced and these have appealed to a wider group of residents.

**Bronwen Parr**  
01727 864645  
bronwenparr@hotmail.com

It continues to be a privilege to be part of St Michael's outreach in our community. The Vicar would be pleased to receive the names of any other parishioners who would like an occasional visit in their own homes.

**Bereavement Support Team** We are a team of two people with a third person waiting for training before joining the team. Usually, the officiating clergy ascertain whether the relatives would like to be contacted by our team sometime after the funeral. We then make a phone-call if requested with a view to further calls or a visit for a chat. This year we have been in touch with seven people by phone with visits to three of them.

**Bronwen Hewer**  
01727 864224

[j\\_hewer@sky.com](mailto:j_hewer@sky.com)

**Ginny Allkins**

01727 765249

[a.allkins@ntlworld.com](mailto:a.allkins@ntlworld.com)

We continue to hold our Service of Remembrance in November for those who have recently been bereaved and this year more people than previously attended with many staying for a drink and a chat afterwards.

Recently there appears to be a trend in our area if not nationally for alternate forms of funeral service, rather than the traditional church funeral and burial or cremation. St Michael's and St Mary's had fewer funerals in 2017 than the recent trend and we wait to see if this is a blip or part of a wider pattern.

On every second Tuesday of the month, meetings of the Luncheon Club have taken

## Pastoral and Worship

**Luncheon Club** place, just the same as in past years. I don't know how many years a group of volunteers have been running the Club in the Parish Centre, but someone mentioned 40 years to me, and I'm sure, one or two of you will remember.

**Gill Huckerby**  
**01727 864269**  
gill.huckerby@btinternet.com

Our activities continued in the same organised way; a two course lunch being provided with tea or coffee, a raffle and, occasionally, a speaker or a quiz. An outing was arranged in June when we had an enjoyable, sunny day on a Canal Boat. Lunch of Fish and Chips was served on board and drinks were available at the bar.

In November we had our usual visit to Burston Garden Centre for lunch and early Christmas shopping, and the highlight of the year, as always, was our Christmas lunch which included a visit from Santa and lovely Carols sung by St Michael's School Choir.

During October, I decided to stand down as co-ordinator of the group with effect from January 2018. I tried to find someone to replace me but unfortunately no one came forward, so after so many years Lunch Club was closed.

However, all is not lost; the members are still getting together for lunch on the second Tuesday of the month, but at the Portland Arms.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers who have supported me during my time as co-ordinator of whom there were quite a few that were vital to the running the group – the drivers who transported guests from home and back; the cooks who provided either a main course or dessert; the general helpers who laid and cleared the tables and washed up the crockery and cutlery, as well as the other volunteers who erected and dismantled the tables.

**Safeguarding** St Michael's Church is committed to the importance of good safeguarding practice and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are an organisation that depends on the valued work of volunteers and consequently, it is essential that we have the correct procedures in place to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable groups.

**Alison Ferreira**  
**01727 860459**  
allferreiras@hotmail.com

Our PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (which is the duty to have due regard to House of Bishops guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

To summarise, St Michael's Church:

- undertakes an annual review of safeguarding which is approved at PCC level and our policy is on public display.
- has adopted the Church of England's policy with regard to safe recruitment.
- obtains DBS clearances for employees and volunteers, where applicable.
- has arranged for all PCC members and volunteers, who work with children and vulnerable groups, to receive appropriate safeguarding training.

## Mission and Community

### Mission and Community Committee Report

Alison Ferreira  
01727 860459  
allferreiras@hotmail.com

The Mission and Community Committee's aim remains to encourage, support and initiate activities which raise the profile of St Michael's and enable us to connect with, and make welcome, the wider community within our Parish.

During 2017, the committee focused on the 2 large community events that have become an important part of the St Michael's calendar - the St Michael's folk evening which is held on the first Wednesday of July and the annual church bonfire party in November.

#### The 2017 St Michael's Folk Evening:

- saw record numbers of people coming into the churchyard to enjoy the festivities.
- the Bell Ringers opened the event as usual. It was pleasing to note large numbers of people arriving early, in particular to hear the bells ringing before the rest of the entertainment began. Everybody really appreciates the participation of the Bell Ringers in the event.
- we welcomed Swanvesta Social Club again who played in the churchyard all evening. We are hugely grateful to the contribution that Swanvesta makes to the overall success of the event.
- we were delighted to include "Carmen's Caribbean Kitchen" this year. Carmen's delicious Caribbean cuisine was thoroughly enjoyed by many people who supported the event.
- we saw the return of 3 Brewers, a popular local brewery, who were also kind enough to supply a marquee.
- the Inn on the Park joined us again to sell ice creams which were very popular as it was such a warm evening.
- the church ran a bar with the help of volunteers from our congregation.
- our profit was up on last year and the surplus made was allocated to the St Mary's "toilet fund".
- we kept the church open for the duration of the event. This is the first time we have done this during the evening, and although it did require additional volunteers to watch the church, it was felt that this was a worthwhile thing to do.

#### The Annual Church Bonfire Party:

- was a huge success again. Considerable effort was made to collect a vast amount of wood so we had a spectacular bonfire.
- our surplus increased this year despite having slightly less people attending the event. This was partly helped by selling hot chocolate and home-made biscuits.
- we were pleased to note that a large number requests for tickets were in response to the Vicar's monthly communication via email.

#### Our committee continues to:

- organise the distribution of Easter and Advent cards within the Parish
- organise refreshments to mark the beginning of Advent.
- review the effectiveness of our communications within the community.

We were thrilled to welcome four new members to our committee and it has been wonderful to have the benefit of their energy, enthusiasm and fresh ideas.

Also, it has been particularly heartening to have received so many offers of help at our events. It is impossible to run these events without the large numbers of volunteers. Thank you to everyone who helped, as well as those people who have supported our events.

Even though we have had some new members joining our committee recently, there is always room for more. Please do get in touch with Alison Ferreira (allferreiras@hotmail.com/ 860459) if you are interested in joining our team.

## Mission and Community

### Welcome, Visitors and Stewards

Sue Dyson  
01727 833524  
sue.dyson2@gmail.com

As the Welcome Coordinator, I am very lucky in being able to meet new people when they come to St. Michael's for special services such as Easter or Christmas and other occasions, as well as greeting regular members of the congregation on Sunday mornings. I introduce newcomers to others in the congregation and act as a point of contact for them in the future.

I welcome groups such as those performing or being part of the audience at the late night concerts of the International Organ Festival; those taking part in the St. Michael's Folk Evening in July; the annual CTSA Prayer Walk; or just speaking to people visiting the church when I happen to be there, such as the time last September when some Benedictine monks from Papua New Guinea arrived and we had a great time talking about the time I spent living there when my children were small.

I am very grateful to the Stewards, who get to church early to smile and give a friendly welcome to the arriving congregation, as well as handing out service booklets and pew sheets, being available to help anyone who may have a problem or emergency during the service, and then tidying everything away at the end. Thank you Stewards!

My thanks are due to the Church Guides who volunteer to be in church for regular sessions during the summer months to welcome visitors and answer their questions. I get very complimentary feedback from visitors who have had interesting and informative conversations, so well done Church Guides!

We are all part of the St. Michael's Welcome and so thank you to everyone!

### Tiny Tots

Sarah Patrick  
patrickandheritage@googlemail.com

Tiny Tots has remained a popular group for carers and toddlers throughout this year. Having been well stocked with some new toys in the previous year we have particularly been enjoying using these this year. The soft mat for the reading area and the balance beams for physical activities are enjoyed each week. We continue to have a healthy snack time, which at times has benefitted from some home-made snacks by members of the group, whose culinary skills are greatly appreciated!

Our usual format includes free play with toys for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers; a healthy snack time; and singing time. We have regular crafts provided by Susan Drummond which are always enjoyed by the children and adults alike! We have at times during this year trialled a story time with a prayer. The children are getting used to sitting still for the story and listening, which can be challenging after the hubbub of the rest of the morning. Many are eager to join in with the story or to touch the books and it is good to see them enjoying hearing the story together. This is something we will continue during 2018.

Many thanks to all our regular volunteers - Michael Hogden, Michael Tutt and Susan Drummond, as well as Lynn who has been a great help to step in and help at times.

### Schools

Kenneth Padley  
01727 835037  
kennethpadley@gmail.com

There are three schools in our parish.

During 2017 an important side-extension has been built on the lower part of **St Michael's Church of England Primary**. This will allow lunches to be eaten on site, small group work to be undertaken during class time, and a club to run after school to help parents who need more time before collecting their children. Plans are on track to build an extra two classrooms at Top School during 2018. The PCC makes five nominations to the Governing Body of this school.

St Michael's enjoys hosting a Christmas service for **Prae Wood Primary** and using the school hall to start our Palm Sunday procession. There are other occasional points of contact around the year.

I continue to deliver a number of sessions in **Townsend Church of England Sec-**



## Mission and Community

**ondary**, especially the sixth form. During 2017, Bob May led another group of parish volunteers at a careers fair in Townsend.

**Traidcraft** As indicated in last year's report, I ceased to run regular monthly stalls this year following the closure of the local supplier, My Fair World. Stalls were run until Easter with most goods being sold at half their retail price, and a stall was also held in the run up to Christmas. Since Easter I have been ordering goods online by request. There is a small group of customers still ordering regularly and some occasionally, such as in the run up to Christmas. I continue to supply ground coffee for Sundays.

**Val Chiesa**  
01582 792713  
chiesa@btinternet.com

All perishable goods were sold on the stall. A small number of goods were donated to FEED. I am still holding jewellery and craft stock which can be sold this year and will form the basis of a Christmas stall. Supplying goods to order means there has been no new stock held since Easter 2016. Selling off old stock has built up money in the Traidcraft account which will be donated to St. Michael's by agreement. Total takings for the year were £2,440, just over £560 less than last year. Goods to the value of £1,564 were ordered, about £1,200 less than last year.

The new arrangement means that we maintain our support for Traidcraft, albeit at a reduced level, so I will continue to administer this for as long as there is sufficient interest.

Thank you to all who have supported fair trade this year.

**FEED** The weekly collection box in St Michael's Church, for donations of food to FEED, continued well throughout the year. In fact the donations **more than doubled** the donations made in 2016, with bumper donations at Harvest Festival and the Christmas – New Year period.

**Jim Mann**  
07770 324375

jimmann147@sky.com These were greatly appreciated by Vineyard Church and helped their particular support for the needy over the Christmas period.

After visiting the Vineyard facility during the year a number of parishioners from St Michael's are now volunteer helpers at the Monday morning sessions of FEED.

These sessions now have an average of 60 people collecting food on a regular basis.

FEED is now part of a new organisation within the Vineyard Church - "**The Vineyard Care Centre**" - providing numerous services and help to the needy.

Thank you to St Michael's for its support and may it continue through 2018

**Website** Following the meeting between the vicar, Mary Fisher and Roger Gray in 2016, it was agreed that Mary would produce a draft website redesign for approval. This process was signed-off in 2017 and we now have a much more contemporary online presence, fit for the rigours and challenges of the modern wired (and wireless) world. We greatly appreciate the work Mary undertook completing this project, and also many years of service Roger spent maintaining the previous website, which served us well during this time.

www.stmichaels-parishchurch.org.uk

**Russell and Yolissa Palmer**  
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yolissa.palmer@gmail.com As mentioned in the 2016 report, WordPress powers the new St Michael's website. This is a flexible platform in order to create online content, and crucially has a straightforward interface, using CMS (a Content Management System). It basically means the appearance is similar to word processing software, such as Microsoft Word. So no coding experience is normally necessary!

Thanks are given to Graham and Pauline Wiley (and other members of our congregation) for the continued supply of excellent photographs of parish activity – a new Gallery page is in the process of being constructed at present.

## Mission and Community

### Parish News Magazine

Sandie North  
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St Michael's Parish News has had a bit of a roller-coaster year. We went from monthly printing on paper to an all-electronic edition for July/August. The reason for this was that Parish News was making a loss of around £2000 and the shortfall was unsustainable for the Parish to bear. It has transpired that revenue was not collected from readers of the magazine; people were helping themselves to copies at church without paying for them and advertising revenue was difficult to control. Many members of the congregation have commented on the change from paper to electronic, but without an efficient business management system, it is difficult to know how to sustain Parish News in the future.

I would like to conclude by thanking Gill Huckerby who has been trying to sort out the difficulties of advertisers and invoices, and I hope that 2018 will see us on a better and more positive path for Parish News. I could not omit all the very valuable members of the Parish News Team, Linda Withington, Katherine Crowdell, Kerry Wells, Sue Dyson, Peter Limebear, Val Carberry and Imogen Broad. Without this wonderful team, there would be no Parish News.

## Stewardship

### Stewardship Committee Report

Nigel Voyce  
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As we tick off some of our tasks under the MAP, we continue to meet the day to day challenges that confront us. As ever, my grateful thanks to all those on the Stewardship and Hall Committees for their wonderful support and enthusiasm.

Through continued stewardship campaigns, we seek to keep pace with costs by encouraging parishioners to donate whilst we actively work on getting back the tax associated with giving. As they say, every little helps.

Our Quinquennial Report was commissioned during the year and priority issues identified for 2018 will be the planning of power into the vestry and redecoration work, once we have tackled the damp issues in certain areas which have 'blown' the plaster-work.

Our thanks to the Friends of St Michael's for their generous gift of a defibrillator machine which has been installed in the Parish Centre.

The School House Flat has been re-let during the year to new tenants who have settled in very nicely.

Following a donation, we have purchased an automatic clock winder for the Tower Clock. Our thanks to our intrepid clock winders, Richard North and Stuart Vincent for their regular trips up the tower in pursuit of ensuring that the clock kept good time.

Our Halls continue to undergo investment with new window blinds and decoration. A recently completed lease on the Memorial Hall means that we can seek to grow our revenue streams from these halls through higher occupancy; our thanks to the Halls Administrator for her sterling work.

As we come to grips with new statutory guidelines and rules for Data Protection coming into force in 2018, and ensuring compliance with Health and Safety Regulations, it has been a busy yet satisfying year.

### Halls in St Michael's Parish

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During 2017, the work, started in 2016, on consolidating a 'one-stop-shop' for hall bookings in St Michael's parish, came to fruition. All of the administration for the three halls is now carried out from the Parish Office which means that hirers can be matched to the most appropriate venue for their event. Several issues have been resolved at the individual halls, and others raised(!), and a brief overview of each venue is listed below.

#### **The Memorial Hall:**

The Memorial Hall currently has 10 regular hirers ranging from a full time Nursery, Theatre Groups, Sporting Clubs and an early morning Box fit class. There is also interest from two more potential regulars for 2018.

Ad Hoc bookings have been steady throughout 2017 with May being the most popular month.

The Hall is still part way through its maintenance plan. Last year extensive redecoration work was carried out to the outside of the building. Part of this work was the rebuilding of the pillars to the entrance of the car park, this, along with the new paint to all the railings and doors, has vastly improved the kerb appeal. Ongoing issues and solutions are being worked on regarding the ageing boiler.

#### **The Parish Centre:**

The Parish Centre currently has 10 regular hirers ranging from baby and toddler groups, writing groups and breakfast club.

## Stewardship

Ad Hoc bookings were good in 2017 with 70% coming from schools visiting the Museum using it for lunch. Out of the remaining bookings, the most popular month was July.

Both floors in the Parish Centre were redecorated in the summer, and the chairs were replaced in the downstairs room.

### **St Mary's School Room:**

St Mary's School Room currently has 8 regular hirers which make up 100% of the hire income. There is already interest for a new regular hirer in 2018.

The School Room now has a professional cleaner on a regular basis. We are continuing to progress plans for an extension/inside toilet which will be a huge benefit to all who use the hall and will definitely attract more hirers.

### **St Michael's Churchyard**

Grass mowing continued well into the autumn this year due to the mild, wet, weather conditions. Thank you to the team of John Bethell, Geoff Goodall, Roger Gray, Mike Weston, Graham Willey and David Fletcher for keeping the grass under control.

**Jim Mann**  
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Autumn also brought an abundance of leaves to be cleared, now evident in a full compost bunker of leaves, plus an area around the perimeter wall as a second store.

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Storms had their effect too, with numerous small branches, twigs etc. to be cleared. A large bough from the cedar tree near the tower had to be cut up after snapping from the tree.

The lavender planting along the main entrance to the church gave a magnificent fragrant display throughout the summer.

The area around the Parish Centre was grass seeded and the border planted with lavender to continue the theme along the entrances.

Overall the year was one of maintaining and keeping the churchyard in order.

The building of the second compost bunker and additional gravel to the path to the Ladies Gate were not completed but are in the plan for 2018.

### **St Michael's church and brass cleaning**

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We have two groups of volunteer cleaners - one meeting on Saturday mornings and one on Thursday mornings. The Saturday group meets on the first Saturday of the month and the Thursday group meets on the third Thursday of the month. In addition this year we coordinated the Saturday cleaning group with the Christmas church decoration. This worked well and we will look to make it a permanent cleaning event.

In addition there is also a small brass cleaning group meeting after the Wednesday morning service on a two-weekly basis.

Tasks include hoovering, dusting, polishing, cleaning the floors, tidying the hymn books and sweeping the porch.

One group ends the session with coffee, cakes or biscuits in the Tower Room. This is a lovely way to catch up and chat.

We are very grateful to all of the volunteers for helping to keep our beautiful church clean and tidy. We would welcome any additional members to swell our ranks, even if it's only for half an hour, it can make a huge difference.

## Partners

### Friends of St Michael's

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The 2017 AGM was followed by an evening talk on "The City under the Park".

The committee was elected with no changes since 2015; David Fletcher as Chairman, Mike Western as Treasurer, and Ruth Jerram as Membership Secretary. Our committee members are Elizabeth Fletcher, Richard North, Michael Tutt, and Jane Larman, (who stood down in September to support her family). The Friends are still looking for a General Secretary, as currently, the Chairman is undertaking the role.

The organisation of events is very challenging due to the small number of committee members, and members who are able to take an active role. Due to this difficulty, the committee decided to hold no events in 2017, so to give St Mary's a clear run during its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year.

The plate attached to the tree which was planted by the first Chairman in 1983 had disappeared, it was replaced with a new plate, by the Earl of Verulam, who was the first Chairman.

Following this event discussions have been held to invite the people of St Michael's Village to support the Friends, this is likely to be expanded in 2018

The Friends is a registered Charity number 279810, so any donations can be Gift Aided.

### St Albans Deanery

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The St Albans Deanery consists of nine St Albans city parishes, together with Aldenham, Bricket Wood, Colney Heath, Frogmore, London Colney, Radlett and Shenley. Synod members are elected for three years and the last meeting of the triennium was held in March 2017, after which the parishes held their APCMs when DS representatives were elected/re-elected.

The first meeting of the new triennium was held in June 2017 at St Peter's Church, London Colney. This was basically a business meeting, outlining the recent work of DS, but also detailing future planning. Key goals that had been achieved were Funerals Ministry, working together with local funeral directors to increase the number of Christian funerals; Nurturing Vocations by running Deanery Exploring Vocation Days; Deanery Prayer Diary every two months, annual "Thy Kingdom Come" prayer events. Among goals still to be realised are to establish a Skills Forum; Mission matters, (Leadership training, developing Mission/Outreach, DBS training and support, pastoral visiting training, healing ministry training); Reaching Young People; Communications Team; Deanery Directory.

I am the only Deanery Synod representative at St Michael's and St Mary's and if anybody would like to join me, they would be most welcome.