



St Michael with St Mary

Living God, we pray for growth in St Michael's and St Mary's:
make us effective evangelists,
deepen our spirituality,
and strengthen us for service,
in your name and to your glory.
Amen.

Annual Report and Accounts 2018

including the Agenda for the Annual Meeting
10.00 am Sunday, 28th April 2019 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

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



THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETINGS

Sunday 28th April 2019

10am THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

- **Appointment of Clerk**
- **Election of Churchwardens**

10.10am THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

- **Apologies**
- **To receive the new Electoral Roll**
- **To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2018**
- **Delegation of Churchwardens' powers in respect of St Mary, Childwick Green to those elected as Deputy Churchwarden(s)**
- **Election of Deputy Churchwarden(s)**
- **Election of members to St Albans Deanery Synod**
- **Election of members to the PCC**
- **Election of St Mary's sub-committee**
- **Election of Stewards (Sidesmen)**
- **Election of Assistant Churchwarden(s) for St Michael's**
- **To receive the Annual Report of the PCC including Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2018**
- **Appointment of Reviewing Accountant**
- **Chairman's remarks**
- **Matters arising from minutes of 29th April 2018 or discussion of matters of general parochial interest – to be received in advance at kennethpadley@gmail.com**
- **Date of Next Meeting**
- **Grace**

Introduction

Introduction: Our Story in 2018

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Looking back over the past year, St Michael's and St Mary's have a huge amount to celebrate. 2018 was marked by both routine parish life and some exceptional highlights.

On the one hand we saw a familiar cycle of faithful ministry through **worship, pastoral care, evangelism, learning opportunities, and social gathering**.

- It is a particular delight to report that for the second year in a row, **attendance is growing**, as indicated by Usual Sunday Adult Attendance.
- It was a good twelve months for weddings and baptisms - and the missional opportunities which accompany these.
- It was a notably positive year for our ministry among **young adults**: the monthly Jelly group has now split into older and younger sections; the Choral Scholarship scheme for students in school years 10-13 has been strengthened and expanded; and in Alex McJannet and Jo Tarvet, we have two of the youngest PCC members in the country (both 16 at the time of election).
- It was also another year of robust stewardship: you will see from the annual accounts that we met our financial obligations (including significant maintenance at St Mary's and the Memorial Hall) and finished the year in **surplus**.
- And last November, the PCC completed its 2018-23 **Mission Action Plan**, our strategic document for the next five years.

We step into 2019 in good heart.

In addition to these markers of regular parish life, 2018 included some truly special occasions and developments.

- July saw the arrival of **Charles King** as curate – and September saw the birth of his and Anke's beautiful baby Hannah. All three are already bringing many gifts to this parish, and I know that Charles will be an enormous blessing in whatever setting he exercises his ordained ministry after curacy.
- We have also been blessed in the last year by the ministry of **Liz Warren** as Reader. Liz transferred to us from a local parish, and she has offered insightful and warm preaching, as well as a gentle pastoral presence. Sadly for us, it will be a fleeting encounter. It was a delight to hear in the early autumn that she had met Terry. We look forward to their wedding in early 2019, albeit tinged with sadness at her subsequent move north! Our loss is very much Shropshire's gain. As I have said on several previous occasions, there remains a gaping need for St Michael's and St Mary's to develop liturgical leadership *from within our own ranks*. Might God be calling you to be a priest or Reader?
- The **Community Weekend** in September was a powerful commemoration of the centenary of the end of World War I, a wonderful celebration of parish life today, and a successful means of raising funds for the Royal British Legion and renovations in St Michael's. One of the leading participants told me afterwards that she could not recall an equivalent team effort in her 33-year association with the parish; another participant wrote 'what a fantastic weekend we have enjoyed'.
- The opening of the **expanded St Michael's primary school** in November saw the culmination of nearly three years' work and more than a million pounds of careful expenditure across both the lower and upper sites. These developments represent the most significant enhancements at the school for two generations, and give the staff and pupils the strongest basis from which

Introduction

they can flourish in the years ahead. This will benefit the future of our children, the vibrancy of community life, and draw new families within the ambit of St Michael's mission in years ahead.

- At a personal level I was excited to have the opportunity of three-month's **sabbatical** last April to June. I did a small amount of travel in central western Turkey, had a week's placement at Norwich Cathedral, and caught up with a lot of refreshing reading and writing. An article which I wrote has just been published, and it has been good to offer a series of talks during the autumn months about my encounters with the 'Seven Churches of Revelation' and with Turkey more generally. I am very grateful for the support of colleagues in the parish and further afield which allowed me to make the most of this time to recharge and reconnect with God.

So, whether you are one of the 100+ volunteers whose time and talents ensure our flourishing Church life, and/or one of the 100+ individuals and families who support the parish through the regular giving scheme, and/or one of the nearly 500 who receive our monthly communications, and/or a curious by-passer to our leaflet rack or website, and/or the Bishop snooping in on what we've been up to, I commend this report and hope you share my excitement for all that lies behind its record of our life in 2018.

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Parish

Church Wardens'
Report
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and

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It has once again been a pleasure this year, to work with the army of volunteers and supporters to ensure that the fabric of St Michael's maintains its integrity and that future plans and ideas progress in keeping with the historic context of St Michael's but remain relevant to the needs of the church and community.

In particular the re-ordering of the west end of the Nave has continued to develop the choral contribution to our worship and has been a positive benefit to the choir's experience. Although on a temporary licence the positive feedback from the congregation and the choir has supported the decision to seek approval for a permanent re-ordering. As we write we are in the process of submitting a faculty and will keep everyone informed once we hear. We would like to thank Colin Hamling especially for his creativity and vision in continually developing the music in both St Michael's and St Mary's.

Of course, the Vicar's sabbatical during the year was a challenging prospect for April to June, but as always Kenneth's meticulous planning ensured that disaster did not strike and made it a lot easier for many of us to carry on regardless, 'keeping calm and carrying on' being the motto of the period. We would very much like to thank John, Mike and all our visiting clergy and speakers who kept our worship running without a glitch, particularly from: Rev'd Canon Tim Lomax, Jane Smart, Rev'd Canon Martin Banister, Rev'd Canon Dr Tim Bull, Rev'd Ruth Goatly, Rev'd Jos Perris, Helena Trent and later in the year Bishop Stephen Venner. There are too many people to name individually but the overall support and generosity of time and patience, including valued support from the office, meant the Wardens didn't lose the plot (well not always!) and enabled all aspects of our life at St Michael's to carry on with no, we hope, apparent glitches.

It was of course an eye opener to realize how much Kenneth does for us behind the scenes, our appreciation on his return was, we are sure, palpable and what wonderful lessons he brought back with him in the sermons and talks he gave on his experiences of the seven churches.

In July it was a delight to welcome our new Curate Charles King and his wife Anke and to welcome Liz Warren in the autumn as our Reader. Charles and Liz have brought so much additional pleasure and education to our worship and we are truly grateful. How wonderful it was too to welcome Charles' and Anke's new arrival Hannah in the autumn.

The replacement of the security system in St Michael's was a key fabric investment this year, the ageing system of some 30 years was becoming tired and beginning to show signs of instability. Not least of all waking the Vicar from his slumber when an unsuspecting spider crossed the line, setting off a dodgy sensor. The replacement also allows the removal of some unsightly cabling and equipment ready for the redecoration of the main body of the church planned in the next few years, funds permitting, and future proofs our valuable church.

Now to the biggest event of the year over Heritage Weekend; the planning and organizing was meticulous and resulted in a wonderful celebration and memorial to recognize the end of the First World War. Our immense thanks to Georgie Ray, Danielle Argent, Ann Dean, Sue Dyson, Gill Huckerby, Anita Lindeman and so many other contributors for their creativity and commitment from the beginning of 2018 to ensure that a whole weekend of remembrance was so successful. Our particular thanks to Geoff Warwick who beautifully made and project managed the new memorial board to commemorate the five who died in WWI and whose names were not present on the original memorial board. There was an army in support for the occasion, too many to mention by name here, but the success of a wonderful weekend of remembrance was an event that not only brought the community together but also supported both the British Legion and the St Michael's redecoration fund.

Parish

The ongoing maintenance and cleanliness of our church, halls, churchyard, electrics, gutters, gullies and general plumbing has continued and goes virtually unnoticed by many, however without the teams in place to coordinate and cajole support, our church would be a different place. Forgive us for not thanking by name the many regulars without whom the church would not function and for whom we are massively grateful but we must thank two behind the scenes workers, Bob May for picking up all the electrical work that crops up often unexpectedly throughout the year and similarly Roy Brooks for so professionally handling the myriad of unseen DIY tasks that keep our ancient building in good repair.

A special mention to our Health & Safety officer, David Fletcher, who keeps us and our community safe on a weekly basis and ensures we comply with regulations at events and 'Do's' - thank you David for your ongoing commitment and expertise. David handed over the Chair of the Friends of St Michael's to Lord Verulam in 2018. Our heartfelt thanks to both and for the wonderful support of the Friends who open up our historic church to the wider community.

A special thanks to our four Assistant Wardens - Sue, Chris, Rachel and Steve, and of course our Deputy Warden Paul at St Mary's for their commitment and support. Our thanks to Georgie & Danielle in the office and to Gill our Treasurer. It is with heartfelt thanks to Gill, as she plans to step down in 2019 after many years of an excellent contribution as Treasurer, for her care and commitment in the post which is legendary.

It almost goes without saying, we give our grateful thanks to and for our Clergy, Kenneth, John and Charles, our Readers Liz and Mike, and to our Director of Music Colin, all of whom led us in another wonderful year at St Michael's and St Mary's.

And from Steph ... a huge thank you to Graham who steps down in April 2019 for a dedicated and incredibly productive six years at the Church Warden helm.

And from Graham ... a huge thank you to Steph who hit the ground running four years ago and has given a masterclass in wardenship. I've been so lucky in my term of office to co-warden with Steph and with two lovely "actresses": Sue in year 1 and Imo in year 2. With heartfelt thanks to these and all who have made the job a wonderful memory'.

St Mary's Deputy Warden's Report

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2018 has been a year of both consolidation and preparation.

Following on as it does from the 150th anniversary year where we held a number of fund raising events, in particular the flower festival weekend and concert, it was time to employ the funds raised to prepare the way forward for our internal toilet and extension project.

Architects plans, drawings and the relevant permissions were all put in hand and developed over the year, broadly paid for by our earlier fund raising efforts. This preparatory, vital, but invisible work, culminated into some tangible benefit in the commissioning of the underpinning of the school room which was completed just before Christmas. This work was made possible through a generous grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation.

Applications to other charitable grant bodies were prepared and made during 2018 and will continue into 2019.

So whilst there is little above ground to evidence progress, a lot has been made and we stand ready now to continue raising funds and to commence the building work during 2019.

Parish

On the worship side of St Mary's, attendance numbers have broadly stayed steady with some very welcome new attendees who "found" St Mary's through Kenneth's excellent series of sermons on the seven churches.

In Epiphany we held our first carol service with the slightly different emphasis toward congregational involvement with many of the readings delivered by hall user groups, emphasizing the community involvement. This has set the tone for 2019 and beyond.

We have, in addition, been seeing and welcoming a regular number of individuals who might not count St Mary's as their first or local church but who, for varying reasons, like to come to our traditional services.

There can be no doubt that the quality of sermons or addresses do attract people and we continue to be very grateful to Kenneth and his team from "HQ" who unfailingly come to St Mary's each week and support us generally, and we welcome Charles to this band. Similarly we are grateful to St Michael's choir who came "up" on several occasions. It makes services very special and the support from St Michael's in so many ways is truly appreciated.

Curate's Report

Charles King
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The great gift of curacy is its focus on an extended period of learning. I have sometimes thought of it, to take a driving analogy, as wearing 'P' plates: having had 'lessons' and practice (i.e. theological college), passed my 'L' test and been ordained, it becomes a lived-out reality which requires growing into. Visibly that 'P plate' has an obvious marker in my first year through the distinctive wearing of the deacon's stole, though when the Annual Church Meeting takes place I shall be looking forward to priesting in the summer and another really important step in my own ministry.

And I am finding that St Michael's with St Mary's is a wonderful place to be doing this learning. You have all made me, Anke, and indeed Hannah, very welcome. There is a rich mix of things going on: to pick out just a few highlights, already in my first week I was able to experience Folk Night; September brought the events marking the end of the First World War; and it was a great joy to journey through Advent and Christmas with you; and as I write we are now looking ahead to Lent and Easter. At the same time, inevitably curacy brings a whole series of firsts: baptisms, leading different styles of worship, funerals and weddings, and it is so good to be in a parish with plenty of opportunities for these.

Some have described curacy as a time of 'leading from the second chair'. It is wonderful, as I am in the very fortunate position of having the opportunity to try things out, get my hands dirty and so on without the ultimate responsibility that belongs to the Vicar! More seriously, though, it is a good reminder that we all need to be creative, try something different from time to time, because generally speaking it really doesn't matter and no one will mind if things aren't perfect. Indeed, it can actually be quite helpful.

Curates are encouraged to do plenty of theological reflection, and something that is probably not so well-known is all the work Kenneth puts in as a 'training incumbent'. I am hugely grateful to him for weekly supervision meetings and much else besides, and likewise for all the support from wardens and people from all parts of church life as I've been getting to know you and how the various aspects of life at St Michael's with St Mary's fits together.

Parish

PCC Members 2018 Members of the Parochial Church Council and Trustees of the Charity during 2018 were:

Ex Officio

Paul Barnes, Deputy Churchwarden

Charles King (from 1st July 2018)

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 2021)

David Fletcher (until APCM 2021)

Gill Huckerby (until APCM 2019), Treasurer

Jane Larman (until APCM 2021)

Fiona Males (until APCM 2019), Secretary

Alexander McJannet (until APCM 2021)

Rachel Naylor (until APCM 2021)

Bronwen Parr (until APCM 2019)

Colin Roberts (until APCM 2020)

Joanna Tarvet (until APCM 2019)

Michael Tutt (until APCM 2020)

Nigel Voyce (until APCM 2020)

Co-opted

John Hayton

Parish

Parochial Church Council Report 2018

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The PCC of St Michaels with St Marys are 'An elected team of parish representatives', who work well together to make decisions in areas of worship, community and mission.

There have been 6 council meetings this year which 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 these committees report back to and participate in decision making for the PCC at the yearly six meetings.

Parish and community events have been successful this year and enjoyed by all who attended.

A grateful thanks to all the members of the PCC for the hard work and time that they put into making the church an active place of worship and outreach.

Graham Wiley, the Laychair of the PCC, welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish meeting for St Michaels and St Marys. The Sunday service was held before the meeting and Graham used a prayer from the Saint and Pilgrims book by Sir Christopher Wren. The Annual Meeting of Parishioners is open to members of the Electoral Roll and Parish residents are able to vote for the churchwardens and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting where only members of the church Electoral Roll have voting privilege.

Annual Meeting of Parishioners Minutes 29th April 2018 10.15 a.m.

Fiona Males,
PCC Secretary
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THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Appointment of clerk

Fiona Males appointed as secretary

2. Election of Churchwardens

Graham Wiley
Stephanie Rainbow

Both served last year and Graham gave his thanks of support to Stephanie who returned her thanks also to Graham. Thanks also to Fiona.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting Minutes 29th April 2018 10.20 a.m.

Fiona Males,
PCC Secretary
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THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)

1. Apologies

Liz Kassel, Paul Barnes, Carolyn Barnes, Mike Western, Janice Western, Alan Allkins, Ginny Allkins.

2. To Receive the Revised Electoral Roll

Fiona Males presented the Electoral Roll for 2018 – defined as a list of eligible people to vote at such meetings.

194 total number on the Electoral Roll.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2017

Minutes confirmed as an accurate representation of the meeting.

Proposed: David Fletcher; Seconded: Colin Roberts; nem con

Parish

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

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

Proposed: Jane Larman; Seconded: Bob May; nem con

5. Election of Deputy Churchwardens/

Paul Barnes elected nem con

Thanks to Paul for his hard work over the past year

6. Election of members to St Albans Deanery Synod

3 Vacancies which will be elected automatically by the PCC.

Graham thanked Sandra North for her work over the previous years. nem con

7. Election of members to PCC

First PCC meeting of the year will be 16th May 2018

PCC subcommittees are:

Mission and Community to raise profile

Pastoral and Worship to oversee pastoral supervision and care

Stewardship to deal with fabric, finance and personnel

Those elected on a 3 year period whose service will be coming to an end:
Rachel Naylor, Sue Dyson, Jane Larman, David Fletcher and Alison Ferreira

Alison Ferreira will be retiring and Graham expressed his grateful thanks to Alison for taking an active part in the PCC as Chair of the M&C.

2 Vacancies remain will be filled by Alex McJannet and Jo Tarvet

The PCC expressed how wonderful to have a full 15 and this is now complete.

Sub-committees are responsible for their own membership

P&W include one or two elected members plus Gillian Davey, Louise Savory, and Colin Hamling

M&C also have one or two elected members plus Michaela Simpson, James Madeley, Alicia Holloway and Adam Styler.

Richard North and Peter Lindeman remain on Stewardship.

8. Election of St Mary's sub-committee

Members elected: Carolyn Barnes, Eike Davis, William Davis, Charmian Highstead, Mike Highstead, Dick Rushman, Harry Woodruff, Ron Woodward, and Sarah Worth.
nem con

Parish

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

Graham thanked all those who continue to serve and thanks to David and Elizabeth Fletcher who retire. A warm welcome to Bob May and Michael Hogben

Dates for refresher training will be advised soon

Proposed: Richard North; Seconded: Jo Tarvet: nem con

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

The role is to take a lead at major services at Michaels instead of the Churchwardens. Rachel Naylor, Chris Allen, Sue Dyson and Steve Argent

Thanks to all with the skills and help with duties who are all standing again and help spread the load.

[Welcome to Sue Dyson.](#)

Nem con

11. To receive the Annual Report of the PCC including Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2017

The annual report has been distributed.

Thanks to Brendan Chambers our new Independent Examiner and to George our organist who recommended him.

Many thanks to Jenny Evans and her hard work over the past year. A very grateful thanks to Georgie Ray for organising the report and she does in the office.

Happy to be received as a record of financial year 2017. Nem con

12. Appointment of Reviewing Accountant

Brendan Chambers will continue as a reviewing accountant any other matters will be down to the PCC.

13. Chairman's remarks

Fear not, I have just one page of A4! Firstly a brief state of the nation. It has been a good year, with numbers up, **p15**, with no new roof, no new heating system, no new lighting system, Kenneth at last getting his sabbatical and due to his careful planning the church and the services have continued smoothly; even though John too has escaped for over a month and this warden promptly disappeared on holiday. John too had an impressive pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago and gave a splendid animated talk on his return. Kenneth gave a superb scholastic series on the reformation to a spellbound audience and I'm sure we may look forward to further stimulating education, after his fact-finding sabbatical trip to the site of the seven biblical churches in

Parish

Turkey. For more on the past and present please re read the APCM report.

Of the finances, we have broken even, largely due to continued savings and good husbandry under the aegis of the Stewardship Committee. However, I offer a word of caution, in that our regular planned giving has year on year gone down, and would urge those who have not reviewed their giving for some while to please do so, and those who have not yet joined the regular giving scheme to please consider joining.

Of the future, we can at last plan to redecorate, a category one requirement from our quinquennial inspection last year, and the previous 2 quinquennials, but we had other unplanned projects to do then. The redecoration requires funding, and a kick-off big event is planned for the second weekend in September, which also marks for us the centenary of the end of the First World War. Before that, we are excited to welcome our new curate Charles King, who will be ordained at the Cathedral on Kenneth's first day back, July 1st. Of the changes to the church, we shall be trialling a new look for the west end. We have in place authority from the Archdeacon to try out temporary re-ordering for up to a year, before we decide how best to enhance our church for both community and worship.

Of the people, it is wonderful that we enjoy a lovely spread of ages, from one baby in the congregation when barely weeks old to sages who have treasured memories of our church and are somewhat older, and of course all in between. We are blessed with beautiful music, enhanced this last year by our choral scholars and new organ scholar. It is also magnificent that the clergy and wardens are so well supported by an army of helpers, whether in small ways, that do add up, or in massive contributions that form the backbone of our community. It makes our job not only a privilege but also a joy to both serve and share in everything that has to be done. Thank you all.

Now on a personal footnote, this coming year is my last in the 6 year term permitted. I wasn't sure it was right for me when I took the job but it has proven to be by far the most wonderful experience, made so by the people I have met and now know, by all of you who have helped or spoken to me, and the most rewarding of all is at the altar rail on a Sunday, with a child's eyes looking into mine as I give them a blessing, and sometimes their teddy too. You might like to think whether God might call you, either next year when I retire, or just sometime in your lifetime.

14. Matters arising from minutes of 30th April 2017 or discussion of matters of general parochial interest – to be received by email in advance

None submitted

15. Date of Next Meeting

Sunday 28th April 2019

16. Grace

Meeting closed 10.50

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
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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

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This chart gives some comparison of our current life against societal trends and attendance patterns in earlier years.

		1983	1993	2003	2008	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Weekly Services												
Sunday 8am	Communicants	26	19	17	9	10	9	8	8	7	7	8
Sunday 9.30am	Communicants	126	92	69	77	72	76	76	75	69	75	76
	Attendance <16	N/A	N/A	16	24	19	23	25	24	19	21	17
	Attendance ≥16	N/A	N/A	75	90	79	86	83	82	76	83	83
Sunday 6pm	Attendance	27	22	18	17	14	15	13	11	13	12	12
Whole parish	'Usual Sunday Adult Attendance' ¹				142	98	100	95	93	89	96	97
Weds 10am	Communicants	13	11	12	11	7	7	8	8	8	8	7
Festivals												
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day	Total all age attendance					270	434	417	517	512	520	489
Easter Day	Total all age attendance					202	241	206	229	242	276	259
Occasional offices												
Baptisms	Parish	26	30	26	12	12	13	13	16	7	11	12
Confirmations	Parish	15	14	0	0	8	9	5	5	6	4	4
Admissions to Communion	Parish	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	8	6	8	4	9	0
Weddings	St Michael's	23	19	13	10	8	12	9	6	7	2	9
Other indicators												
Electoral Roll at APCM							199	199	197	196	189	194
Recipients of email at 31 st December		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	95	c.215	c.270	c.340	375	430	466

Notes

1. The 'Usual Sunday Adult Attendance' is the figure on which our Parish Share to the diocese is calculated. It does not include guests for services such as baptisms or burial of ashes, and it does not include those who attend at more than one service. The USA for 2008 looks exaggerated.

2. Averages are rounded to the nearest whole

3. Not shown on the above, there was a considerable uplift in attendance at evening services in St Michael's in 2018 over 2017.

Pastoral and Worship

Pastoral and Worship Committee Report

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The P&W endeavours to support the Vicar in the provision of pastoral care and appropriate worship opportunities within the parish of St Michael with St Mary.

Regular Sunday services are held at both churches; these range from formal said Communion to interactive all-age worship. Additional weekday services of Morning Prayer and Holy Communion are held at St Michael's. Special services have included the dedication of the supplementary First World War Memorial, a Taizé style evening service and Matins on Remembrance Sunday. Full details of all services are given on our website, which also includes the text of a number of sermons.

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.

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, who has championed a number of initiatives to enhance the provision of music. His report below presents the musical activities of the year in more detail.

The focus of the Lent Studies in 2018 was "Saints and Pilgrims in the Diocese of St Albans" by Bishop Alan Smith. The entry for each day features a short biography, a poem or extract of writing from the individual, and a prayer written by Bishop Alan. The Lent groups, one on Tuesday evenings, a second on Wednesday mornings, read and discussed the material about the individuals. Dandy the Donkey again led the pilgrimage on Palm Sunday from Prae Wood School to St Michael's. The services during Holy Week and Easter were well attended.

The Autumn Programme of evening events was varied this year. Following his sabbatical, on one evening the Vicar showed some photos and described his visit to Turkey. In addition, at St Mary's, he gave some interesting and informative extended talks on the seven churches of Revelation. He also delivered in a series of ten sessions, "An Introduction to Church History" in conjunction with the cathedral. It was good to have a contribution from our organ scholar and one of our choral scholars who shared experiences of working in communities in Africa. As the NHS reached 70, five parishioners who work in medical fields were inspirational in speaking about their roles.

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.

With Advent came the start of the new church year and the preparation for Christmas. Three Quiet Evenings during Advent gave a chance for reflection in what can be a busy period. The many different services at Christmas included Carol Services, a Nativity Play and Crib Service.

At Christmas, as at other times during the year, our churches are beautifully decorated. We are grateful to Wendy May and Carolyn Barnes and their teams for their floral creativity and activity.

Each service in church needs preparation and some of this is done by a group of Sacristans whose assistance is greatly appreciated.

The PCC is mindful of its responsibilities with regard to Safeguarding and is 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 has this year been co-ordinated by Jo Swire whom we thank for enabling this important parish activity to continue.

Pastoral and Worship

A number of churches now have bells which are silent, but we are fortunate at St Michael's that, thanks to Alison Evans and her team, ours continue to ring out loud and clear.

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

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 co-ordinated by one key volunteer who is supported by a helper and parent volunteers to deliver Sunday school 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 over the year have consisted of, drawing, painting, making sheep, fishes, crowns and decorating biscuits. Climbers also supported the World War I memorial festival by contributing poppies to the event. 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. Unfortunately Climbers has recently experienced a drop in attendance which is a result of a number of children moving up into Explorers. We are still aware of a number of families with young children who would be appropriate for Climbers, but either they are not attending Climbers due to other commitments (new baby) or they prefer to attend the full Church service which caters for children through the provision of toys at the back of the Church.

Explorers and Seekers
Pauline Wiley
01727 868532
pwiley@stmichaels.herts.sch.uk

Jo Fabian
01727 752365
jofabian@hotmail.com

There are two other groups in 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, followed by 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 rhyming prayer which we have all learnt by heart and 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.

The older children are keen to help out at significant family services including Mothering Sunday and Harvest by reading the gospel, leading the intersessions, stewarding and serving coffee. This year's Easter services were well attended by the children of both Explorers and Seekers, including walking with Dandy the donkey on Palm Sunday and joining in the Good Friday activities prior to the children's Easter Service and construction of the outdoor Easter Garden. The children's Easter daffodil/windmills that they planted around the Garden were still turning weeks later! Harvest saw our traditional window display – this year's theme was "Give Peas a Chance", as well as lots of participation in the whole service and at coffee.

Pastoral and Worship

The summer party rounded off the academic year for Children's Church and the new term saw a farewell party for one of our regular families who returned to live in Australia.

Advent always sees the children performing a Nativity play to the congregation and this year's play 'Open House Nativity' seemed to be well received by all (again).

The school renovations have given us a new display board and cupboard at Top School, which is kept updated with photos and themes throughout the year to celebrate our children and hopefully inspire others to join.

Our regular teenage helpers, Alex and Jo continue to give us their time and enthusiasm to help with the activities, being re-commissioned as young leaders on Advent Sunday as well as both becoming members of the PCC this year.

Our numbers vary from week to week 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 We run two Jelly Youth Groups; one for younger children (years 8-10) and an older one to when they leave school. We aim to have one session each month for each group. We currently have six members in the younger group and 10 in the older. We discuss current issues of interest and link them to appropriate readings in the bible. We finish the evenings with games.

Jenny Tarvet

Servers I first started serving when I finished my Admission to Communion course. It's a really lovely job where you get to help the vicar during the service. I began by carrying the candles, before progressing to carrying the book. It's going to be a while before I can carry the cross though.

Astrid Williams

When you are serving, you start the service by going to the vestry and wearing an alb – when I began serving, none of the albs were small enough for me, so they had to buy me a special one! During the first hymn, we walk up the aisle, with two people carrying a candle and me carrying the Gospel. It's a beautiful book with real gold leaf and it has to rest on a cushion as it is so special.

When it's time for the Gospel reading, we go down to the middle of the church and I hold the book for the vicar. The Offertory Hymn is probably when we have the most to do. The two candle people and the book person have to stand in front of the altar and take the jugs of wine and water, the bread and the plate of money with the number clickers in it. When I carry the book, I help the vicar wash his hands and prepare the table for Communion. When it's the final hymn, we all go back down the aisle to the choir vestry.

I really enjoy serving – it makes me feel like I'm part of the service and doing something to help.

Church Music In the main, the role for the choir to support the weekly Sunday 9.30 service, our established pattern of a motet or anthem during communion, and a portion of a psalm (either sung to Anglican Chant or Responsorial), alongside the leading of the hymns, continues.

Colin Hamling
01727 863453
colin@hamlingmail.com

During the year we introduced a further setting of the Communion Service, by William Matthias, for use during ordinary time. We now have five settings which we sing in the various seasons across the church year.

Pastoral and Worship

Our monthly service of Evensong on the fourth Sunday continued throughout the year. In September, this was preceded by an Open Rehearsal, at which the choir was joined by number of visitors and singers from our congregation; we concluded with a Festal Evensong for Michaelmas. The music included the Canticles to the setting in G by Sumsion, and "Worthy is the Lamb" from "The Messiah" by Handel.

We have appointed further Choral Scholars, making a total of seven at the end of the year, and drawn from three schools. They are a welcome addition to the choir, being variously present each Sunday for the 9.30 service, and coming together for special services. I am grateful to our sponsors who generously support the scheme; I am also delighted to report that the scheme has received a grant from The Williams Church Music Trust.

Our Organ Scholar, George Throup, is gaining valuable experience in accompanying our services, and during the year obtained his Grade 8 organ, and a place for September 2019 at the Royal College of Music to study organ.

In October some of the Scholars gave a Sunday afternoon concert; this included instrumental performances of their audition works for entry to music colleges and universities; I am pleased to report that they have since received offers of places.

A number of young people have started using the organ for practice; the Vicar and I are keen to support this as part of our educational outreach, and are looking forward to opportunities for them to be involved in the music at St Michael's, and maybe even becoming our future organ scholars.

At Advent, Christmas and Epiphany we repeated our pattern of Carol services at both St Michael's and St Mary's. This provided for music and liturgy of varying styles across the four services. In addition we gave a secular concert together with the St Albans City Band.

On a practical note, following agreement from the PCC and with an Archdeacon's Licence, the west end choir platform has been extended and the choir stalls realigned. The semi-collegiate arrangement has proven very effective in improving ensemble singing, and also the clarity of words now that the choir is a little closer to the congregation and in front of the organ. The new arrangement also provides a more attractive visual aspect of the west end.

I thank the choir who have given loyal commitment throughout the year in preparing and singing a wide range of music to enhance our worship, and also those who have contributed in practical ways. And especially, I thank Revd. Padley for his unerring support.

Bell-ringers

Alison Evans
01727 856845
alison.evans@btinternet.com

The band has done its best to continue ringing during 2018 but the death of one of our members in February was a serious blow, permanently reducing us to five resident ringers. We are teaching two adult learners but depend on ringers from other local towers to make up the numbers for services and practices. This meant we only missed two Sunday morning services but we managed to ring for just one Evensong.

However, the ringing itself has still been enjoyable. We have almost exclusively been limited to six-bell ringing but we continue to expand our repertoire and have learned some interesting and tuneful new methods. We have also spent a lot of time supporting the learners in the hope that they will soon be proficient enough to ring on Sundays.

Our finances remain stable and, at our AGM, we agreed a donation towards the church redecoration fund and another to a Christian conservation charity in memory of our dead colleague.

Pastoral and Worship

We continue to take our turn on the coffee rota. We rang for seven weddings this year, and welcomed seven visiting bands, as well as showing the Year Six children from St Michael's school around the tower. We rang at the start of the Folk Evening in July, as well as at the beginning of the community weekend in September, following which we ran a number of well-attended tower tours. We also submitted an entry in the Flower Festival - a host of hand-knitted poppies mounted on half a bell wheel. We had dinner together at the Six Bells in March and held an enjoyable outing in October to five towers in Northamptonshire.

Sacristan Team

Ann Dean,
01727 867664
d.dean868@btinternet.com

I write on behalf of the invisible band of helpers that, every week, "set out" the communion table, those who "clear away", others that 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 and we are delighted welcome Sarah McJannet and Val Carberry to our team

To all Sacristans, may I say a BIG thank you for your support over the last year.

Flowers

Bob and Wendy May
01727 853695
postmaster@i-c-
a.demon.co.uk

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. Christmas decorations seemed particularly good and we managed to keep a wedding arch going through Advent for an extra splash at Christmas.

The highlight of the year (or even decade!) was the Flower Festival associated with the World War I Centenary celebrations. Expertly directed by Anita Lindeman, the decorations provided a magnificent backdrop to the History Display and the Words and Music Concert. Anita succeeded in pulling together a team of flower arrangers and helpers from St Michael's and many churches around St Albans; the Abbey Flower Guild being particularly helpful.

In excess of £8,000 was raised over the entire weekend's activities with the flowers being a contributory factor to its success.

Pastoral Visiting Team

Bronwen Parr
01727 864645
bronwenparr@hotmail.com

Phillip and Bronwen Parr have been members of the Pastoral Visiting Team for over five years and the time has come for new members to be recruited into the group. It is apparent that a few more parishioners are finding it difficult to come to worship in church and to have more people able to visit parishioners in their homes is helpful. It is easy for people to "fall off the radar". If someone hasn't been to church for a while, it can be that it is purely by choice, or it may be that a person is unwell or frail. We would always encourage attendance in church when possible, and transport may sometimes be available. We hope that those who have been church members continue to feel part of the church community even if they find attendance a problem. Please let the Vicar know of any individuals who would appreciate a visit at home.

We continue to visit residents in Fosse House frequently and 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 opportunity to share in worship is clearly valued by the residents and some of their relatives.

Bereavement Support Team

Bronwen Hewer

Whenever there is a funeral in the Parish, the officiating clergy ascertain whether the relatives would like to be contacted by our team, sometime after the funeral. If requested, we receive contact details and phone a few weeks later with a view to visiting if asked.

We have been in touch with seven people this year, largely by phone and have also

Pastoral and Worship

01727 864224 offered a listening ear over a cup of coffee on several occasions.
j_hewer@sky.com

Jenny Hehl

The book of requests for prayers by the candle stand, has also been a means of contacting people on occasion if they leave their email address which is then followed up. We hold a service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving in November to which recently bereaved people are invited although the service is open to everyone.

It is well attended and has proved to be a good contact with people who, over a glass of wine afterwards, are very pleased to have an informal chat about their loss.

We have said goodbye to Ginny Allkins who has worked so effectively in our team since 2012. Jenny Hehl has been training for her role over the past year and we welcome her.

Luncheon Club

Jo Mc Cullen
joswire@hotmail.com

My name is Jo McCullen, I took over the running of the St Michael's Lunch Club in January 2018. The club is held on the second Tuesday of every month at the Portland Arms, Portland Street, St Albans. We arrive at 12.15 and finish by 2pm.

Invitations are sent out approximately a week in advance, some hand delivered, some by post. Everyone telephones me to confirm their attendance or otherwise and some request lifts, which I co-ordinate with helpers. We have a two course meal and tea and a raffle is held each meeting, the proceeds of one month are used to buy prizes for the next month.

Last year as it was so hot, we had to postpone our July meeting and many people were away. We did not meet in August due to the holidays of myself and the Portland Arms landlady.

In November we had an outing to Burstons' Garden Centre, where we enjoyed a lovely lunch in their restaurant which the Church subsidised.

In December we enjoyed a special Christmas lunch with all the trimmings, crackers, a free raffle, Christmas presents and accompaniment of a local guitarist and sing-a-long to Christmas songs. The Church subsidised this event too.

Safeguarding

Alison Ferreira
01727 860459
allferreiras@hotmail.com

The safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is an absolute priority at St Michael's and St Mary's Churches. We are committed to the importance of good safeguarding practice and fostering the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults who worship in our church and engage in our activities. We rely on the much valued work of many volunteers who assist us with the various activities which children, young people and vulnerable adults participate in. Consequently it is essential that we have the correct procedures in place to safeguard these groups, so we can ensure that our church is as safe a place as it can be.

This is achieved by:

- undertaking an annual review of our safeguarding policy. This is approved at PCC level and our policy is on public display and is available on the church website.
- adopting the Church of England's policy for safe recruitment.
- obtaining DBS clearances for volunteers and employees working with children and vulnerable groups, where appropriate.
- arranging for all PCC members, in view of their position as trustees of the church, and volunteers working with children and vulnerable groups, to receive appropriate training.

Mission and Community

Mission and Community Committee Report

Charles King
cking.curate@gmail.com

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

During 2018, M&C continued to run the two main community events that we usually take on: the St Michael's Folk Evening in July, and the church Bonfire Party in November. This year we also found ourselves as with many others taking part in the wonderful weekend of special events to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War.

St Michael's Folk Evening:

- This was opened as in previous years by the bell ringers. This was very well received, and we record our thanks to them and hope they will continue to do so in future years.
- Swanvesta Social Club returned, playing in the churchyard. This was a great draw and played a significant role in attracting people beyond St Michael's Street into the church area.
- Local brewery, The 3 Brewers, provided a selection of beers, and we are grateful, too, to David Worcester at the Lower Red Lion for running the hog roast stand.
- Inn on the Park, one of our neighbours from Verulamium Park, sold ice creams, and Carmen provided some tasty Caribbean food.
- M&C ourselves sold a range of other drinks and refreshments.
- This is a successful format added to this year by having the church itself open, and the Friends of St Michael's enhancing their presence with a membership stall.

September Centenary Weekend

- M&C helped out at this weekend by selling refreshments and organising games during the Saturday fete.
- The event created a great buzz from across the St Michael's area to wider St Albans and beyond.

Church Bonfire Party

- This was held again in the Paddock, and despite a clash with half term and many from St Michael's School being away, the event proved very popular, and a great way to engage with the wider community. It has a strong following reputationally, with new people coming having heard about it on social media.
- Given that in 2019 it will also fall during half term, it is important to maximise ticket sales on the gate.
- Our thanks to the churchyard working party and those who stacked the bonfire for keeping us well supplied with material to burn!

In addition we have:

- Organised the distribution of Easter and Christmas cards within the parish.
- Organised refreshments on Advent Sunday.

Autumn saw the drafting of a new Mission Action Plan, and for M&C our attention has begun to turn to how we may revitalise links with the PTAs of schools in our parish; address loneliness; a focus on children and young adults; and parish communications.

The M&C committee would like to thank everyone who has supported our various events this year, and, of course, all those who serve in any kind of capacity to make them happen. We couldn't manage without your help. New members are always welcome; please contact Charles King.

Mission and Community

Welcome,
Visitors and
Stewards

Sue Dyson
01727 833524
sue.dyson2@gmail.com

As Welcome Coordinator, I get to meet new people as well as regular members of the congregation, on Sunday mornings, at special events, or when I am pottering about in church tidying up toys in the tower room!

I was pleased to be able to welcome St Albans Morris Dancers and the St Albans City Brass Band to entertain us on the Saturday of the WWI Commemoration weekend in September. The Band enjoyed themselves so much that they came back in December to treat us to an Advent Concert in church. I was happy to welcome in many people at the St. Michael's Folk Evening in July and the CTSA Prayer Walk in September.

I am very grateful to the Stewards and Church Guides, who are the face of welcome when they carry out their duties.

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

Tiny Tots

Jacqueline Voyce
jsvoyce@hotmail.com

Tiny Tots continues to be a popular playgroup and has attracted new families. We have introduced Stay and Pray elements to a couple of the sessions with the support of Kenneth and Charles. The children have enjoyed these sessions and listened well.

The weekly, voluntary donations are generally consistent and are used to provide the healthy snacks for the children. This has been a popular aspect of the playgroup encouraging healthy eating.

To develop the playgroup further we would like to clean and organise the toys and look at the storage. We will also continue to try and find additional, regular volunteers to help with setting up

Schools

Kenneth Padley
01727 835037
kennethpadley@gmail.com

There are three schools in our parish.

2018 was a year of significant development at **St Michael's Church of England Primary** with the construction of two new classrooms and additional facilities at Top School, the completion of a three-year programme to raise pupil numbers to one classroom per year. A strong and stable teaching base ensures that academic results continue to improve. The PCC makes five nominations to the Governing Body of this school, makes use of school facilities for Sunday morning children's groups, and runs weekly collective worship for the school in church on a Wednesday morning.

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 Secondary**, especially the sixth form. Colin Hamling and I have had a meeting with the Head of Music about musical opportunities for teenagers at St Michael's.

FEED

Jim Mann
07770 324375
jimmann147@sky.com

The weekly collection box in St. Michael's Church, for donations of food to FEED has grown throughout the year, with very regular occurrences of more than one box being donated. This year's donations at Harvest Festival and Christmas were over-whelming.

In addition to the food box St. Michael's now has six volunteers who regularly help at the Monday morning sessions of FEED at the Vineyard Church.

December was a particularly busy time for the food bank with 650 people collecting food in four weeks. Regular numbers are now 60—80 people collecting food each week.

It is proposed that a representative for FEED from the Vineyard Care Centre will give a talk at St. Michael's, early in 2019, to give a follow-up about its activities since the last

Mission and Community

talk given three years ago.

Additionally, an introduction talk will be given at St Marys in the hope that a collection box can be started there too.

Thank you to St. Michael's for your support and donations, may it continue through 2019.

Website
www.stmichaels-
parishchurch.org.uk

St Michael's Church website has been maintained by Russell and Yolissa Palmer for the last 18 months. The most crucial action undertaken in 2018 was software updates to minimize the likelihood of cyber attacks on the website platform. Additionally In 2018 the following actions and more have been achieved:

**Russell and Yolissa
Palmer**
info@allantica.com

- Pew Sheet uploaded to website on a weekly basis and the Parish Magazine on a monthly basis.
- Rollover links added making it easier for users to contact relevant individuals through the site i.e. for Hall Hire
- Modernise and build a new photo gallery with photos indexed in a standard way to view on the website event by event.

yolissa.palmer@gmail.com

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.

**Parish News
Magazine**

The big news for the year is that a very generous donor agreed to wipe out the existing debt in order that we could start afresh with a clean slate, free from debt. This enabled us to start printing a hard copy for the December/January edition and many favourable comments have been received. It is not too late to subscribe if you still wish to receive a printed copy.

Sandie North
sandrich2@btinternet.com

Once again, nothing is done without a superb team working towards its production: Kerry Wells, John Mole, Sue Dyson, Lynn Ashmore, Peter Limebear and Kyna Mason who looks after the advertising side. Thanks must also be given to Gill Huckerby who has given her valuable advice when needed.

Stewardship

Stewardship Committee Report

Nigel Voyce
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2018 was an opportunity to reflect on our previous Mission Action Plan and to consider what challenges we may be facing in the coming five years. One of the major items that we will be undertaking was as a result of our Quinquennial Report which looks at the condition of our church and what is needed to keep it in good order for the next five years. From this report it is clear that we need to repair plaster work and redecorate the inside of the church, a major undertaking which will require substantial funding.

Funding through our standing order giving scheme still remains our major income raiser and our stewardship campaign continues to encourage parishioners to donate whilst we actively work on getting back the tax associated with giving. As technology advances we also explored different electronic mobile means of giving which we will further develop in 2019.

During 2018 we introduced the new Data Protection rules, installation of security cameras and the new security alarm system, a new electronic bank account was opened, a program of churchyard tree maintenance undertaken, changes to the choir stall ordering, and changes to the Parish Magazine circulation to allow for a limited number of paper copies.

Our halls continue to undergo investment with a new boiler system installed in the Memorial Hall. These important upgrades help to grow our revenue streams and through our Halls Administrator we are seeing much higher occupancy rates. The School House Flat continues to provide a steady income stream and we have are looking to perform some upgrades in the outer hallway to the stair light well.

During the year it was announced that our Treasurer, Gill Huckerby, would be stepping down and replacement officer(s) have been sought to fill her position. Our grateful thanks to Gill for her marvellous work over the past years in keeping our finances healthy and on track.

As ever, my praise to all those on the Stewardship Committee and in the Parish Office for their wonderful support and enthusiasm.

Halls in St Michael's Parish

Danielle Argent
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hallbooking17@gmail.com

The Memorial Hall:

The Memorial Hall currently has 10 regular hirers ranging from a full time Nursery, Theatre Groups, Sporting Clubs, 12th St Albans Brownies and an early morning Box fit class.

Ad Hoc bookings have been steady throughout 2018 with October being the most popular month. The total numbers are down slightly from 2017 as we had less hire during June and July due to the heatwave.

The Hall is still part way through its maintenance plan. Two new boilers and hot water system were installed in October/November, this has completed a major task on the list and is proving extremely successful.

The Parish Centre:

The Parish Centre currently has 10 regular hirers ranging from baby and toddler groups, writing groups, breakfast club and the St Albans Beekeepers Association.

Ad Hoc bookings were consistent in 2018 with an 18% increase from 2017, this is mainly due to the volume of schools visiting the Museum using it for lunch. The busiest month was March 2018 which had a 100% increase in bookings compared to March 2017.

St Mary's School Room:

St Mary's School Room currently has seven regular hirers which make up 99% of the hire income.

Stewardship

We are continuing to progress plans for an extension/inside toilet, this will be a huge benefit to all who use the hall and will definitely attract more hirers especially in the ad hoc hire space.

St Michael's Churchyard Thank you to all the volunteers, who helped with the Churchyard Working Group, throughout the year. In addition, a big thank you to the new members of the team, which made it a well-supported group for the whole year.

Jim Mann
07770 324375
jimmann147@sky.com

A really special thank you to Mike Weston and Roger Gray who retired from the grass mowing team after many years of service. Fortunately Richard North and Roy Brooks have agreed to join the mowing team and will be trained in the use of the drive on mower in the spring.

Grass mowing was reduced dramatically due to the hot dry summer, which left very little grass to cut! The opposite happened at the end of the season, when vast quantities of leaves were racked up in the pouring rain!

With the completion of the school extension, the perimeter holly hedge along the school boundary had to be cut down to allow natural light into the windows of the new building. Along with the holly hedge, there was major pruning to evergreens which provided a mountain of fuel for the bonfire in November!!

The newly planted lavender around the Parish Centre border became well established and provided colour and scent around the entrance to the Parish Centre. The remaining border was planted with perennials.

A large bag of daffodil bulbs was donated and these have been planted between the yew trees along the footpath from the Bluehouse Hill entrance. We await Spring 2019 to see the results!

In addition, the yew trees and others in the area from the church tower and Bluehouse Hill were reduced in size which has allowed more natural light into the area.

We have had a well-supported Churchyard Working Group throughout the year that has maintained the churchyard in really good order; thank you to you all.

St Michael's church and brass cleaning

We have two groups of volunteer cleaners - one meeting on the first Saturday morning of the month and the other on the 3rd Thursday morning of the month. Additionally we carried out four extra sessions to coordinate with Christmas and Harvest church decorations.

Jane Larman
01727 868349
janelarman@sky.com

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

One group ends the session with coffee, cakes or biscuits in the Tower room. This is a wonderful way for the teams to catch up and chat.

We are very grateful to all volunteers for helping to keep our beautiful church clean and tidy. We are always looking for new helpers to swell our ranks, just half an hour can make a huge difference.

Partners

Friends
of St Michael's
(Registered Charity
279810)

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During 2018 our Committee consisted of David Fletcher (Chairman), Mike Western (Treasurer), Ruth Jerram (Membership Secretary), Elizabeth Fletcher, Richard North and Michael Tutt.

During this year, we have held discussions on how to promote the Friends of St Michael's and decided that we would take the opportunity, at the various events planned for the year, to encourage people from St Michael's village and other visitors to find out more about us, and, where possible, ask them to join the Friends.

Bearing this in mind, an Events group was formed led by the Earl of Verulam and Adam Singer and friends from the village, and on 4th July, in association with the Village Folk Evening, we had a stall where people could sign-up to join The Friends. This proved to be a quite successful evening with 35 new members to swell our numbers.

Our next event is now being planned and it is envisaged that this will take place over a weekend in late September and will have a medieval theme. Please watch out in 2019 for more details.

Our next AGM will take place at the end of January 2019 where we will confirm a new committee to take us forward in the new year.

The Friends of St Michael's is a registered charity (registration number 279810). If you would like to make a one-off donation to the group, and if you pay tax, you could ask for your donation to be Gift Aided. Alternatively, if you would like to join the group, please get in touch.

St Albans Deanery

Sandie North
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In April 2018 the Deanery Synod agreed a "Proposal for Shorter Parish Vacancies" to be put to the Diocesan Synod for onward debate at General Synod, probably sometime in 2019. The proposal recognised the disruption caused to a parish and its mission during a vacancy. Diocesan Synod agreed the motion.

Among other topics discussed were the X:site day on Saturday 13 October 2018 for children aged 7-11 held at St Luke's Church between 6pm and 8pm, with 50 children and 30 helpers. Ten churches were represented, but St Michael's was not one of them. The second X:site day was held on Saturday 2 February, with games, fun, food, Bible story, drama and Christian songs. It is a way of linking Sunday School, School Assemblies and Holiday Clubs (if they are run).

At the Deanery Synod meeting held in October 2018, it was agreed that there will be no contributions requested from parishes in 2019.