



St Michael with St Mary St Albans **Parish Profile**



What people think of St Michael's and St Mary's

'Many of us live in St Albans because we love the historic context and the fact that St Michael's has such significance as **possibly the first site of Christian worship in the British Isles** is particularly meaningful to us.'

'Lovely church, very peaceful and quiet. I've **found comfort** after my prayers. Didn't want to leave. Thank you.'

'**Thanks for keeping me going.**'

'It's a **friendly** place where I have made many friends. I have received much love and support over the years.'

'The 8 o'clock communion service is a peaceful service when **the cares of the day can be put before God** before they take over the mind and energies.'

'**I have learnt a lot**, hearing different ideas and have enjoyed going to the various groups.'

'As soon as you walk inside **there is a feeling of peace and calm**. You feel the people who over the years have worshipped there are looking out for you.'

'My standout thing about St Michael's was how **I received a deeper understanding of faith**, sharing theological and cultural insights, through the Wednesday address or Sunday sermon, in Lent groups, lectures in the Parish Centre or via videos on the website.'

'**There are many things I like:** historic building, very friendly people, high quality sermons and warm, inclusive community spirit - feeling of belonging.'



'From the outside positioned on the green St Mary's looks like a film set for Miss Marple. On the inside a delightful Arts and Crafts chapel designed by Gilbert Scott. Just oozing peace and tranquillity where **a very genuine and warm welcome** to a traditional evensong, compline or communion awaits.'

'**A wonderful place to breathe deeply and contemplate.**'

Contents

What people think of St Michael's and St Mary's	2
Who we are	4
Our churches	5
The parish	6–8
Our buildings	9
Our worship	10–11
Sunday Services	10
Wednesday Services	10
Special Services	11
Other Services	11
Where we are now	11
Our music	12–13
Choral Scholarships	12
Organs	13
Our mission	14
Our activities	15
Our groups	16
Our schools	17–18
St Michael's School	17
Celebrations, Sharing and Reflection	18
Our next vicar	19
Your role	20
You will bring...	21
Together we can...	22
Your team	23
Clergy	23
Staff	23
Your volunteers	24
Your resources	25–26
Finance	25
Buildings	26
St Michael with St Mary in figures	27
The Diocese and Deanery	28
Links with the Deanery	28
Opportunities to grow and develop your Ministry	28
Further information and next steps	29
Parish map	30



Who we are

We are delighted that you are thinking of becoming our new vicar in the parish of St Michael with St Mary. We have also been thinking about who we are as a parish community and what we should say to help you make your decision. We bade farewell to our previous incumbent with great sadness, but we have no set ideas about who you are or might be. We have been praying that God will find us someone who can be happy here and grow with us as we develop and agree our vision for the future of the parish together.



Here are some of our thoughts to help your decision:

- we are a warm and welcoming community of active and committed members who would like to broaden our appeal to the wider, more diverse community around us
- we see ourselves as open-minded, forward-thinking and ambitious to grow our parish through our Ministry of Welcome
- we know we can be opinionated and challenging but we want to go deeper into God and grow spiritually with your help
- best described as central in our traditions, worshippers from a wide range of backgrounds seem to find a happy home with us
- with a high proportion of well-educated professionals, we enjoy challenging preaching which helps us to learn and grow spiritually
- worship and prayer, supported by a long-standing musical and Anglican choral tradition, are central to all we do
- we are a caring group providing mutual support to our clergy and congregation, as well as valuing and fostering pastoral links to transform the local community
- the pandemic period pushed us to explore new ways of welcoming and engaging with a wider congregation, including online and outdoor services; we want to build on that.

Our churches

Our church buildings are much loved by both our congregations and the many people who visit them. Built on the site of the Roman basilica in Verulamium, **St Michael's church** was founded in 948 during the late Saxon period (see virtual tour) and is a Grade I listed building. It is possibly the first site of Christian worship in the British Isles.



St Mary's is a Grade II listed church in Childwickbury. It was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott and built in 1867 to provide a place of worship and schoolroom for the local estate workers. It has some fine stained-glass windows in the chancel and is an excellent example of a small Victorian rural church.



Both churches are open from 9am to 5pm every day of the week. During the Covid shutdown periods, many people came into our beautiful churches for the first time, and messages in the prayer book in St Michael's and on the prayer tree in St Mary's are testimony to the comfort this provided.

St Michael's Vicarage is a large, 1920s 5-bedroomed family house with extensive gardens at the back and side. The parish office is attached at the side and has a lockable door opening on to the Vicar's study. The front area is used for parking by parish officers and employees as there is no dedicated car park. There is a gate through to the churchyard for easy access to the church. The Pleasance and paddock are adjacent to the vicarage.



The parish (map on page 30)

Situated largely in western St Albans, the parish includes St Michael's and Kingsbury; the Gorhambury and Childwickbury estates; the Verulam and Batchwood housing estates; and the hamlet of Potters Crouch. It is a true mixture of urban and rural.

At the induction of a new incumbent in 1977, Bishop Robert Runcie described St Michael with St Mary as the 'most ordinary and extraordinary' parish in England.

- St Michael's church is built on the site of Roman Verulamium, specifically the basilica where it is thought St Alban was tried.
- St Michael's was traditionally visited by pilgrims on their way to St Albans Abbey up the hill; the village still attracts many visitors – to the park, museum, pub and Waffle House.
- After the Reformation, the significance of the church was enhanced by its patronage by the owners of Gorhambury: from this period date the Jacobean altar table, pulpit and chairs; Francis Bacon's statue is a feature of the chancel; the patron has been a member of the Grimston family since the seventeenth century and is now the Seventh Earl of Verulam.
- The churchyard and paddock border the car park entrance to Verulamium Park and Museum; there are Roman ruins in the park and a Roman theatre near the entrance to the Gorhambury Estate.
- St Michael's Village is a conservation area and one of the most desirable and expensive residential locations in St Albans. This can make it difficult for growing families to move house within the parish. In 2021, St Albans was ranked the top destination for buyers moving out of London to buy their first house.
- The Verulam Estate on the other side of the park consists of privately owned housing, with Waitrose supermarket and shops, Prae Wood School and Fosse House residential home nearby.
- Part of the Batchwood estate, a mixture of social and private housing, is in the parish. Some St Michael's School pupils live here, and we would like to welcome more families from both estates into our regular worshipping congregation.



The parish



The parish

St Mary's church is on the green in Childwickbury, a peaceful and tranquil setting off the main Harpenden/ St Albans Road. Most people who attend the church regularly no longer live or work on Childwickbury estate land as was historically the case.

The church itself is small and therefore popular for smaller weddings and funerals. The schoolroom with its modern facilities and garden offer opportunities for parish study days and social activities.

St Mary's congregation is small but has doubled its number of regular worshippers in recent years. Communion is offered once a month followed by tea in the schoolroom. Compline and Taizé services take place on an occasional basis. The annual Animal Service is particularly popular and attracts a wide range of people, many of them non-churchgoers.

Sunday services now attract more people from a wider area, some of whom attend other churches for morning services, making it a more diverse congregation and offering more support to the deputy warden in stewarding services.

From operating very much as two separate churches and congregations a few years ago, there is now a close parochial relationship.



Our buildings

In addition to two churches, we have three halls: the Memorial Hall, the Parish Centre and St Mary's Schoolroom and garden, and the School House Flat. As well as providing income of just over £59,000 per annum, the halls offer us opportunities to meet, and provide space for community activities. We are in the process of switching our booking processes to an online system and upgrading our website to secure status. This will allow us to take hall and other payments online.

- The Memorial Hall is on the other side of St Michael's village and is built on land leased from the Earl of Verulam. The Stewardship Committee oversees its maintenance. It is home to a children's nursery as well as a theatre group, dance group and table tennis club, plus one-off hirers. The kitchen was recently refurbished, and the lighting brought up to date. It is fully booked with these communal activities.
- The Parish Centre is used after church services for coffee on Sundays and for other church meetings. St Michael's School breakfast and after school clubs use it in term time, as do several other regular hirers. Occupancy is 25% higher than in 2019.
- St Mary's schoolroom was recently refurbished, and an indoor loo added with a grant from Veolia matched by us. The rear car park has been repaired and resurfaced. The number of hirers has doubled since 2019 and we hope to recover the costs of refurbishment soon.
- The School House Flat is above St Michael's School and has its own entrance. In return for overseeing the flat, the church receives the rental income.



Our worship

St Michael with St Mary attracts worshippers from a wide range of backgrounds, as we are central in our traditions. St Michael's offers mostly daytime services while St Mary's offers evening worship. (See regular services) This balance seems to work well. Until recently, morning prayer at St Michael's was offered and we would like to reinstate this. Clergy and readers lead our services. Our services include contributions from those who act as sacristans, stewards, chalice assistants, readers, intercessors and servers.

Sunday Services

- 8.00am Holy Communion (St Michael's): a Book of Common Prayer said service in more traditional language with a short homily.
- 9.30am Parish Communion (St Michael's): our main family Eucharist service based on the three-year cycle of *Common Worship* readings and themes, with one All Age more interactive service with simplified language once a month. This is our main act of worship, with choir and organ. Baptisms take place at this service on the fourth Sunday.
- 6.00pm Evensong or Compline, or Holy Communion on first Sunday (St Mary's). Sunday services at St Mary's use the *Book of Common Prayer* and hymns from *Ancient & Modern NS*.

Wednesday Services

- 9.00am School Service (term time only) for St Michael's School – a service which also attracts some parents: our largest weekly service.
- 10.30am Holy Communion – short said service for mostly older adults



Our worship

Special Services

Further services are held:

- on Ash Wednesday in the morning and evening
- on Palm Sunday with a donkey procession from Prae Wood School
- throughout Holy Week, culminating in the Good Friday liturgy and meditation services for adults, and building the Easter Garden activities for children
- Ascension and All Souls Service of Commemoration for the recently bereaved of the parish.
- several carol services for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany at both churches, as well as Christingle and crib services for younger children at St Michael's.

Other Services

Occasional provision of other forms of service and worship is much appreciated such as meditative, Taizé, time for shared reflection and Quiet Days. We are keen to continue and develop opportunities, particularly after the interruptions of the pandemic.

Where we are now

We are now eager to rebuild and strengthen regular commitment in worship and church life. We want to build on what has been valued previously, and on what we have learnt through reaching out and sharing worship, faith exploration and pastoral support in new ways – including online initiatives.



Our music

St Michael's has a long-standing Anglican musical choral tradition, and we believe that music is a gift of God to us all. We love to sing and are led by a committed Organist and Choir, including Scholars. We encourage anyone with an interest in singing to join the choir and we work with the school to encourage more children to join and develop their musical skills.



Corresponding to the *Common Worship (CW)* readings and themes, used at the main Sunday Service, we have a three-year cycle of Hymns selected from *Common Praise* and *Angel Voices*, a locally produced supplementary hymnal. This cycle ensures a balance of more and less familiar, and within each service a variety of poetic and musical styles. Other music comprises:

- five congregational communion settings incorporated into service booklets derived from *Common Worship*; this also facilitates use of various Eucharistic Prayers and other CW options:
- psalmody – chanted, responsorial or plainsong
- an anthem or motet
- repertoire selected to be of appropriate complexity for the choir, appealing to the congregation, and relevant; there is a wide diversity of styles – plainsong to modern through Tudor and Victorian
- songs for children's services, and Worship Songs which have gained popularity and acceptance in Anglican worship and are congregational in style.

Choral Scholarships

Up to eight Choral Scholarships and an Organ Scholarship are available and generously sponsored. Since 2017, there have been 14 scholars, and many have gone on to music colleges and gained further scholarships. The annual recruitment was disrupted by Covid but is now being re-established.

Organs

At **St Michael's**, there is an organ by Peter Collins, built in 1979 concurrently with reordering the church for a nave altar. At **St Mary's**, the small instrument by Hill contemporary with the church building is in good order, and fully effective for its role.

Worship and music



Our mission

Our Mission Action Plan (MAP) shows the ways in which we have tried to turn our faith into practice by making our churches more welcoming through the buildings and the people. Wherever possible, we encourage young people to join in worship and community activities.

- **Mission of welcome and inclusion:** by opening both our churches daily, having a children's corner for use during services, sending welcome packs to all our schools' parents/carers and having an annual welcome service for them.
- **Improving communications:** by upgrading our website to be more user-friendly and establishing a Facebook page. Without a printed parish magazine, we communicate online but also distribute leaflets and flyers for Christmas and Easter services and key events. We print a weekly notice sheet.
- **Supporting those at risk of becoming lonely and cut off:** a 'buddy system', originally phone-based, started during lockdown between parishioners of all ages and those living alone, has developed into visits for the housebound and a monthly walking group followed by a pub lunch for the more mobile. We held a very successful Buddy tea party and plan to build on this positive development.
- **Informed and organised charitable giving:** working across our committees, we welcome talks from organisations such as Samaritans in sermon spots and link with a variety of local charities including the Jubilee Community Centre and Age UK. In the last three years we have donated an average of £1,335 to charities. We also have collections at Christmas services and collect weekly donations for FEED foodbank.



Our activities

There is a calendar of church-based group activities and social activities including other members of the community and the school. Some raise funds but the principal aim is missional, to bring the community together with the church at its centre. Activities include:



- **Lent Course:** based on a theme or book, two groups (one evening, one morning after 10.30 Wednesday service) meet weekly for discussion and prayer.
- **Educational evenings/talks:** on a variety of topics using different speakers. Prior to lockdown, we held a series of meetings on the environment and climate change. These were attended by individuals and groups from across the city.
- **Quiz Night:** usually held in January in the Parish Centre as a social event post-Christmas, this was held on Zoom in lockdown.
- **Folk Night:** a local event held in St Michael's Village usually in the first week of July. Swanvesta Folk Singers perform in the churchyard with local businesses providing food, and parishioners running a bar. The church is open to visitors.
- **Bonfire Night:** in early November, this event brings school and church together in the paddock for a bonfire, sparklers and refreshments served by parishioners.
- **Walking group:** following the successful establishment of a 'buddies' group during lockdown, guided local walks followed by a pub lunch run monthly and a summer tea party have helped those living alone to socialise with others again.
- **Refreshments in church and Parish Centre:** are served after the Advent Carol Concert and also after the All Souls service, where support is offered by our bereavement counsellors. Parents are invited to coffee after the school service.



Our groups

We have a variety of groups that support worship and other activities:

- **Children's Church:** meets every Sunday at 9.30 in the school and participates monthly in the All Age service during term time. Our services are enhanced by servers (aged 8+). Children are admitted to Communion from this age following an induction course.
- **Young People:** meet monthly in families' homes for evening social, prayer and discussion activities. One group is for school years 7–9 and the other for school years 10–13.
- **Choir:** sings at Sunday services, occasional services on request and community carols.
- **Bell ringers:** St Michael's Society of Change Ringers is a well-established group of dedicated ringers who ring at services and occasional services. They maintain the bells.
- **Home Groups:** we have well-established and newer groups which we would like to review and refresh following the pandemic.
- **Churchyard Working Party:** maintain the churchyard by working every first Saturday to ensure it is kept clean and tidy. Volunteers at St Mary's also maintain the churchyard and garden.
- **Church Cleaners:** clean St Michael's church on the same Saturday monthly. The two groups usually pause for coffee and a chat. People who don't normally attend church join these groups and sometimes start coming to services.
- **Friends of St Michael's Church:** is a community charity that helps fund repairs and restoration. A recent charity event was held at the Abbey Theatre. They have raised £120,000 over the years.



Our schools

St Michael's School

The close relationship between St Michael's Church and St Michael's School has a profoundly positive effect on both. At our Wednesday church services:

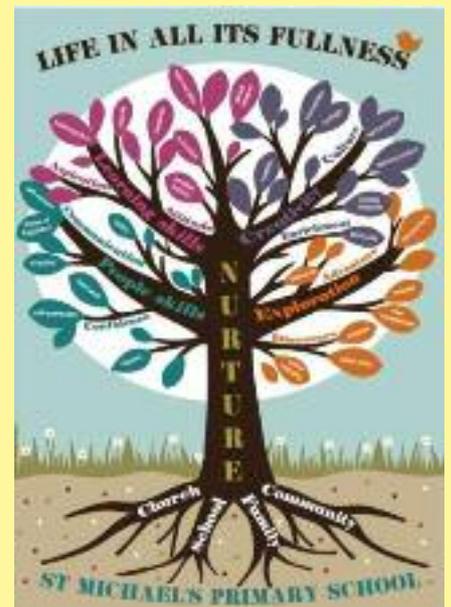
- The **children** enjoy taking part by providing class prayers, lighting the candles, ringing the bells and responding to the Vicar's questions. It is vital that the new incumbent enjoys working with children and can explain the key messages of Christianity in an engaging way.
- An increasing number of **parents** attend the services, which provide a wonderful opportunity for church personnel to meet with the whole community, both for evangelism and for offering Christian support. Coffee after the service offers a chance for parents to talk about the key points of the service at an adult level.
- The school **community** is very diverse, serving Christians, those of other faiths and those with no faith. It is important that services are delivered with sensitivity to other beliefs, without diluting the key messages of Christianity.

School Vision: Life in all its Fullness

The school vision is 'Life in all its Fullness' and the curriculum is represented in the St Michael's Curriculum Tree. The roots show the key people – family, school, church, local community.

The word 'nurture' runs through the trunk of the tree. The branches show the four curriculum drivers, People Skills, Learning Skills, Creativity and Exploration, which are integral to all we do, and these are linked to our Christian values of Friendship, Wisdom, Perseverance and Respect, all underpinned in love.

The school follows the 'Understanding Christianity' programme, which gives children an in-depth knowledge of the 'big story' of Christianity. The children are also taught about other faiths and learn to have respect for other points of view. We welcome members of the church to support class teachers in talking to the children about specific aspects of Christianity, such as the Eucharist and the Trinity.



Our schools

Celebrations, Sharing and Reflection

- The children enjoy coming to church to celebrate Christian festivals, including Advent, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter, Pentecost and Harvest. The younger children present a nativity in church in the autumn term, Years 3 and 4 provide a performance for the spring term, and Years 5 and 6 in the summer term.
- On Friday mornings, one class in the school holds a sharing assembly in church. Parents are invited along to hear about what the children have been learning.
- We provide opportunities for school staff to have private reflection time in church instead of a staff meeting. The presence of the vicar during these sessions provides pastoral support if required. The head teacher and the vicar work together to provide a selection of bible readings, words of hymns and poetry to give a focus for reflection if required.



The church is an integral part of school life. **The SIAMS inspection of 2020 judged the school to be 'excellent'**. Please visit the school website to find out more about our school.

Prae Wood Primary School has held Christmas services at St Michael's. Our Palm Sunday walk starts at Prae Wood School and the children sometimes sing at Harvest or Christmas services at Fosse House.

St Michael's clergy have helped with revision sessions for GCSE students at **Townsend Church of England School** as well as taking part in lessons and activities with the Sixth Form. Parishioners have supported careers days by talking to pupils about their working lives and professions. We would like to continue and develop these links with the school, as we have few older teenagers engaging with the church and its activities.



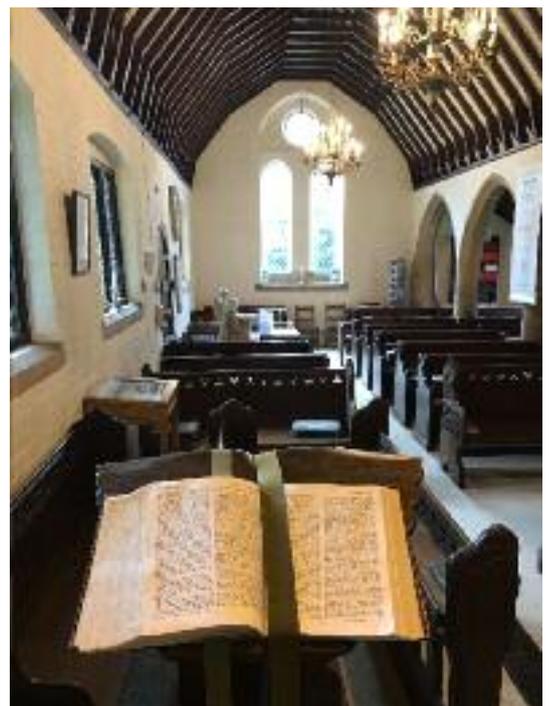
Our next vicar

We are seeking an energetic and committed priest with a strong Christian faith to help us grow spiritually and make new disciples. You will be someone who can lead prayer and worship within the Eucharistic Anglican tradition; a teacher and educator who can reach out to different audiences and individuals. St Michael with St Mary has a tradition of deep, thought-provoking sermons as well as interactive services for children.



The role of vicar at St Michael with St Mary is a challenging one. As well as ministering to our congregations, you will play an active part in the life of St Michael's School and in the wider community. You will also be responsible for two historical churches which are central to the identity of the parish, plus other properties offering opportunities to work with a variety of community groups. Currently the incumbent is the only full-time clergy in the parish with part-time support from within the diocese, but there is an excellent director of music and two efficient office staff.

This is an ideal role for someone with the skills and experience to manage and enrich all aspects of parish life. Anyone who is called to St Michael with St Mary will find a community ready to be inspired and challenged in new and creative ways.



Your role

You will be the parish priest who will lead and work with the team of paid staff, volunteers and the PCC at St Michael with St Mary. The key areas of focus are to:

- lead stimulating and inspiring worship at a wide range of services within the Eucharistic Anglican tradition
- encourage and enthuse volunteer support from the congregation and wider St Michael's community
- oversee pastoral care in the parish, including visiting
- engage with our schools, staff and parents, especially at St Michael's School, to build strong missional and pastoral relationships
- update the parish via online communications, including regular input to and review of the website, helping us to keep it vibrant and relevant.
- maintain our tradition as a teaching parish by supporting vocations where possible and contributing to educational courses and lectures
- ensure parish finances are sound and that buildings are properly maintained, including specific building projects
- represent the parish within the diocese and explore ways of working jointly with other churches
- lead on the development of our next MAP so we continue to grow.



You will bring...

A profoundly spiritual and sincere faith to lead and inspire the worshipping communities of St Michael with St Mary. We think the following qualities are essential:

- confidence to lead worship within the Eucharistic Anglican tradition and inspire through preaching
- energy and enthusiasm for your calling and thorough knowledge of the Christian faith
- ability to work with others to develop a community of faith through a shared vision
- proven communication skills, as a speaker, writer, and facilitator with varying audiences and across a range of media
- a good listener who can offer sympathetic pastoral support to individuals and families
- experience of working successfully with children and young people
- teaching and leadership skills which can inspire and engage with the whole community in different settings, either at a school summer fete, in the pulpit or at a quiz night at the pub.

The following would be desirable:

- previous experience as the incumbent of a parish, or equivalent
- experience of financial management or project management
- a pragmatist who knows their own limits and asks for help when needed



Together we can...



We look forward to working together on renewing our MAP in 2023 with the fresh insights that a new incumbent can bring.

In 2019 we renewed and revised the targets in our five-year Mission Action Plan which focuses on: going deeper into God; making new disciples; transforming communities.

Our annual reviews show we have made progress towards achieving our MAP goals. The effects of the pandemic from the first lockdown in March 2020 created new challenges and continue to be felt to the present day. Our smaller services have attracted slightly increased numbers in the return to church, but our main 9.30 service has not yet regained 2019 levels, despite some green shoots over Easter. We journeyed further into the age of technology during lockdown and our website, Facebook and YouTube channel hits increased over that period. We ran outdoor services in the paddock. We would like to build on these initiatives.

We see our main challenges as:

- To build back post-Covid and increase the number of children, young people and families participating in regular worship in our churches by recharging our welcome programme and strengthening links with our schools and communication with the wider community
- To increase the pastoral and spiritual support we can offer to the whole community including the elderly, lonely, sick and bereaved
- To offer a variety of worship and music styles at services in both churches to suit different congregations
- To encourage and nurture participation in all church activities to make best use of people's time and talents in the service of God
- To maintain our two beautiful, historical churches to a high standard to serve the needs of worshippers and the wider community
- To make best use of our additional properties to serve the needs of both churches and the community while providing a secure income stream
- To increase the number of people donating regularly through the Parish Giving Scheme.

Your team

Our parish draws on the time and talents of a wide variety of people who work together to serve God under the leadership of our incumbent.

Clergy

The vicar leads the clergy team for the parish with the part-time support of Associate Priest, John Bannister; Mike Ford, a reader based at St Paul's who shares his time with us; and Patsy Cann, a reader-in-training at St Michael's. During the vacancy period, we are very grateful for the support of Ruth Goatly, Associate Priest at St Mary's Marshalswick, plus clergy and readers from across St Albans Diocese.



Staff

We employ:

- **Director of Music (Colin Hamling)**, who plays the organ, agrees the music for all services with the clergy and directs the choir, including the choral and organ scholars. He attends Standing Committee meetings on request and is a valued member of the worship team.
- **Office Administrator/book-keeper (Georgie Ray)** – four mornings a week. Georgie deals with all enquiries swiftly and has an excellent knowledge of the ecclesiastical processes for occasional offices. She supports the vicar in all the administrative aspects of the smooth running of the parish, and our Treasurer on financial management.
- **Halls Administrator (Danielle Argent)** – also part time, manages the bookings, marketing and administration of our properties efficiently and promptly.

Your volunteers

Churchwardens: there are two churchwardens at St Michael's, four assistant wardens and a deputy warden at St Mary's. All are members of our current Standing Committee, together with our Treasurer, Office Manager, and clergy. The group meets frequently over Zoom as well as in person to ensure that clergy are given the fullest support in managing all aspects of the parish.

PCC: meets bi-monthly and is made up of more than 20 people including the churchwardens and deputy churchwarden, the Treasurer, elected Deanery Synod members, elected PCC and co-opted members. When not chaired by the incumbent, a Lay Vice Chair is elected.

PCC committees: meet in the months between PCC meetings. *Pastoral and Worship* works to enhance our liturgy and reflection, *Mission and Community* is responsible for raising our profile and outreach, and *Stewardship* monitors resources related to people, fabric and finance. There is a dedicated sub-committee for *St Mary's*.

Nominated roles: include our Treasurer, Officer Manager, H&S Manager and Parish Safeguarding Officer, plus organisers of pastoral visiting and bereavement support. We have a team of sacristans who prepare the church linen, clean the brass and silverware, and assist the clergy in preparing for Communion at 9.30 services. They act as stewards at weddings and funerals. Parishioners also serve as governors at St Michael's School.

Supporting services: adults and young people are stewards, readers, intercessors, chalice assistants and coffee makers. Children support the clergy as servers. There are three organists who play for Evensong at St Mary's on a rota basis.

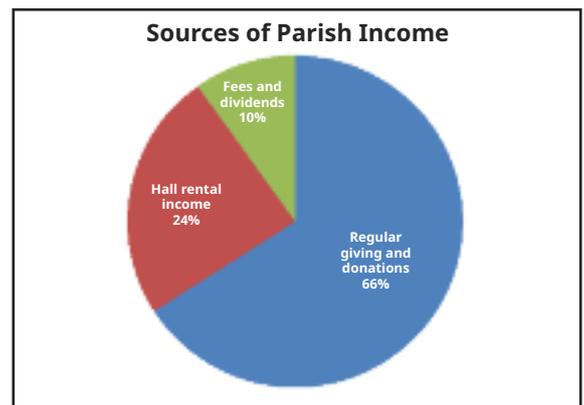


Your resources

Finance

The parish runs with the support of both paid staff and volunteers but is also reliant on a strong financial base of income sources from regular donations, hiring and investments. St Michael's has always met its parish share and supported St Mary's in this respect. Thanks to this strong base, we have weathered the pandemic. At the end of 2021, we held unrestricted reserves of £351,000. We attribute our current position to the following:

- We have established strong financial controls and have a professionally experienced Stewardship team to maintain our Grade I and II listed buildings and other properties.
- Our Treasurer provides a strategic approach to our finances to ensure timely cashflow and careful investment in our maintenance programmes.
- An annual recruitment drive to encourage more people to join the Parish Giving Scheme includes a targeted Stewardship Sunday. This is vital in maintaining our future financial health.
- Our average annual income over the last two years has been around £240,000
- The pandemic took its toll; in 2019–2021 we had an average loss of £21,000 pa whilst maintaining an average turnover of £241,000 pa
- Average annual expenditure of £262,000 pa has allowed us to keep our buildings in good repair whilst meeting all our expense obligations.
- Fundraising by the congregation and the Friends of St Michael's Church plus successful applications for grants for special projects have made many fabric projects possible.



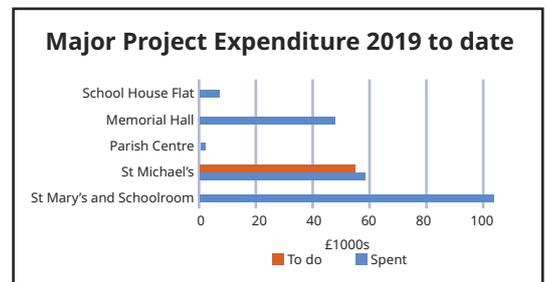
Your resources

Buildings

Maintaining both a Grade I and Grade II listed church is a constant process. When lead was stripped off St Michael's nave roof in 2009, it was replaced with stainless steel. Since then, we have:

- installed a new heating system and a new security alarm system in St Michael's. We host one of the antennae for the SADC CCTV system and benefit from their security camera surveillance on the church roof in exchange
- installed a new LED lighting system in St Michael's church which can be used flexibly and is more sustainable. These three projects together cost £275,000 and helped the church achieve an eco-target
- replaced the outdated cabling in the St Michael's tower, the dangerous ladder giving access to the tower roof and built a new platform for the safe maintenance of the bells
- re-plastered the lower sections of the church with lime plaster to complete refurbishment of the interior of St Michael's
- refurbished St Mary's schoolroom, installed indoor facilities, and improved the grounds at a cost of £104,000.

Projects in the pipeline: replacement of the choir vestry roof and installation of Wi-Fi in St Michael's church to give coverage across the whole site. This will allow much more flexibility in worship and other activities. Both Churches have had Quinquennial Inspections this summer: further repair work recommended for the longer term includes the tower at St Michael's and St Mary's roof.



St Michael with St Mary in figures

The following statistics give some background to earlier sections:

- The electoral roll for St Michael's stood at 179 in 2022. This is more in line with church attendance than previously.
- Service attendance figures: post-pandemic, numbers at the 8am have increased to 10+ and 6pm has increased to 12, while Wednesday figures have remained steady or slightly improved at 9, possibly due to people preferring less crowded services.
- In 2019, attendance at 9.30 services averaged 89, but in the first quarter of 2022, was at two-thirds of the adult and 60% of the children's figure. After Easter, numbers have begun to increase following the third highest attendance at that service in 20 years. Average Sunday attendance in 2019 was 101 adults and 21 children.
- The school service on Wednesdays was attended by an average of 200 people in 2019 pre-lockdown; these services will be fully re-instated in September with parents meeting for coffee in church afterwards.
- Occasional offices: in 2019, there were 16 baptisms, 5 weddings and 9 funerals in the parish. In 2020, there were 15 funerals with only 1 wedding and 1 baptism. Last year and this year we are clearing the backlog, with 8 weddings and 7 baptisms in 2021.
- Congregational profile: approximately half of those on the electoral roll live outside the parish. We have a higher proportion of older to younger worshippers but have attracted younger families to morning services. Some of our wedding couples have maintained their links with the church. We confirmed 15 people of all ages this year.
- Parish demographics: there is a mix of age groups within the parish. In addition to older working and retired people there is a significant presence of families with young children, attracted by the high quality of schools. Verulam Ward, in which most of the population of the parish is located, has a higher proportion of people over 65 and a lower proportion of ethnically diverse households than other parts of St Albans. The profile is very different in Batchwood, which has a relatively high proportion of council tenants and the highest percentage of people claiming unemployment benefit in the District.



The Diocese and Deanery

The parish of St Michael with St Mary is in the Deanery and Diocese of St Albans. As one of the pilgrimage churches situated close to St Albans Cathedral, we have good links to other churches through Churches Together in St Albans and as members of Deanery Synod. Regular meetings of both were disrupted during the pandemic but we look forward to working with the new Rural Dean to re-establish active links with other churches.



St Albans Cathedral uniquely has its own Adult Education Centre as well as hosting a variety of events including the St Albans International Organ Festival. St Michael's has provided a venue for concerts. Installation of Wi-Fi in the church should offer more opportunities for activities in the building.

Links with the Deanery

- The Deanery is a grouping of 16 Church of England parishes with 19 churches, stretching from north St Albans to Radlett and Aldenham in the south.
- Our PCC is supportive of the aims and work of the Deanery. Typically, between one and three members of the PCC also attend Deanery Synod meetings and report back to the PCC.
- Tea and cake are served for Churches Together in St Albans on their annual Pilgrimage Walk. We maintain ecumenical links through this organisation.

Opportunities to grow and develop your Ministry

Naturally we pay in full all legitimate working clergy expenses, expect you to take proper holidays and days off and we will support time taken for training, reading weeks, personal development, retreat and academic study.

Previous Vicars of St Michael with St Mary have moved on to Cathedral appointments, and have maintained close connections with the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Albans and its learning programme. They have also had opportunities for academic development, including a sabbatical. We are a parish that will support both learning and family commitments and give you the opportunity to develop your skills, spirituality and mission.

We welcome your gifts and your vision for the future.

Further information and next steps

Further information

Further information is available on:

www.stmichaels-parishchurch.org.uk

Virtual tour of St Michael's Church

Regular services

Mission Action Plan

Memorial Hall, Parish Centre and St Mary's Schoolroom and garden

The parish YouTube channel

The parish Facebook page

Charity Commission website : charity number 1132915

St Michael's School website

SIAMS link to inspection report

Next steps

Thank you for taking the time to read this parish profile.

If you feel called by God to be the new Vicar of St Michael with St Mary, we would love you to apply for the role.

For an informal conversation or for an application pack please contact the Archdeacon of St Albans' office at

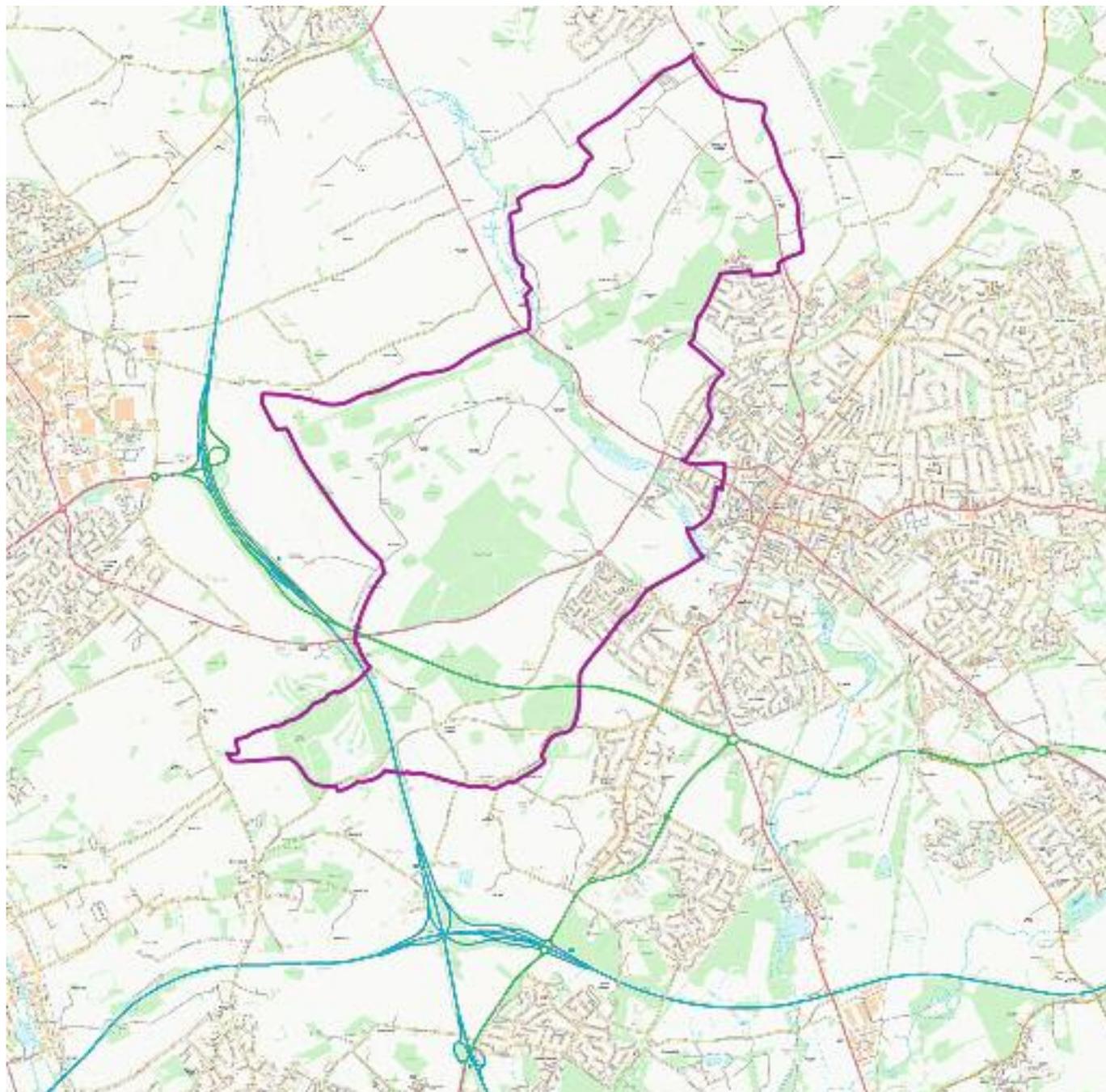
<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/contact-the-archdeacon-of-st-albans/>.

The closing date for applications is 25 October 2022.

Shortlisting will take place on **3 November** and interviews on **21 November**



Parish map



Map contains OS data © Crown Copyright 2022