



Annual Report

2017 -2018



St Michael's Church Annual Report 2017 / 18



Living to Make a Difference

Vicar's Report	4
Heart of the Community	6
St Michael's Centre	7

Serving the Community

Pre-school & Nursery	8
Coffee Shop	9
Sharing Fund	9
Scouts	9
Young People's Music	11
Occasional Offices	11
Flower Group	12
Saturday Breakfast	12
Over 65s' Sunday Club	13
Link Club	13
Osbourne Court	13
Children's Ministry	14
Youth Ministry	16
Student and Young Adults	18

Discipleship

Pastoral Ministry	19
Musical Worship	21
Rhythms of Grace	21
Marriage Ministry	22
Lifegroups	22

Outreach

St Michael's Cheswick	23
Parenting Teenagers	23
MAG	24
Alpha	25
SMYB	25
Men's Ministry	26
Website	27

Making It Happen

Diocese and Deanery	28
Church Council	29
Fabric Committee	30
Finance Report	31

Vicar's Report

“Enlarge the place of your tent....and strengthen your stakes”

As I look back on 2017, this verse from Isaiah 54 has resurfaced time and time again.

“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back, lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left;”

It's been a 10 year journey working on the Vision that God gave in 2008.

A time to reflect

During 2017 we felt it was important to get ready for 2018 by asking three questions of our current Vision. We asked:

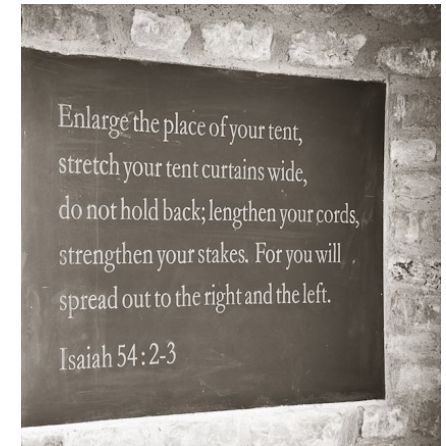
- What's worth Celebrating in our Discipleship, Outreach and Serving?
- What's missing in our Discipleship, Outreach & Serving?
- What would excite you about God's 'vision' for us in next few years?

Leadership Day Away 3 February 2018

We gathered as many leaders together as we could on 3 February 2018 to pray and discern where God might be calling us to next.

Firstly, it seemed from the day that there is still a lot of “traction” within the overall vision at St Michael's. Discipleship, Outreach and Service still seemed to accurately 'frame' what God was calling us to. Secondly, there was much to celebrate within the life of the Church. These thoughts have been captured in a 21 page “post it note” document which can be available from the Church office.

The implications from our day of prayer and reflection was a sense that the Lord was saying: Improve how we 'reach' people, strengthen how we 'teach' people and resource how we can 'release' people.



Discipleship in 2018

God is calling us to a greater depth in Maturity.

Summary verse: Colossians 2:6–7 “Just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness.”

The leaders at St Michael's sense there is a need for depth of Christian teaching, more focused opportunities for Discipleship, Training and equipping the saints for works of service. We will be praying, training and releasing more leaders. There are a range of ideas being discussed some of which will be shared at our Vision night on 18 April.

Outreach in 2018

God is calling for our faith to be infectious.

Summary verse: Acts 2:46 “The Lord added daily to their number those who were being saved.”

The leaders at St Michael’s sense there is a need for ‘outreach’ not drag-in! More explicit sharing of our faith through witnessing, through evangelistic events, through communities, especially new housing areas.

As a result of this in 2018 there will be more evangelistic events in the auditorium (Steve Legg, a Christian comedy magician in Oct 18, Christmas Comedy show etc). We aim to discover ways to engage with our local community, develop partnerships with others in Student work, new housing areas, church planting initiatives etc.

Serving in 2018

The Christian life is always love in action.

Summary verse: Micah 6:8 ‘act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God...’

God calls us to provide support in the issues that are faced by people in our community... debt, isolation & loneliness, relationship breakdown, addictions, mental health, bereavement etc.

We shall continue to work serving the community as we have in 2017. There will be some new initiatives shared at our Vision night on 18 April as to how we can strengthen this aspect of our calling.

Thanks for serving

My thanks to Chris Dalton, who has served as ‘food technician’ in the Coffee shop over the past 10 years or more. Chris steps down this year and has served others in the Coffee Shop with commitment, enthusiasm and delicious soups.

We welcome Dawn Kowolskie as Kitchen assistant to continue the excellent service.

My thanks to the Church Wardens, Alex Clare and Ian Osborne. Their support, advice and leadership is always well thought through and their commitment to the Lord has been an example to us all.

My thanks to Ian, as Director of Ops, Laura, Alison, Andy and Caroline in the church office. They have served with all the encouragement that good administration brings. All a big thanks to Dave Carey for all his hard work managing our building resources. Well done to you all.

2018 here we come!

During 2017, the PCC engaged in monthly meetings. My thanks to Mark Watkins as PCC secretary who has organised our meetings.

We continue to assess what God is calling us to during 2018 and the hope is that at the APCM on 18 April, I will share 5 key things that God is calling us to.

There are a few key initiatives that I’d like to highlight. Firstly, the Church weekend on 20-22 April. Please come. Philip Jinadu, our guest speaker, will focus on “Called to share.” It is always a highlight of the year.

Secondly, our Church on the Green service is 24 June at 11am. This will be followed by screening of England v Panama in the auditorium. The world cup begins!!

We are the Church...

Thank you to you all. The Church is the body of Christ where every believer takes their place and plays their part. You make Church all that it is.

Love to you all,

Revd Canon Simon Jones

Heart of the Community

Operating as separate charity (St Michael's Church Centre Ltd), the aim of the Heart of the Community project is to further and develop the vision of the Church of 'living to make a difference by being a Christian heart at the centre of the community'.

The Heart of the Community project aims to rebuild community, restore relationships and help people discover the difference their lives can make.

We have expanded and upgraded the resources we already have, in order to accommodate future growth in the Church and local population and increase our ability to serve the community, both locally and regionally.

Our four Ambitions within the project have been:

- *Building a large, new, multi-purpose church and community centre*
- *Refurbishing the church building*
- *Upgrading the Old School Rooms*
- *Mission and outreach - making a difference in other communities in need, by giving to projects in the UK and overseas*

The St Michael's Centre has been open for three years now and it has been really good to get used to the space. Slowly, over the two years of operations, we have seen the usage go up, rentals increase and the community be served more effectively.

Last year, we appointed Andy Mead as Events Facilitator and Administrative Assistant for the centre. Bookings have increased and more events have taken place in the centre. My thanks to Andy and Ian for their hard work this year.

So, what next? This year we continue to focus on what it will take to complete the project that God has led us into.

Our priorities will be something like this:

Make sure we are repaying our loans successfully.

- 1 Complete the office suite upstairs.
- 2 Complete the seminar rooms/Kitchen along the Arches corridor
- 3 Continue the works in the Church, including tower refurbishment
- 4 Carry out essential repairs to the Old School Rooms.

We are delighted to report that we have recently been given permission by the Charity Commission to access funds of nearly £200,000 that were held in the Old School Rooms Trust. This will enable us to fund repairs and improvements to the Old School Rooms (e.g. new windows, gutter repairs and external painting) and to make a contribution to the cost of some of the further works still required to complete the new centre.

We will be sharing more information in the spring as we head towards our Heart of the Community Gift Day on Sunday 13th May.

Revd Canon Simon Jones

Chair SMCC Trustees until November 2017



John Spens

Chair of SMCC Trustees



St Michael's Centre



The vision for St Michael's Centre is for it to be full of people of all ages and from all walks of life; building community, restoring relationships, having a good time, and – ultimately – getting to know Jesus for themselves if they don't already. This is lived out daily in St Michael's Centre through generous hospitality

and making sure our guests have a positive experience from beginning to end. Our guests include everyone from those who turn up unannounced, to businesses who book months in advance, and we hire out rooms and provide refreshments and anything else they need.

In 2017 room hire income was up 48% and trading profit used to help repay the loans up 40% from the previous year. Profits would have been marginally higher but extra tables have been purchased and an additional projector, these purchases benefit the church as well as being used to meet the needs of other users in the centre. The increases are largely as a result of the introduction of a venue specific web site which has introduced new businesses to the centre. This allied to consistent excellent feedback concerning customer service has led to 'word of mouth' marketing meaning an increase in business. This has necessitated an increase in staffing and a new 'model' has been created built around Andy Mead as a permanent member of staff on 32 hours plus an increasing army of casual staff who can be called upon to facilitate major events.

Highlights of the year have included the winning of custom from the MOD, hosting the Spring Harvest Road Show, a major Internet Security Conference, INSET day for the training of over 320 teachers, St Michael's school production of the Lion King and the joint Gospel Community choirs with Geraldine Latty. The coming year will see us being a hub for the HOPE mission where we will sleep and feed 70 people supporting the HOPE mission week. We will also be hosting the Global Leadership Conference in November as well as the Diocesan conference which this year will host 500 people. Corporate and community business continues to grow, but the most exciting aspect of the coming year will be using the full capacity of the auditorium to host high profile Christian entertainers where the church can further engage with the local community by inviting people to the centre to enjoy the facilities and at the same time receive an introduction to the gospel.

There's always space for more to go on in St Michael's Centre, so if you have any ideas please do get in touch with the office and we will see if we can make them happen. If you would like to be part of the hospitality team for events please contact Ian for more information (You get to wear a blue shirt!).



Ian Taylor
Operations Director

Pre-School & Nursery

Management and Staff

We were delighted that, after taking a year to recruit, Kelly McCloskey took up the position as Manager on 8th May 2017. Kelly had previously worked in our setting as Deputy Manager so it was a case of 'welcome back!' There is a lot to learn and grow into in the role, but Kelly has settled very well and is doing a great job. After 5 years as Manager, Vanessa Rennolds stepped down to become Deputy Manager; she is very happy to be more 'hands on' with the children again. We are grateful to her for her continued dedication and commitment to the vision of the Nursery and for the years she carried overall responsibility for this ministry. Mandy Love continues to do a brilliant job looking after the finance and admin side of the business.

We are blessed to have a very stable and loyal staff team. As well as Kelly, two other previous members of staff have returned to us; both described how they felt it was a sense of 'coming home'. It is lovely to see how supportive all the staff are of one another. With entry standards for qualification now being more rigorous, there does appear to be a general shortage of qualified staff looking for work, which is presenting increasing challenges with recruitment. However, we are pleased to be supporting two existing members of staff as they work towards qualification.

The Management Committee met 10 times during the course of the year. As well as responding to ongoing operational issues, we have had to think more strategically about how to implement the 30-hour funding for 3 year-olds. Part of our response to this has been to introduce a 9am-3pm Pre-School (term-time only) session, which in theory means that parents can take up a genuinely 'free' place (5 days x 6 hour session, term-time only). In practice, the majority of our children access the Nursery (all-day, all-year round) provision where they can use the government funding but also contribute towards a service charge for food etc. Between September-December we trialled an earlier 7.30am start, but it quickly became apparent that it was not financially or operationally sustainable.

It has been good to welcome Ian Taylor to the Management Committee as Secretary, following his appointment as Operations Director. An important aspect of his initial focus has been to bring some consistency of approach to key policies across the different ministry areas in church.

Children and Parents

We currently have nearly 100 children in our care. It is an absolute joy to see them grow and develop as they move through the Nursery and Pre-School. A real highlight (for children, parents and staff!) came in March when we once again played host to some 'Living Eggs' and were able to watch with delight little fluffy chicks hatch and grow. The children are also really enjoying the new colourful rubber flooring in courtyard, marked out with a race-track, hopscotch etc. The children love going across to church with Karen Needham (Vice Chair) to have stories and do crafts, and our Nativity, Easter and Leavers services are always a highlight – for everyone!

Relationships with parents have also been strengthened through our Parent Forums, a Wine & Cheese evening and Coffee morning. A Mother's Day breakfast and free bacon butties in honour of Father's Day at the annual Fun Day (Teddy Bear's Picnic), together with a 'Stay and Play' session to support Children in Need have all been well supported and received.

A dedicated website and Facebook page to keep parents informed and up to date with news and forthcoming events, and the introduction of 'Tapestry', a web-based system for doing reports and observations, which parents can readily access at any time, have also proved very popular.

Finances and Fabric

For the calendar year 2017 the Pre-School & Nursery recorded a net operating surplus of £21k, (50% of which is gifted back to church to reinvest in serving the community). Given the knock-on effect of the mandatory rise in the minimum wage, and a £2.3K increase in rent payable to the Diocese, we are happy still to be making a surplus, although a significant contributory factor was that we were, for well over a year, operating without a Deputy Manager. With further increases of 4.4% in minimum wage taking effect from April 2018, and a final £3K rent increase from May 2018, it has been necessary to increase fees by 3% to ensure we remain on a sound financial basis.

We continue to invest in the fabric of the building and grounds to keep them in good repair. A significant investment last year was made when we put rubber play flooring in the courtyard, and also erected a roof shelter over the Baby play area in the garden. There were 2 work parties during the year that were well supported by church members and Nursery parents (past and present). We are very grateful to two of our parents, Charlie Bridgford and Dave Pheasant, who have taken on regular gardening and maintenance work, and also to Dave Carey who continues to give outstanding support.

We are committed to setting aside 10% of the operating surplus into a 'Hardship & Mission Fund', some of which has been used to benefit children in our own setting, particularly those with additional needs. We gave a gift to one of our previous Pre-School Leaders, Cathy Gardiner (now vicar of St Barnabas, Knowle West), to help fund outreach to local children and families. We supported the work of the charity 'Kenya thriving', helping to meet basic needs for children in a poor rural community. Catherine Freeman (who was Catherine Hart when she used to work at the Nursery) came back to talk to the children about this project, which really captured their imagination.

Looking ahead

One of our priorities for the coming year will be to establish a 'rising 3s' room in the Butterfly area upstairs for the children coming up from Caterpillars to help support their transition. We will also be having some significant expenditure on outdoor painting work, which is planned for the summer. The end of April will mark our 10 year anniversary of moving the Pre-School across to the Old Vicarage and extending the provision to include all-day, all-year round Nursery care. It has been an adventure in faith from the start! God has always been faithful in providing what is needed to resource this wonderful ministry, for which we give Him thanks and praise. We are also hugely grateful to members of the Church for their practical and prayerful support.

Revd Canon Julie Bradley
on behalf of the Management Committee



Old School Rooms Coffee Shop

As the Coffee Shop heads into its' fifteenth year of ministry, it is for many a place to get a cup of coffee, and for others it is also a less daunting way to start to find out more about God and Christianity.

The friendly atmosphere of the Coffee Shop has encouraged many new faces to use the space. This is due to the volunteers and staff who make everyone feel welcome.

In 2017 the Coffee Shop sold over 20,000 drinks and 15,000 snacks and lunches. There have been extremely busy times, especially over the lunch period!

There has been refurbishment of the floor and cupboards that were damaged by flood water. The Coffee Shop is very grateful to Dave Carey, and all those who helped remove all the furniture from the room before Christmas, and put it back after.

Financially, the Coffee Shop did not require any additional financial assistance from the PCC.

In 2018 there will be changes to the staff team, and new initiatives will be launched.

However, the future of the Coffee Shop will still depend on finding enough volunteers to run it. A film promoting the role of volunteers has been made and can be found on the church website.

I would like to like to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone who has supported the Coffee Shop this year.

Ann Cooke
Coffee Shop Manager

Sharing Fund

The *Sharing Fund* was set up in February 1993 as a way of providing financial support to local people in genuine need. The fund is administered by the Clergy and Church Wardens, and details of gifts and loans remain confidential.

In allocating money the following priorities are born in mind: -

- a) Members of the church in financial need.
- b) Help for Christian development and training such as a Church Weekend or training course.
- c) Any case of extreme need in the Parish – especially when that need is identified through the caring ministry of a member of St Michael's.

This year we have been able to express support and care to 26 individuals and families. These gifts have made a real difference to those receiving them, not just on a financial level, but also because they are tangible expressions of God's love and care.

Balance b/f at 31.12.16	£ 2262.12
Receipts for the year	£ 5243.06
Outgoing gifts for year	(£ 3530.00)
Balance c/f at 31.12.17	£ 3975.18

As always, we are grateful both to those who give either regular or one-off gifts to the Sharing Fund and to those who draw out attention to particular needs.

Revd Canon Julie Bradley,
Associate Minister

Stoke Gifford Scouts

As we move on into our 27 years since we were sponsored by St. Michael's Church on 6 June 1991 we have had another successful year for the group. We focus on earning badges, teaching new skills and having fun. We camp twice a year, and take part in other activities like archery, rifle shooting and many others. 108 young people regularly attend, between the ages 6-14 years, alongside our 27 adult leaders.

Camps already in planning for this year, a group camp in May at Tintern and a summer camp for Cubs and Scouts at Brownsea Island in July and an autumn camp in October location to be advised.

Marcus Booth and Janet Porteous have both received recognition for their work in Scouting and awarded the Medal of Merit in 2017.

We also offered places to those on our waiting list for Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. Currently we have 38 Beaver age (6) and 73 names of cub age (8), and 1 of scout age. This indicates a very strong future for the group. However most importantly we do need to expand the size of the group by opening a second Cub Pack this will only be achieved if we recruit more leaders. If you can help, please get in touch with any of the section leaders or me.

Beavers and Cubs meet on Mondays and Scouts meet on Wednesdays in the Old School Rooms. The second Beaver Colony and second Scout troop meet at St Michael's School on Wednesdays. We have links with the Solar Explorer Scout Unit who last year enjoyed several camps and hikes in support of the Duke of Edinburgh award and Young Leader schemes. These Young Leaders help in all sections of the group and are a valuable support.

All our leaders are trained to a high standard. We have had a number of our leaders complete their training and have received their Wood badges which represent the completion of their training. My congratulations go to them all.

And, finally we need more help in leading these sections, as well as support roles with the executive committee. If you can help, please get in touch with any of the section leaders or myself.

Paul Smith - Group Scout Leader

Young People's Music Group

The Recorder Group meet on Fridays at 5pm, and the Brass Group on Tuesdays at 6pm, in the Church. The young people have been improving their skills, and some are studying for Grade exams. We enjoyed entertaining the community at the Christmas lunch for Over 65's with Christmas carols, and the Brass Group played for Carols on the Green. The Brass Group also played carols at Parkway Station with the support of friends and singers and collected £209 in donations for the Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter. New players are always welcome, there is no charge and some instruments are available for loan.

With very many thanks to the families for all their support.

Rachel Mason



Occasional Offices of Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals

St Michael's remains committed to serving the community of Stoke Gifford, at the significant life events of Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals.

During 2017, there were 27 Baptisms at St Michael's, and 2 services of thanksgiving and dedication. This is more than double the number we had during 2016! It's fantastic to see this increase in people making a commitment to the Lord. A large number of the infant baptisms were separate services in St Michael's Church. We have also had some full immersion baptisms in the baptistry in St Michael's Centre.

Baptism Preparation sessions have gone from strength to strength this year. These sessions are headed up by Vicky Wicks, and happen around once a term. Baptism families are invited to come to the 10.30am celebration (if they don't already come) so that they can see for themselves that they and their children are welcome to join in. The aim of the session is to welcome and encourage understanding about the promises they are making during the Baptism Service. We want to give them a positive experience of church whatever age they are, and help them meet other people at a similar stage of life. And this is only one of two sessions, the minister taking the service will meet the family nearer the date of the baptism.

There were 5 weddings at St Michael's in 2017, and one service of Marriage Blessing. Both St Michael's Church and St Michael's Centre Auditorium can be used for the Marriage Service, and to date there have been 3 weddings in the Auditorium. At the first point of meeting prospective wedding couples, we show them both venues and offer them the choice of where they would like their marriage ceremony to take place.

It is a real blessing to be able to offer the diversity of the historic and the new, and I always feel so honoured to show our buildings to people who have never visited us before.

We continue to work with bereaved families. Ministers from St Michael's are regularly asked to officiate at committal services at local crematoriums. In 2017 we held 13 Funeral and Thanksgiving services, including one in St Michael's Centre. Ministers at St Michael's always work closely with the families to ensure that the service is exactly as they want it.

There are several organists who I can call upon to play at these services, as well as a small number of people who can act as Verger for the service (setting up the church beforehand, and making sure the service runs smoothly). Thank you to all who have served in this way.

Laura Thomas
Church Administrator



Flower Group

We are a small but enthusiastic group, who work individually or in pairs through the year to decorate the church week-by-week and we all gather together to prepare for the festivals i.e. Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Harvest – which give great opportunities to encourage our creativity as we all have different approaches and styles! The church is regularly used for the 9.00 service, Mid-week Communion, Evensong, occasional services, prayer and music groups, as well as weddings; last year we arranged flowers for 3 weddings and this year looks to be similar. We continue to arrange flowers there week by week, wanting to create an environment that enhances the heritage of prayer, worship and celebration and it's fun to have the opportunity to arrange flowers in a more formal setting than at home. I would love to hear from you if you are interested in getting involved. Don't be put off if you don't feel you have the experience – you'll be surprised how far a love of flowers can take you!

Annie Hepburn



Saturday Breakfast

Once again we've had a wonderful year cooking for you, listening to some amazing talks and raising over a £1000 for different speakers and good causes. We've seen a wonderful increase in numbers of regular attendees due in no small part to the Facebook advertising being undertaken by our Marketing Director – Kia. We are also very happy to welcome Joe Sanderson as a regular member to the crew. HOT OFF THE PRESS - we will be welcoming Peter Stace to the team as we sadly say a fond farewell to our Executive Toast Mistress and the Master of the Tea Ceremony. Arthur and Marie have decided to hang up their aprons after spending more years as members of the team than our younger members have spent on the planet. We will all miss you. You leave some big shoes to fill, albeit with red sequins and taps on the heels (you have to come in early to see Arthur wearing these!)

Remember if you want to join in the fun and start your day with a full cooked English Breakfast please let us know by contacting Kia, Col or Charles or telling Laura after the weekly newsletter announcement. We meet at 08h15 for coffee on the second Saturday of every month except August. Breakfast starts with a crash at 8.30am and finishes with an enlightening talk. If you feel you haven't had enough fun you only have to raise your arm at 09h45 and we will ensure the entertainment carries on for as long as necessary. If you want to have a speaking part please see Chris Bradley.

If it's your first visit its FREE otherwise a per capita payment of £2. Children are very welcome as are imaginative vegetarians.

The Saturday Breakfast Team

Over 65's Ministry

Building on the popularity and success of the Over 65s community lunches and teas, which happen 4 and 2 times a year respectively, we have been giving some consideration to what 'next-steps' we might take in developing this important ministry.

Our vision is that those we meet, greet and serve should feel valued by and part of the church. We have contact with well over 100 'over-65s', the majority of whom are not regular church goers.

To coincide with the last couple of lunches, we have produced a newsletter highlighting areas of church life that might be of interest to guests – for example, the Community Library, Link Club, Coffee Shop, Monday Men's Group etc. This does appear to have had a positive impact on take-up and involvement.

Our aim in the coming months is to do some market research to see what other activities might be welcomed. In particular, we are keen to establish some 'stepping stones' so that those who are interested in exploring 'something more' in the Christian faith know what is on offer. The presence and commitment of Jack and Ruth McGinley has been a huge blessing and encouragement in developing this whole area of ministry.

Oversight of the lunches is in a time of transition but we are very grateful to Sue Woodhead-Marsh and Jean Allchorne who have been 'chief cooks' since the start, and to Liz Reed who has 'held the reins' of organizing the lunches for the last 18 months. Claire Jessopp continues to organize the teas where guests are treated to beautifully presented hand-cut sandwiches and home-made scones and cakes. A willing team of volunteers (ranging from young to slightly older!) give their time, energy and enthusiasm in a way that really makes a difference.

A big thanks to all involved!

Revd Canon Julie Bradley

Link Club

We have had a very enjoyable year with interesting speakers, musical entertainments, Spring and Summer pub meals together, an outing to Devizes and a couple of ad hoc visits to the cinema. All of our meetings have been fuelled by ample tea, coffee and conversation. Everyone agrees how much we appreciate the over 65's lunches and teas and several new members have joined us as a result. At the AGM in January we voted to welcome men to attend any meetings that interest them - but they would need to be brave enough to face a room of between 16 and 25 women and they would be expected to take their turn in helping to wash up.

At present we are meeting in the Old School Rooms while Little Stoke Community Centre is being refurbished but we hope to return to alternate meeting places after Easter.

Ruth McGinley

Osborne Court

For yet another year Osbourne Court has been an important part of St Michael's Pastoral Care Ministry.

Once a month we hold a Sunday afternoon service which includes hymns, prayers, a bible reading, a short talk, and a testimony for 30 to 40 people. At the end of each service everyone is handed a card with a verse or prayer and picture on. Singing the hymns is a favourite with the residents and even those suffering from dementia seem to come alive when they hear the music.

Once a month on a Thursday morning a small team go into the home and hold a shortened Communion Service. Again the presence of the Lord and the many blessings received as faith is kindled and strengthened is very evident.

The team is led by Julie Bradley but this year we had to cope with Julie being on a three-month sabbatical from April to June. Thanks to some good forward planning, wonderful support from Jack McGinley with the Communion services, and our dedicated team of volunteers, (and of course much prayer) we survived.

Yet again we thank God for the privilege of sharing His word in this area of our community and for the wonderful pastoral opportunities that arise out of it, particularly supporting the residents and their families with 'end of life' care.

Liz Reed

Admin Coordinator

Children's Ministry

Discipleship

Sunday Morning

Our vision for Sunday Club is to have fun together while growing in our relationship with God. We see this as a vision for leaders and children alike and we are lucky to have a fabulous team of 43 people who all have different skills but all have a real heart for growing their relationship with the children they work with and with God. When I chat to the team what I love is they are often sharing what kids have said or done in the session, which has helped their faith grow.

Crèche (0-2 ½ year olds) and Bubbles (2 ½ - 5 year olds) continue to use Imaginor material, which uses a simple puppet called Jack to help tell the story. The repetition and songs for each section help the children feel safe in the routine have helped the children to settle.

Our other groups Splash (5-7 year olds), X-Stream (7-9 year olds) and Pathfinders (9-11 year olds) have changed this year to use Scripture Union material Livelight.

Outreach

St Michael's School

We continue to work closely with St Michael's School and all the usual activities are continuing, we lead two assemblies each week, one for reception and KS1 and one for KS2, Open the Book is still a great favourite and the children enjoy listening to the stories and seeing the great props, but especially enjoy that volunteers are allowed to join in with the acting.

Different year groups have visited church for services, performances, Christmas and Easter Experience and the Year 6 came and enjoyed a "Leavers Morning and Service" where we celebrated the joy they have had at school and the excitements and fears for their new schools.

This year we are blessed with a team of 4 who lead Reserve RE. Reserve RE allows us to teach Religion from a Christian perspective and share our faith with children from Year 1 to Year 6.

Messy Church

This year our main emphasis has been working out how we will use the new church centre so that we have extra space. As with any change it has been interesting trying new things and for a while it was rather chaotic, especially in the church services where the extra space seemed to excite the children (especially the week we couldn't get the sound desk to work and we were using balloons). However, we seem to have got a structure that works now and a team that works well together.

Beehive

We have had a huge change to the Beehive committee this year, but the group has started to gel well together and we feel we are working more as a team as we get to know each other better. The families who attend the group hear a bible story, participate in a craft and sing songs each week. It is a great service to the local community offering a friendly place where children and families are welcomed.

Uniform Groups

We enjoy the Beavers visiting church and finding out about Christianity and why Christians pray as part of their faith badge. Also we continue to help the children plan and lead uniform services 3 times a year and join us for the Open Air Service. Please pray that our links with these groups continue to grow.

Serving the Community

Community work

We have also been working closely with Eva Stewart who is the Family Link Worker in St Michael's school and this has led us having the opportunity to work in the school with a group of children offering one to one sessions and also working with families in the community offering support.

Make Lunch

A team of 5 of us did a day of training on "Make Lunch" which is an initiative to offer lunch during the holidays for children who receive pupil premium. Please pray for this and let me know if you would like more information or to be involved.

Saplings

Saplings meets each Friday morning during term time at Wallscourt Farm Academy, Cheswick. It is a playgroup for parents/carers and preschool children and has about 30 families attending regularly. It is a friendly fun group that brings local families together and helps new families to the area meet each other. The sessions run from 9.15 to 11am and provide craft activities, general play opportunities, singing and story time as well as refreshments! There is a small team of hard working dedicated helpers from St Michael's each week that make the group happen and who get to know the families that attend. It is hoped we can run a parenting course in 2018. We are grateful to Wallscourt Farm Academy for allowing us to use their community room each week and to host a Christmas event for Cheswick that St Michael's organised. The Boston Tea Party has been very welcoming when the group has met there when the school has had an inset day or was closed due to snow.

A Huge Thank You

All the wonderful work St Michael's does with children and their families would not be able to happen without our fabulous team who run the children work.

There are over 70 people who help in some way. We are so blessed to have you all and your commitment to this work, so thank you so much. I don't usually name people as we are a team, and the children's ministry could not work without all of us doing our part, but I did want to just say a huge thank you to Megan and Janice for all they do.

We are blessed that we still have Megan with all her energy and enthusiasm, as most will know Megan got married this year to Jack and became Mrs Bishop. They are trying to discern together what God has in store for them, but we are grateful to still have Megan and Jack while this happens.

Also we have welcomed Janice Stace to the role of Assistant Children's Minister. It has been great to have Janice join us, and she is managing to bring order and structure to the children's work, which is amazing.

Thank you everyone!



*Karen Needham
Children's Minister*



Youth Ministry

The youth ministry has seen another 12 months of growth and fun as we seek to equip and inspire young people to become life-long disciples of Jesus. Through discipleship, reaching out and serving our community we are seeing young people deep their faith in Jesus, committing to follow him for the first time, and use their gifts in the life of the church to make a difference in our community.

Discipleship

Our 2 Sunday morning bible study groups, **RS2** (years 7-9) and **WORD** (years 10-13) have spent the last year going through a book of the bible each session, drawing out where we see Jesus in each book and giving an overview of the whole story of God. Similarly, our 2 midweek life groups **Ignite** (years 7-9) and **Unite** (year 10-13) have been places for community, prayer and fun as we look to live out the calling of Jesus on our lives. Here we have covered topics such as the Church's response to injustice, spiritual disciplines and the Kingdom of God. We also continue to host our **Worship Breakfast** once a month, giving teenagers the opportunity to eat together and have an extended time of worship together.

Our annual **youth retreat** in October was also a success as we took 17 teenagers away to play late night games, worship round a campfire and pray for the persecuted church. In August, we also took 13 teenagers to the Christian festival **Soul Survivor** where many met with God in a powerful way, receiving healing, prophesying and being encouraged in their faith. This experience was so significant it was a catalyst for one member of our youth group choosing to be **baptised** in November.

A particular encouragement from the past 12 months has been the way young people are feeling supported and equipped in **using their gifts** to serve the wider church. There are a number of young people serving in a number of contexts, including leading worship, welcoming, messy church, Proclaim, over 65s lunch and more.



Outreach

Our 2 weekly youth clubs, **Teen Central** and **Club** meet every Thursday in term time to serve the community and help young people take a step closer to Jesus. We have been able to pray with a number of teenagers to receive God's peace and healing for various situations in their life. In one of the youth clubs this has led to us to regularly opening the bible with the unchurched young people and one of them choosing to become a Christian. Others still have expressed their belief in Jesus and his resurrection. Looking ahead, we are in significant need of volunteers to join the team to help nurture the fledgling faith of these young people, as well as continue to share the Gospel with those who are interested, all in the context of playing card games, football and craft activities.

In July, 8 young people and 4 leaders flew out to **Uganda** on mission as part of Bristol Diocese's ongoing link. Here they visited hospitals, schools, orphanages, farms and plantations. They were asked to speak at various churches and a youth conference as well as spending time on building projects. Reflecting on the trip, one young person said, "I think God wants me to become a missionary and now I think I can do it!"

We also continue to have links with our local **scout troops**, joining them in February to help them earn their "My Faith" badge, getting them to explore their own beliefs whilst sharing the Gospel and how it impacts our lives today.



Serving the Community

Our work with **Abbeywood Community School** continues to be a key focus for us as we lead weekly mentoring sessions for those struggling in lessons. Working closely with the school's pastoral care team, we listen to the concerns and frustrations of each young person whilst using resources to increase their confidence, resilience and interpersonal skills. Looking ahead, we are in conversation with the school about how to play a key part in their primary school transition work, as well as delivering assemblies in June. We have also supported the Christian Union at **Bradley Stoke Community School** by meeting to support its young leaders as well as delivering sessions to its members.

Recently in February, some of the teenagers felt compelled to use their gifts to share God's love and serve those in need. From this we helped them set up their group called **IMPACT**. Their first act was to meet and pack aid parcels in response to a appeal for help from a charity. Future events are planned and will continue to be chosen and led by the young people.

Wider Bristol Work

St Michael's pays a key part in serving and resourcing the wider youthwork scene across Bristol. We lead the **Bristol Youthwork Forum**, a group of around 60 youthworkers from around the city which meet 3 times a year to resource each other and plan how best to work together. We are on the leadership team for **Hope Bristol**, a 5 day city-wide mission aiming to show God's love in practical ways, with 450 young people signed up to make a difference in our city (180 of which are coming from across the country.) We are also on the leadership team for **The Mix**, a worship celebration that meets 4 times a year for teenagers across the region, enabling young people to meet and become like Jesus.

Back in June, we received an emergency phone call from a Bristol based, **secure educational unit** asking for help. They were hosting a visiting speakers day for the inmates and had a last minute withdrawal with 24 hours to go. Using our links to the Bristol Youthwork Forum, we were able to put together a team of youth workers, led by ourselves, and a programme to deliver to 60 students. Since then, this has enabled local youth workers to revisit the unit to deliver long term mentoring to inmates.

Volunteers and Associate Youth Ministers

The great work we have seen this year could not have happened without the fantastic support of many volunteers giving up their time and using their skills to help teens become life-long disciples of Jesus. A huge thank you must go to all of them. We continue to be looking out for more to join our team, with specific needs for helpers with our youth club, schools work and administrative support.

Our two Associate Youth Ministers - Tom Ranger and Catherine Paddock - have done a great job since joining us in Sept 2016. Studying part-time for degrees in youthwork and theology, these university placement students have been able to offer a higher quality of work, consistency for the young people over 2 years, and increased our capacity for youth ministry compared to our previous intern model. Whilst enabling us to do a great job of discipling, reaching out to and serving our young people, they have also been learning about leadership on-the-job, preparing them for a future of serving and influencing the church in the future. Sadly, both Tom & Catherine will be leaving the roles in August and the process has already begun to find more students to join us over the next few years.



Joel Preston
Youth Minister



Student and Young Adult's Ministry

This year has been an exciting one for the student ministry with new groups, plans and discipleship starting up. Our main aim has been to inspire and disciple those who attend St Michael's with a variety of monthly activities, while looking for ways to partner with other churches and the UWE Christian Union in outreach.

Discipleship

With students already involved in weekly CU life groups and meetings and a great 20 somethings life group already ongoing at church, we decided to prioritise setting up a monthly plan. The monthly plan aimed to provide a variety of activities that covered the different parts and aims of a life group, that would work around the busy and varying schedules of our students and young adults. One of the key monthly activities has been **Beer & Bible**, taking place on a Wednesday night at the Beaufort pub. We've looked at topics such as joy, forgiveness and grace through teaching bible journalling, reflecting on our most embarrassing moments, Christmas Top Trumps and even acting out a scene from Jeremy Kyle! Alongside this interactive bible study, we have continued sharing food together at **monthly meals** with families at St Mike's kindly cooking for us, while also carrying out **social events** together including cinema or games and doughnuts nights in the auditorium, bowling at The Lanes and the pub quiz at the Beaufort! We have also tried to make members of the team available to chat and pray over a coffee, particularly through a monthly **drop in**.

Outreach

After attending the UWE Christian Union's '**Church Search**' event at the start of the year we saw a handful of new students join the groups. However, this event is aimed at Christians who are keen to find a new church away from home, and we were keen to look for ways to reach the many students who are not

Christians and encourage them to ask questions about faith. This was the reason we started **Monday Night Live**, a monthly cafe church in Costa Coffee aimed at 18-30's, with live music and a guest speaker who would share their testimony. After taking a month or two to find its feet, February's Monday Night Live saw around 60 students fill



Costa Coffee! The event is now carried out in partnership with other local churches and the UWE CU, encouraging those either on the fringe of church and faith or those who have never explored Christianity to hear about a real God at work today. Even the Costa staff, who have been amazing in supporting the event and telling customers to join us, have been quizzing members of the team about their own faith and come into the event even if they aren't on shift! Guest speakers have included Dave Jeal, Chaplain to Bristol Rovers FC after his life was transformed from being a football hooligan to now a church leader in Lockleaze, former Soul Survivor youth worker, now a pioneer ordinand in the Church of England, Laura Verrall-Kelly and many more.

Serving the Community

Over Christmas we organised taking a group of students and young adults to the Bristol **Operation Christmas Child** factory to help pack boxes. After some training, the team worked hard wrapping and strategically packing to ensure children all over the world got presents at Christmas. The students and young adults really enjoyed supporting such a great cause and even talked about going back to help some more! We're hoping to organise more opportunities like this to help serve in our community over the next few months. We have also been invited to support the work of the **UWE CU** through carrying out talks and helping on a Q&A panel alongside a Muslim and an atheist during their events week. We have supported outreach by supplying food for their 'Meal with a message' event. We hope to continue to grow this partnership over the coming months as the new CU president and exec is selected.

The Future

As this year has involved lots of transition, we are excited to see what the future holds through the student ministry at St Mike's and Monday Night Live. We are keen to look for ways to maintain momentum and grow the team in order that we can have an even bigger impact on the 30,000 students who attend the university. This year we are hoping to be at the UWE's Freshers Fair in some capacity, as we look for ways to reach and disciple those who don't yet know Jesus.

Tim Coates



Pastoral Ministry

Our vision remains to encourage care and prayer to happen as naturally as possible within the life of the church, wherever people are 'connected' e.g. through Life groups, TiE groups, friendship groups or as part of our regular Sunday services. However, we recognise that whilst it is important to keep building connections, there will be people who fall through this established net of care. Under the umbrella of 'Pastoral Ministry', a wide range of other initiatives are available that aim to show people that they belong, matter, are noticed, are welcomed and are missed when not around.

There is a database of over 60 members of St Michael's church who have an interest in one or more aspects of Pastoral Ministry (welcome, connect, care, prayer). Much of the work that these people do is naturally hidden from view but without their compassionate and prayerful commitment, it would be very difficult to provide for peoples' needs in the way that we currently do. For this wider pastoral team, three training sessions have been delivered over the past year to support them in their ministry. They are the Diocese's CI Safeguarding training, a revisit of our vision that included thinking about assertiveness and a whole day for developing listening skills delivered by Louise Mill from Network Counselling & Training.

The core team responds to and supports church family members and others in the community in times of crisis or with on-going problems. Over the next year, we will be looking to see how we can deploy members of the wider team more effectively so that we can continue to be confident that we have a service that is responsive to pastoral needs as they arise.

Julie Hobbs acts as the person coordinating specific pastoral care needs.

e-mail address: care@stmichaelsbristol.org

Welcome

We continue to develop our welcome strategy. In November, we held a meeting for interested parties to look at what we do well, what we could improve on and what we might do differently. There were several things identified that we could do better - becoming better listeners (note all church members were invited to the listening well workshop), making a point to chat more informally with those we might be sat next to in church and introducing ourselves to those we don't know at coffee time. In the last year there has been a new initiative to create a space for fellowship and welcome before the 6.30pm evening service by offering tea, coffee and cake, which appears to be popular and working well.

Connect

In a growing church with different services it can be difficult for people to get to know others who attend a different service from them. Also, in a large church, such as St Michael's, it can just be challenging to feel part of church family. Connect was an initiative set up to help build relationships across the whole church, recognising that meeting socially and having fun together makes connections, develops relationships and enables people to feel that they 'belong'. This year, many social events have taken place to help people 'connect' including large events such as our Harvest Supper and this year, for the first time, an opportunity for folks to see in the New Year together with music, games, dancing and worship. There have also been smaller events like Saturday knitting and crocheting workshops in the Coffee Shop, a wine tasting evening, several 'men only' events and a visit to a Women's Christian Conference in London. Some regular events also take place e.g. the monthly Saturday breakfast, the over 65s lunches and teas, and the Connect Book Club and Supper Club.

Our Facebook page "Connect at St Michael's" now has a membership of 190. As well as advertising social events, members can post suggestions for meeting socially in a smaller and more informal way. It is also a channel for recommending local trades people, offering free items and requests for help.... all serving to 'connect' us as a church family. As not everyone has access to Facebook, Connect events continue to be advertised in the weekly notice sheet. Connect is both run for and by all church members irrespective of age, gender, or marital status and relies on everyone playing their part whether this is by organising an event or supporting those that do happen.

Pastoral Presence (Here to listen)

The Pastoral Presence initiative enables a volunteer from the pastoral ministry team to come alongside, befriend and listen to people for an hour a day (Mon-Sat), either in the Coffee Shop or the new church centre. Admin and Coffee Shop staff have the times of availability for each day as they do vary. 'Here to Listen' has been running for a year and has been a blessing to those who have used it. We are encouraged by the willingness of volunteers to be available to others. This is not a counselling service but using effective listening skills validates others, shows we care and is certainly one way of showing God's love to one another. Many of the volunteers attended the 'Listening Skills workshop' to support them in their role. Loneliness has been identified as an increasing problem in today's society and it is anticipated that we will start to advertise 'Here to listen' more widely as part of our vision to be a Christian heart at the centre of the community.

Jean Allchorne takes the lead on the pastoral presence initiative and would welcome any further expressions of interest; she also oversees Connect. Contact can be made using the Connect e-mail address: connect@stmichaelsbristol.org.

Prayer ministry

Prayer ministry at St Michael's is an integral part of our care and support for each other under the wider umbrella of the 'pastoral net'. The aim is to encourage not only prayer ministry in services, but also in all aspects of church life, as a spontaneous and natural response to situations and need. The amazing and committed team of prayer ministers has expanded over the past year. We draw strength and confidence from each other and seek to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in all that we do.

Regarding prayer ministry during services, we are ever mindful of the changing needs of each of our congregations and we continue to explore ways to best support prayer ministry in each case.

A training afternoon on 9 April 2017 was an opportunity to introduce our new 'Guidelines for Prayer Ministry at St. Michael's' and for some teaching from Jack McGinley, based on his wealth of experience. (A personal thank-you to Jack for his wisdom and support in all areas of Prayer). In May/June 2017, we experienced an amazing 24/7 prayer week initiated by an enthusiastic team that explored prayer and used creative ways to encourage people to become immersed in 'The Lord's Prayer', as part of the national 'Thy Kingdom come' Church of England initiative.

This was followed by a week of 'Prayer Opportunities' in September 2017 where we explored and encouraged each other in the whole wealth, discipline and diverse genre of prayer. After much prayer and listening to God and feedback from 24/7 prayer, it was agreed that the 'Sacred Space' prayer room (Room M1) would become permanent. The prayer room is open to all. It's a quiet space to 'just be' in personal prayer and to find that 'oasis of peace' in an often bustling Church Centre. The room is open during office hours 9am-5pm to just pop in if it is empty or to book a time slot through the office. The prayer room will also be the venue for extended prayer and listening appointments as we seek to extend this ministry. St. Michael's Church where centuries of saints have prayed over the years is also open at various times of the week for morning prayer and Holy Communion.

In October 2017 we were invited to lead a training evening at St Chad's Patchway on prayer ministry and share the model that has evolved at St Michael's. A small team was able to discuss the development of our guidelines for prayer ministry and give testimony to answered prayer in our own lives. Our continued vision for prayer at St. Michael's is that it becomes a normal experience that we encounter and engage in, in all circumstances and throughout all services, something that can spread into the lives of our families, the work place and the wider community.

Trish Aston oversees the prayer ministry dimension of what we do.

e-mail address : prayer@stmichaelsbristol.org

Revd Canon Julie Bradley, Jean Allchorne, Trish Aston, Julie Hobbs

Musical Worship

It has been a very exciting year for St Michael's musical worship team and one that has featured continued reflection and ongoing development in how we lead and facilitate communal worship. It has been wonderful to witness worship team members growing in their calling to serve God and the church through musical worship. We feel there has been a palpable sense of continued movement on our worship journey with the maturation of the differing worship styles across our regular Sunday services, as well as the introduction of new songs which have provided fresh expressions of worship. We have also been blessed with new people joining the team.

This year, the worship jam sessions have developed into more focussed workshops exploring specific topics including the use of different instrumental styles and arrangements and the roles of leading and supporting singers in worship music.

These have been great opportunities for enthusiastic exploration of creative ideas and have also provided a boost to the fellowship and social side of the team. The opportunity to lead with a visiting worship leader - Jamie from St Chad's, Romiley - over the church weekend also provided renewed insight and encouragement.

As always, we welcome anyone looking to offer their technical or musical gifting to serve on the team to get in touch.

The worship at our weekly 9am communion service, continues to flourish. Thank you to our three wonderful organists, Alan Crofts, Jonathan Reid and Maria Johnson for all their dedicated leadership. Specific thanks to Alan, who does a superb job at organising the rota of Organists. Thank you also to our wonderful singers and wide range of amazing musicians who have helped us in our 9-o-clock worship. There are some plans afoot to extend our range of music and more use of some 'sung' settings in our liturgy.

Thank you to our 'technical teams' too across all our services and Celebrations. Without you our corporate worship would never be seen or heard!

We are looking forward to the coming year, to seeing what God has for us as we strive towards our vision: To see all who come to St Michael's being transformed through encountering God in musical worship.

Olly and Tamara McGregor
Worship Co-ordinators

Rhythms of Grace

Rhythms of Grace is our monthly reflective prayer group which usually meets on the third Friday evening of the month in church. The name comes from Matthew 11:29 (Message) "Learn the unforced **rhythms of grace**", which is a wonderful invitation from Jesus to come aside to learn how to pray and to encourage one another to go deeper with God in prayer. This year's sessions have included a Labyrinth, Pilgrimage, preparing for Advent with a Jesse Tree, letting go of anxiety using prayer & the Bible, praying with pictures, an imaginative meditation about the sea and a mini series on Faith, Hope and Love. Materials and ideas are provided to spark our prayer, though it may just be that all you need is the space to process what God is already doing in your life. We have the opportunity to share what God is saying/doing and pray together at the end of the evening, naming and holding needs and burdens before Him. Everyone is welcome so why not come along and see for yourself.

Annie Hepburn



Marriage Ministry

Last year 5 couples enrolled on the **Marriage Preparation Course**, which ran for 5 weeks from January to March. The evenings begin with a meal where guests enjoy chatting with each other about their wedding plans. We use material produced by Holy Trinity Brompton, which combines excellent teaching with helpful testimony from a number of 'sofa couples'. This input is interspersed with opportunities for couples to discuss important issues like effective communication, how to handle differences and resolve conflict and how to keep love alive. Feedback is always very positive and couples doing the course often find their perceptions of what church is about are changed along the way. Each week we are joined by a live 'sofa couple', who share from their own experience of doing the course, getting married and settling into married life. It is especially encouraging when we hear stories, sometimes years later, of how the understanding and tools gained from the course have made a difference to marriages.

Last year, due to being on sabbatical, we were unable to run the **Marriage Course** (which follows a similar format although the material is covered in greater depth). We did, however, offer 3 of the sessions again as 'stand-alone' refresher evenings, which 4 couples chose to access to some degree. We are currently in the process of handing the baton of leadership onto Olly & Tamara McGregor, with a course planned to run on alternative Friday evenings starting on 13 April.

Julie and Chris Bradley

Lifegroups and TIE groups

Lifegroups

Our leaders continue to serve week in week out in this invaluable area of church life (quite a number of them really should be getting long-service or life-time achievement awards, in recognition of the many years they have led groups here at St Michael's!!!!). We still aim to meet the needs of all in our congregation from the young people through to our oldest members. This is why no two Lifegroups are the same, each has its very own DNA but with elements of fellowship, prayer, bible study and pastoral support weaving through them. This is also why we are giving thought and prayer as to how we can add a variety of different types of groups into the mix, to better meet people's changing needs. We are encouraged that we have new Lifegroup leaders ready to take on these new challenges in the coming year. We also hope to see some multiplication of current groups this coming September.

Although we intend to continue to have our annual sign-up Sundays, we are also looking at ways to raise the profile of Lifegroups throughout the year, to make them more easily accessible and joinable.

Sadly, last September, we lost a number of our faithful Lifegroup leaders. Our thanks go to Amy Ho as she moved on to take up new responsibilities at St Andrews, Rachel and Sam Hepburn who moved to Devon, and Keith and Pat Cline who had both a close family member and friend taken seriously ill, resulting in their energies needing to go to giving them care, help and support.

We are, however, thankful that new leaders volunteered to take over the reins as we now have: Amanda Grinnell, Kim Carey, Claire Jackson and John and Poppy Spens leading groups. You will find more information about our groups on the church website.

TiE groups (Three is Enough)

Gives people the opportunity to be more accountable, share more deeply and develop their faith, as well as encouraging each other to look outwards towards new ministry areas. As with the lifegroups, we are currently looking at ways to raise their profile and make everyone aware of what they are. However, these groups aren't co-ordinated or managed, they generally happen organically with three like-minded people deciding to meet together on a regular basis. We would be happy to talk to anyone who has any questions about how to set one of these groups up.

Tracy and Vijay Jassal
Lifegroup Co-ordinators

St Michael's, Cheswick

Parenting Teenagers Course

Rachel Hepburn finished her role as community worker in August 2017 which left a gap in the community and school.

However, Saplings playgroup continues to grow on Fridays in term time at Wallscourt Academy. A small team from St Michael's help at this each week and some good relationships with parents and carers are developing.

At Christmas we held a carol event at Wallscourt Academy and some of the school children, Saplings families, Beavers, and residents from Beaufort Grange came. The Open the Book team told the Christmas story which was enjoyed by all who came.

We plan to run a parenting course in the summer term for parents in Cheswick.

A monthly "Songs of Praise" event at Beaufort Grange Care Home has started and this is proving popular with the residents. Once every three months Holy Communion is offered. The event is run by the Cheswick Lifegroup.

A block of new retirement flats is now occupied, and as a result of delivering St Michael's Christmas cards in the flats, the Cheswick Life Group was invited to lead some carol singing in the lounge where there is a quality grand piano. Around 50 residents attended and we hope we can offer more events for those residents.

In March, there was an invitation from Wallscourt Academy for us to lead an assembly about the plight of children attending schools under trees in a refugee camp in Uganda. This was well received by staff and children and the school wants to form a link with such a school which will be set up in the spring.

We are looking at ways to make the community at Cheswick aware of the activities at St Michael's and are working on a welcome leaflet to put through the doors of the next batch of houses under construction in Cheswick. We can also use social media to advertise events. We would also love to lay on community events relating to different Christian seasons but our team is small and we need help from other members of St Michael's to manage this! The opportunities are clearly there.

John and Poppy Spens

In September 2017 we ran our first Parenting Teenagers course. The vision behind it was that I wanted to go on one.... and – of course – we wanted to serve our community here in Stoke Gifford. And we did just that.

There were 11 families of all different shapes and sizes represented: 4 of them were not connected with St Michael's, 2 were on the fringes, and the other 5 were part of our regular church family. Using the material from Care for the Family, 5 leaders (some of us with teenagers and some of us who have lived to tell the tale) took it in turns to host the sessions and to lead the small group discussions.

The feedback was unanimously positive. The main outcome was that now parents knew they weren't on their own; that there were others going through the same thing, however bad it felt. And we've made people welcome and given them a positive experience of what church can be.

We are hoping to run this course at least once a year, and probably in the autumn. In the past we have also run courses for parents of primary school children; we are hoping to do this again – and that this too will become an annual occurrence.

Vicky Wicks



Mission Action Group (MAG)

St Michael's Mission partners

Mission at St Michael's involves sharing in the ministry of our mission partners overseas and in the UK, by building relationships, visiting wherever possible and providing financial, practical and prayer support. Through the work of our mission partners, children are given 'life, hope and opportunity' (Univida, Brazil), they are brought up in a caring Christian environment and are able to receive education (Faith Home, India and SIITA Nest, Uganda). Bible-based family values are promoted in Zimbabwe and other countries in Africa by Family Impact (Lynne Knight). Our links with churches in Moldova (Pastor Ruslan), Brazil (Jimmy Rocks) and Tonypandy, South Wales (Sarah Sutton) help to support discipleship, evangelism and outreach to the local community. The Peace and Hope Trust provides healthcare, educational equipment, buildings and pastoral work to poor communities in Nicaragua. The Deanery link with a Ugandan Diocese enables students to access tertiary theological education in Uganda.

In Bristol, our support has helped ministries reaching out to homeless and vulnerable people (Crisis Centre Ministries and Emmaus) and to refugees and asylum seekers (b.friend). People have been enabled to seek help through counselling (Network). Children and young people have grown in faith and had fun during holidays at Upcott.

Our focus on a different mission partner each month (Mission Partner of the Month) has continued, with update presentations, videos, information sheets and visits in person from mission partners when possible. A new display on all the mission partners, including the names of their link people at St Michael's, was posted on a board in the OSR foyer in December.

Mission trips

There were two mission trips in 2017. A team of six people went to Gotesti, Moldova to help run a children's holiday Bible club, participate in church services and visit church members and others in their homes. A team of 12 young people and leaders went to Uganda to see the outreach projects of churches in our linked Diocese of Ruwenzori, to visit schools, hospitals and charities and to participate in a youth conference and services at several churches.

Mission Support Group

News from our mission partners is circulated regularly to members of St Michael's Mission Support Group for information and prayer. This group currently has 18 members, comprising all the link people for our mission partners and others interested in mission. Administrative functions are undertaken by a few core members of MAG.

The group met twice during the year to share updates and, at the winter meeting, to review our support for our mission partners, as circumstances change over time. It was decided that the time had come for our financial support for Emmaus Bristol to end.

New mission partner

From January 2018, we started supporting a new mission partner, The Brickworks, which is working with the Anglican Church in South Sudan and in refugee camps in Northern Uganda for South Sudanese people. The charity supports health clinics and primary schools, sponsors the training of Christian nurses, teachers and pastors and has funded church buildings, Christian radio and youth camps.

Finances

St Michael's Church gives 10% of voluntary income to support mission work. In 2017, £33,000 was given to our mission partners. A further £5,000 was used for bursary funds to help with the cost of mission trips and for one-off gifts to mission partners and for other outreach ministries.

HOTC tithe. In 2017, funds were paid for starting a new church in Brazil (Jimmy Rocks; total in 2016-17: £15,000), contributing towards a building for a boys' dormitory, dining hall and kitchen at Faith Home, India (£11,250, the balance on a total gift of £15,000) and providing a room for counselling and prayer at Network's new premises in Filton (£15,000). Funds of £15,000 were also allocated to the Peace and Hope Trust, to build a school classroom and kitchen in an impoverished village in Nicaragua (work to start in April 2018).

Future Plans

1. A display about all our mission partners will be prepared for the board in the church porch.
2. A programme is being prepared for Mission Partner of the Month.
3. We will continue to liaise with our mission partners, to share news and pray for them regularly.



Anyone interested in mission is welcome to join our group.

We are especially in need of Secretarial support.

Mary Cottrell

Alpha

It's always a delight and a privilege to be part of the Alpha team.
You get to work with a lovely bunch of like-minded people.
You get to share a meal together with people who have decided they want to find out whether Christianity is at all relevant to anything.
You get to hear some amazing stories from amazing people, and share some of your own.
And you get to introduce all these amazing people to Jesus, the most amazing person of all.

To make this happen takes time and energy, so a huge hurrah goes to all who have shared who they are with people, those who have given talks, tidied up, led groups, set tables, befriended people, prayed for people, washed up, cooked, rescued me from my computer, led us in worship, and generally been Jesus' hands and feet every Wednesday evening.

This term we've introduced a hospitality team into the mix. Their role is to join in the setting up, to serve food, chat and welcome our guests, and then clear everything away again afterwards. These people have been stars, and it has been a joy to get to know them better as they join in with the work that God is doing through Alpha. Thank you – you know who you are!

And here's to more of the same throughout this year. More courses are planned because God uses Alpha to transform lives. This year we will begin to think about stepping stones to Alpha – maybe one off events – but something that will help people feel OK about committing to a 9 week course. But my prayer is also that we all dare to invite those we know and love to come and join in, to come and find out the best news of all.

Vicky Wicks
Alpha Co-ordinator



SMYB



Highlights from 2017 include yarn bombing the Green for Church on the Green, being invited to St Michael's School in Winterbourne as part of their arts week, and decorating the outdoor prayer space at St Michael's School in Stoke Gifford. Building on the previous year's success, we created a larger poppy display for Remembrance Sunday, which included poppies by complete beginners, and earned an article in the Bradley Stoke Journal.



Since we began yarn bombing, people have been asking to meet together and to learn to knit and crochet. So this year we have started monthly workshops in the Coffee Shop (second Saturday of the month). These are open to beginners who want to learn a new craft, as well as those who already knit or crochet and would like to contribute to future yarn bombs.



We are excited for what the year ahead holds as we look to include more people and to collaborate with other local community groups, to continue to bring joy and colour to the local area.

Debbi Bambridge
SMYB



Men's Ministry

During the year we have continued to develop the men's strategy, and focussed on encouraging men to start coming to church and/or to deepen their relationship with God.

The approach has continued with social events but has now been enhanced with faith talks to meet the needs of those men who already come to church. This year we have organised 9 events (from a sports quiz to build a burger) and 2 faith talks with over 350 men attending in total. In order to ensure we are not just attending to men's faith needs we have taken the opportunity to host events that include women.

The first of these being the clay pigeon shooting last month.

Our approach over the next year will be to focus on Life Skills (that is men using their skills to provide talks and support to the wider community) and continue with a monthly social event and quarterly faith talks. Although Men's Ministry Dad's with Kids events have not proven to be that successful we are looking to try out some family orientated events as well. The first being a petanque competition on the green. That being said, the breakfast club run for dad's and Kids has proved its worth and continues to run monthly.

Rob Bakewell



Men's Friday Night Football

We have a starting age of 16 and no upper age limit. It is open to church and non church members. I send out details regarding football each week to over 70 email addresses. Players are asked to reply to the email confirming they are playing that week (as we have a maximum limit of 40 players), so far this season lowest turnout has been 17 players while the highest turnout was 38. I would say that just over half of the players attend St Mike's while the other half are family, friends and neighbours of members of St Mike's.

We play each week during football season (September- June) at Abbey Wood community school, Stoke Gifford (on the outside Astro turf pitch). between 20:00-21:00 every Friday evening (in all weathers!!), players are charged £3.00 each to play which covers the payment for the hire of the football pitch and lost footballs etc.

At the end of season (in June) we all get together (in the OSR). The aim is to allow men to get together each week and enjoy playing a game of football, in a friendly and sportsman like way, and when we are playing football to encourage and praise each other but most of all to play the game with a smile on our faces and have fun together.

Andy Greenslade



Online 365

The church website, our social media channels (*Facebook* and *Twitter*) and our rotas, calendars and bookings on the *ChurchSuite* app have all been kept up to date, week by week, month by month by Laura Thomas in the office, with Chris Smith always on hand to provide IT support for the admin team as a whole. Huge thanks must go to them all.

Venue Hire website

In June 2017 we launched the new dedicated Venue Hire website at stmichaelsvenuehire.co.uk

Compared with the church website, it's much simpler – with the single aim of increasing the number of bookings of our excellent facilities. The new venue hire website also gave us the chance to test-drive the 'responsive' design which is being used for the new version of the main church website. For a measure of the effectiveness of our new venue hire website, please see the separate St Michael's Centre section in this annual report.

The New Church Website

If all goes smoothly, the new church website will be given a soft launch at the Vision Night and AGM on 18 April 2018. Those present will be invited to test-drive the new site over the following couple of weeks, and feedback on what's working well, what's not working so well, and what could be improved. The website address will remain unchanged as stmichaelsbristol.org

Three key features of the new website...

A wonderful 'responsive' layout

Which means the layout of the website changes brilliantly to fit the size of the screen on which it is viewed. Particularly important since so many people now view the website on tablets and smartphones.

Event synchronisation

A rather nifty piece of behind-the-scenes cleverness which means calendar entries and events on the *ChurchSuite* system are automatically displayed on the respective website pages. For most of us this won't make a noticeable difference, but for the admin team it significantly reduces the need to enter the same information in multiple applications.

Searchable sermons

Audio recordings of all our sermons will be searchable according to theme, sermon series, speaker, date and bible passage.

Particular thanks must go to Dave Pilch who has done almost all of the under-the-bonnet work on the new site. The complexity of the site and the volume of information it includes are ingeniously hidden by a layout and interface that keeps everything looking far simpler and easier to navigate than it could be.

Let's keep it fresh

Organisers and leaders of all church activities, groups and events are encouraged to make use of the website as a primary communication tool. If you're starting, changing or inviting participation in any part of church life – please send details to the church office for inclusion in the website and *ChurchSuite*.

Rob Wicks
Chair Website Committee

St Michael's in the Diocese and the Deanery

St Michael's is the Anglican (Church of England) Church for the parish of Stoke Gifford, in the Deanery of Kingswood and South Gloucestershire.

In the Diocese of Bristol, there are 7 deaneries, each led by an Area Dean.

As well as being vicar at St Michael's, Simon is also Area Dean for Kingswood and South Gloucestershire Deanery.

Each Deanery plays an important part of life in the Diocese.

It's not just the vicars who are involved! Lay people are elected onto Deanery Synods (Assemblies of people) along with the clergy who are automatically members. The elections for lay members happen at the Annual Meeting of all the parishes in the Deanery. Kingswood & South Gloucestershire Deanery is the largest in the Diocese, and Deanery Synod is comprised of 34 clergy and 50 lay members. There are currently 2 people from St Michael's who also serve as Deanery Synod Lay members. Deanery Synod meets three times a year, February, June & October.

Responsibilities of Lay members include electing the lay members of both Diocesan and General Synod. Deanery Synod pulls together the thinking of the Church's life in the Deanery. It's the place where the voice of the parish is heard beyond the PCC and is an opportunity to share ideas and best practice.

Guest speakers are invited, and in the last year we have heard from:

James Gardner – Uganda Link,

Claire Fussell – Giving & Resources Advisor, Bristol Diocese,

Sam Cook – Hope 2018 Co-ordinator,

Chris Priddy – Head of Parish & External Relations, Bristol Diocese

The June Synod meeting last focused on an exercise relating to the appointment of the next Bishop of Bristol, the results of which were fed back to contribute to the decision making process

St Michael's have hosted the Confirmation service for the Deanery for the past few years, as one of the few churches who are large enough to host it. (The Deanery Confirmation Service in 2017 had 328 people in attendance)

In 2017 St Michael's hosted a Growing Leaders course for the Deanery, attended by over 35 people, including 12 people from St Michael's.

Caroline Murphy
Deanery Secretary



Within the Deanery, we support the Diocesan vision of *Creating Connections: Connecting with God, each other and in our communities.*

The Diocese of Bristol seek to make this happen through the priorities of:

Making Disciples

Growing Leaders

Engaging Younger Generations

Encouraging Generosity.

The Diocesan Synod is made up of Clergy and elected lay members and meets three times a year. There are currently 2 Lay Members from St Michael's.

The next synod is on 9 June at Holy Trinity Bradley Stoke. This will be an open meeting, to enable those who are interested in the subjects or standing for the next Synod to attend. Bishop Ric Thorpe will be leading a discussion about church planting and resourcing churches, and there will be a focus on social transformation in the Diocese. As well as conversation on a range of other items.

If you would like to attend, please email Graham.Shaul@bristoldiocese.org as numbers are needed for catering purposes.

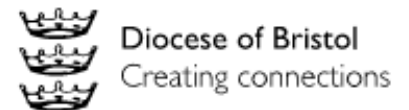
Like other parishes, we work closely with the Diocese of Bristol, who provide support and training in a number of areas. The Diocese also regularly hire the facilities in St Michael's Centre and we are pleased to be hosting the Connected Conference on 25 April.

It's an exciting time within the Diocese of Bristol. Following Bishop Mike's retirement in September, the appointment of a new Bishop of Bristol will be announced in May this year. Members of St Michael's have had the chance to input into the decision making process, and several of our youth were involved in a forum earlier this year.

We look forward to seeing what God has in store!

Laura Thomas

Lay Representative Diocesan Synod



Parochial Church Council

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) meets regularly throughout the year and is responsible for ensuring that the vision and mission of St. Michael's Church are implemented and represents the views of the congregation.

The council consists of approximately 20 members, including Clergy, Churchwardens, and Licenced Lay Ministers, as well as both co-opted and elected members of the congregation. Our representatives at both Deanery and Diocesan Synods are also ex-officio members of the PCC.

The PCC is supported by key focus groups and committees which report back to the PCC throughout the year. These groups cover areas such as Mission, Finance, Church Fabric, Coffee Shop, Pastoral Ministries, Pre-School & Nursery, Children's Work and Youth Ministry and are mostly made up of a great many volunteers. As you may be aware, there are a lot of great initiatives supported by our Church which without these groups would not be the wonderful success that they are. Therefore, on behalf of the PCC and the wider congregation, I would like to thank everyone involved for all the great work that they do in God's name.

2017 was a very busy year and saw numerous changes in how we make best use of the St. Michael's facilities, including the Church Centre. Work has already started to fit out the balcony in the Auditorium which will allow us to host even larger events and access to the additional office space on the first floor will also be a blessing! There is still plenty more to do to complete the remainder of the work on the building and we continue to pray that God will bless us with the resources to undertake these in the future.

We had a fantastic response to our annual Gift Day, for which we are humbly grateful. Your generous contributions have allowed us to continue to fund all the fantastic work that St. Michael's is involved with, both within our local community and further afield. 10% of all contributions go towards our Mission activities both home and abroad.

We had a very successful leadership day in February which allowed us to take stock of everything that has been happening at St. Michael's over the past few years and to provide an opportunity to re-focus our efforts on what we believe God wants to achieve in our Parish. There are plenty of opportunities to get involved in serving both our Church and the wider community and I know that the various leaders would love to hear from anyone interested in contributing.

On a final note I would like to thank you all for all your help and support in making St. Michael's the welcoming and inspiring place it is, and I look forward to all the wonderful events planned for the coming year.

Mark Watkins
PCC Secretary

Fabric Committee

During the past year the Fabric committee has been primarily focused on:-

- Appointing a church architect, tasking him to compile and present a specification for the refurbishment of the tower
- Requesting authorisation ('B' notification) from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) to commence remedial works on the tower
- Applying to the DAC for permission to remove the bells from the tower and display in the new centre
- Investigating the best method for preserving the Bell frame
- Upgrading the Church electrical installation
- Obtaining quotes for the installation of electronic bells
- The red book has recently been updated and will be maintained by the Church Wardens in consultation with the Fabric Committee.

The DAC did not grant permission for the removal of the bells from the tower. The time taken to prepare and submit this application delayed the repair of the tower, this is now due to commence late April. Once complete we will be able to make the bells safe by lowering them to the bell pit and apply a preservative coat to the Belfry timbers.

A fault in the church wiring led to the upgrading of the church electrical distribution box followed by a complete rewiring the power supply to the audio visual desk.

This March/April we are due to have the statutory Quinquennial inspection so the FC are holding off all other works until the report is submitted. This will provide most of our focus for the next 12 months. None of the above includes various works done by the committee such as maintaining the boundary hedge, ad hoc work in the church, looking at possible grants to partially cover the costs of future projects and meeting up with contractors to discuss works both current and future.

Looking beyond the next 12 months, we hope to be able to focus on achieving one of the main ambitions of the Heart of the Community Project – 'to restore our historic church building for generations to come'.

Finance

The SMCC has gifted £75k for work on the church. General fund pays £250 per month into the Fabric Committee account

Opening balance £2,066.43

Closing balance £4,468.11

Personal

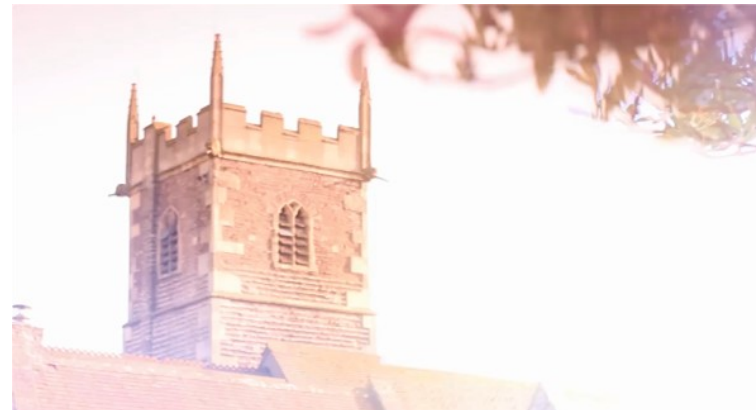
So thank you to the team for your efforts over the past year.

Alan Croft and Marcus Booth have resigned from the committee but will still be available for help and advice when the need arises. So, thank you to you both for all your past efforts and continued support. We are pleased to confirm the Alex Clare has joined the committee.

Present Committee

Martin Allen (Chairman), John Peppin (Secretary), John Bailey, Mike Peacey, Paul Smith and Alex Clare.

Martin Allen
Chairman



Finance Report

Firstly a huge thank you to everyone who gave to the work of God at St Michael's Church during 2017. Whilst we were expecting a deficit last year, we had an amazing response to our Gift Day which resulted in an overall £12,100 surplus for 2017. However, 2017 was not without its challenges. Firstly, we continue to be overly reliant on ad-hoc gifts, especially at Gift Day. Whilst we are incredibly grateful for the generosity of people at Gift Day, it would make budgeting and planning a bit easier if more of our income was received monthly. Secondly, the loss of 4 regular donors resulted in a loss of about £30k in regular giving in 2017. It's my hope and prayer that everyone who feels that St Michael's is their home church would feel that they are able to contribute to the ministry and operations of St Michael's.

There are a number of people who ensure that the finances of St Michael's are run tightly and effectively. Chris Bradley was Treasurer for the first 15 weeks of 2017 and I was blessed to have such a supportive, wise and diligent predecessor. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Alison Volkmer (Financial Controller) who manages the day-to-day finances of the PCC and has done a great job of improving our financial systems and handling our monthly finances with dedication and thoroughness. I would also like to say a big thank you to Mandy Love who does an amazing job with the finances at the Pre-School and Nursery (which delivered a surplus in 2017) and to Ann Cooke and Peter Day with their prudent and effective management of the Coffee Shop finances (which also delivered a small surplus in 2017). Finally, my heartfelt thanks to all who serve on the Finance Sub-Committee of the PCC who tirelessly pore over detailed spreadsheets and accounts, to ensure that the finances of St Michael's are run in a way which balances financial prudence with faith in a generous God.

Rob Farrell
PCC Treasurer, March 2017

