

# St Michael's Church Elmwood Road

*Your local church*



## Annual Report 2022



### Why we exist

We want to be family for our local community – a church where everyone feels welcome and loved. We want to be a place for joy and for consolation. A place where people learn and flourish and find out what it means to live a wholehearted life as a disciple of Christ. And how we can all bring love and peace to the world around us.



## VICAR'S REPORT

2022 will be remembered largely for the death of our late and much-loved Queen and also for the wonderful celebration of her Platinum Jubilee three months earlier. The whole nation gathered to give thanks to a woman who gave us seventy years of loyal service and ultimately revealed what she had been keeping in her handbag all those years – a marmalade sandwich (hopefully not the same one!) At St Michael's we had cream teas in the Church garden in June, and we kept the church open for prayer and for signing a book of condolences in September. And we now look forward to celebrating the coronation of King Charles.



Once again, there are many people to thank for helping with all we have been doing at St Michael's over the last year, especially our wonderful Churchwarden, Sue White and our fabulous Associate Priest, Rev Gary Piper; our excellent Licensed Lay Ministers, Sarah Tonks and Simon Wethered; our kind and diligent Secretary, Linda Woods; and our top-notch Treasurer, Jordan Hiebert, who has continued to keep a careful eye on our finances. Staff members have also worked hard. We are grateful to Sue Riley, our Administrator. To Jan Cunningham, our Music Director, and to Hansol Kim, our Worship and Youth Leader.

It was lovely to have a full-scale Street Party in Elmwood Road in October and I would like to thank everyone who supported this event, which is a such highlight of our work in the community.

We continue to pray for renewal of both the Church and the world around us. And all blessings for the future. Once again it has been a huge personal privilege to serve as Vicar at St Michael's.



Thank you all for being the best ever.

Yours in Christ

*Martine Osborne, Vicar*

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

### Membership of the PCC

Name	Designation	Term expires
Martine Osborne	Vicar	<i>Ex-officio</i>
Sarah Tonks	Lay Minister	<i>Ex-officio</i>
Simon Wethered	Lay Minister	<i>Ex-officio</i>
Susan White	Churchwarden & Lay Vice Chair	<i>Ex-officio</i>
Vacant position	Churchwarden	<i>Ex-Officio</i>
Anne Glyn	Deanery Synod Rep**	<i>Ex-officio, April'23</i>
Lesley Pendlebury	Deanery Synod Rep**	<i>Ex-officio, April'23</i>
Florence Olimba	Deanery Synod Rep *	<i>Ex Officio, April'23</i>
Linda Woods	PCC Secretary*	April 2023
Siew Walton	Member*	April 2023
Sonia Cromeey	Children's Champion from 2021**	April 2023
Ned Gould	Member	April 2024
Bisola Nwakodo	Member	April 2024
Kathleen Birch	Member	April 2024
Jordan Hiebert	Treasurer	April 2025
Eric Lofty	Member	April 2025
Vacant position	Member	April 2025
*standing down at APCM ** standing for re-election		
The Vicar, Churchwardens and Deanery Synod members are all ex-officio members of the PCC. The 3-year Deanery Synod cycle starts again in 2023		

The PCC works with the Vicar to discuss ideas/plans and jointly to make decisions. The PCC is responsible for the repair of the church building, the furniture, the equipment and anything that can be moved, as well as other property such as the Centre. It is also responsible for the financial affairs of the parish, and, with the Vicar, the PCC has responsibility for the type of services which are held. St Michael's PCC has 9 elected members, with 3 members elected each year. Other than the Officers, where continuity needs to be maintained, members are encouraged to have a break after they have served a term or two on the PCC. The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, in relation to having due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Standing Committee (SC) is required by Canon Law; it is made-up of members of the PCC (Vicar, Churchwardens, Treasurer and Secretary). Its role is to set PCC agendas, as well as to deal with urgent matters which it then brings to the PCC for approval.

The PCC meet in the church during the warmer months and on-line during the winter months, when the church can be cold in the evening. This arrangement seems to suit most members. The meetings are held on different nights of the week to fit in with people's busy schedules. The PCC meetings begin with 15 minutes Bible study and prayer and we aim to balance discussions between mission and business. In 2022, the PCC met six times and the SC met seven times.

Once again, boiler problems and roof issues took up a lot of time, although, at the time of writing, these seem to have been resolved.



Several of us attended an on-line CPAS course entitled “PCC Tonight”. Having found it helpful, we agreed to explore one module at the start of each PCC meeting with the aim of demystifying what a PCC does. In summer 2022 PCCs were asked by the Diocese to add the following five topics to their agendas for regular discussion:

- 1) Mental Health
- 2) Children
- 3) Safeguarding
- 4) Diversity
- 5) Eco Church

We felt the best way to do this was to cover one or two items in detail at the start of each meeting, with just a brief report on the other items. This allows us to continue to deal with the other issues without the meetings lasting into the night.

During the year one of our Churchwardens, Susan Chamberlain, had to stand down due to ill-health and the PCC were sorry to lose her. Her role has yet to be filled. Meantime, Sue White continues to carry out the many responsibilities involved. At the 2021 Annual Meeting, we elected a new member, Eric Lofty, while the PCC Treasurer, Jordan Hiebert was re-elected and Florence Olimba was elected to fill the Deanery Synod Vacancy. This left one PCC vacancy which remains unfilled.

Do please think and pray about serving as a member of the PCC – a paper is available from the Vicar if you would like more information on what it entails. It can be a very affirming experience and, while we hope you will want to serve for three years, a shorter term can be accommodated. Elected members are expected to prioritise attending PCC meetings – the dates for the year are circulated well in advance.

If you have thoughts, ideas, concerns please do share these with the Vicar, Churchwarden(s) or a member of the PCC. If you’d like to put forward items for PCC discussion, you should submit them to the Vicar for consideration by the SC.

On a personal note, the time has come for me to stand down from the PCC, which I will do at the Annual Meeting. I have served on the PCC continuously since 2010, when I retired from paid employment with the Diocese. In 2010 I became a Churchwarden (for the second time) and then PCC Secretary in 2013. It has been a worthwhile experience but it’s time for someone else to take over and I wish him or her well.

*Linda Woods, Secretary*

## **ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT**

The Electoral Roll numbers 163, up 20 from the level a year earlier. Just over 60 of these members live outside the Parish. While the numbers have increased, there are some people on the Roll who have died or no longer attend St Michael’s and these will leave the Electoral Roll when we have the next full review of the Roll in 2025.

*Ian Peacock, Electoral Roll Officer*



## WORSHIP REPORT

Sunday services at 9.30 and 11am have been well attended and we've been delighted to welcome many new people. Both the Choir, led by Jan, and the Band, led by Hansol, are growing. And it's been wonderful to have Youth Church led by Hansol at the 9.30 and Children's Church led by Sonia Cromey at the 11am. Thank you, Jan, Hansol and Sonia and everyone who helps them.

The year opened with a sermon series on 'Epiphany moments,' followed by another sermon series on "The Character of God", and in the summer we had a sermon series on 'The Son of Man.'

In May we were pleased to welcome Joanne Gilbert to our Sunday services for Environment Sunday when she talked about her work with WildChiswick.

We had five Messy Church services – Messy Eco-Church in February, Messy Easter in April, Messy Seaside in July, Messy Harvest in October, and Messy Christmas in December. Thank you so much to Sarah Tonks who took the lead in making these happen, and for all who helped.

We had a Service of Remembrance for loved ones who have died in October and a Remembrance Sunday service in November.



At Easter we had a dawn service by the river as well as a Choir and Band led service on Easter day. At Christmas we had a full range of services and events, including a Christmas Wonderland Event at which Mad About Gospel came to sing. Thank you Sue for being the inspiration behind this and, of course, to Father Christmas, who took time out of his busy schedule to visit!

We continued throughout the year to record services and upload them to our YouTube channel so that people can participate online. Thank you Hansol for doing this and thank you to Luke Hanna who has helped us every week on the sound desk and behind the scenes with the tech.

Finally, huge thanks to Rev Gary Piper for many excellent sermons. It was lovely to celebrate his 80th birthday with him in October.

*Martine Osborne, Vicar*



## CHOIR REPORT

This year the adult section of the choir has continued to thrive post Covid restrictions. We were joined in the spring by two excellent musicians, James Hawkes, a splendid bass, and Amy Hawkes, another versatile mezzo who can turn her hand to either soprano or alto; and in the summer by Nick Lane, a very welcome new tenor who also plays the organ and has stood in for Jan at very short notice in emergency. With such a strong men's section we have been able to sing various of our favourites such as the Mendelssohn men's trio When Jesus our Lord and Peter Cornelius's Three kings from Persian lands afar. Matthew Harrison went off to university in Bath in the autumn having handed over as head chorister to Chloe Harvey but returned for Christmas along with a number of other former choristers.

As well as returning to full sung services after the long gap of Covid, we enjoyed several special occasions during the year. One highlight was the wedding of Juliet, a former head chorister, who chose an eclectic selection of music for us to sing and Jan to play. We also sang at Sue Hardwick's wedding to Ron. The baptism of James and Amy's son Solomon was another special event when we were joined by several members of James' musical family to sing two anthems, and soon afterwards Bella and Jon's son Elvin was baptised, with two anthems and Bella's favourite hymns. We joined Helen's family at the crematorium to celebrate her mother Diane's life and accompanied Amber in singing The Lord is my shepherd by Howard Goodall which was a favourite of Diane's.

At Christmas we were able to resume singing round the streets to raise money for Save the Children and a cheque for £431.55 went off to them. Mervyn very kindly hosted us for mince pies and mulled wine afterwards. The carol service was the highlight of the year, with 23 singers (sadly another four were ill at the last minute). This year we had the full nine lessons so there was room for six choir pieces as well as the usual congregational favourites and we had a varied programme of well-known and new music.

Our priority for 2023 is to rebuild our treble section and we are looking for new children to join and develop their musical skills through the RSCM training scheme. We have two new recruits in training and a few more potentials in the wings so please encourage your children to have a go. As long as they can read (words) fluently the choir will do the rest!

We currently rehearse at 10 on Saturday mornings and at 9am before the 9.30am service on Sunday; if you would like to join us, please talk to Jan Cunningham, Director of Music, after the service. Singers of all parts are welcome.

*Jan Cunningham, Director of Music*

## SIDESPEOPLE / WELCOMERS REPORT

Many thanks to those who offer a friendly face and a warm welcome to people when they arrive to worship at this service.

1st Sunday: Alison and Ros  
2nd Sunday: Ian and Alexis  
3rd Sunday: Ron and Dee

4th Sunday: Ginny and Pierre  
5th Sunday: Caroline and John



Special thanks to Norma, who quietly steps in if regulars get called to another task.

*Linda Woods*

## **HOUNSLOW DEANERY SYNOD REPORT**

Another year as St Michael's Church Elmwood Road Rep on Hounslow Deanery Synod. We had the normal 3 meetings in February, June and October. Only the February meeting was via Zoom, the other two meetings were in person. On the whole it was as if Covid never existed, I noticed the lack of mask wearing, hand washing and sanitising of hands has lowered greatly. There is going to be a 5th Booster from April but only for the over 75's and those in care homes and those with a low immune system for those over 12 years old.

The first meeting of the year was held via zoom Thursday 24th February. Rev Martine Osborne the Area Dean chaired the meeting. The Deanery standing committee was introduced to the meeting. Martine introduced the speakers Rebecca Cooper-Jones and Rev Jody Stowell from the London diocese's LLF team. The topic was an introduction to using Living in Love and Faith resources, one of the latest projects by the Church of England. It looks into matters of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage within the Church. It also looked into diversity and being inclusive within the Church community. There is a course, video and resource about it on the Church of England website.

The second meeting in June was held at Holy Trinity Hounslow. Florence, Martine (Area Dean) and I attended from St Michael's. Simon Surtees (Lay Chair) welcomed all the attendees and opened the meeting in prayer. The topic was Racial Justice with a presentation by Fr Joseph Fernandes, Vicar of Hilda's Ashford and Area Dean of Spelthorne. This is a key matter in the Kensington Area current plan - you can access further information via the internet. Rev Elis Matthews advertised the Hounslow Shelter Project relaunch as Cafe Together, which St Michael's has become involved in, doing it on Monday evening in the beginning of 2023 for a number of weeks run by our fabulous Churchwarden Sue White. We had open house and eating together at the back of the church between 6.30 and 8.30pm, open to anyone and free. The meals were done by volunteers from the congregation. I went to most of them at St Michael's and we had a good range of people coming to the free meal\dinner being main course and dessert, often my favourite apple crumble and custard!!! The best of British. I think it was great to meet as a community in a relaxed atmosphere after the Covid restrictions.

The final meeting of the year was held at The Green School for Girls Isleworth. Florence, Martine (Area Dean) and I attended. The weather was very cold and the heating was turned off and the door to the outside kept blowing open. All the attendees kept on their hats, coats, gloves and scarves. Even Martine the Area Dean kept her coat on (!!!) who chaired the meeting and welcomed all attendees at the meeting and opened the meeting. The first speaker was Jo Jones, the Kensington Area Bishop's Schools' Chaplain who gave presentation on Engaging with Church and Non-Church Schools. The presentation touched on the why, how and practical ways to support schools and introduced the 'growing younger' agenda. The second speaker was Sally Yarrow, the CEO and Executive Headteacher of the Green School Trust. Sally discussed the ways churches are involved and support the Green School. The last speaker was Penny Roberts, Diocesan Director of Education. Penny talked about Church of England schools. There was a question and answer session after each session. Martine closed the meeting with prayers.

What stood out in my mind in 2022 was the introduction of the Cafe Together run by the Hounslow

Winter Shelter project. Martine and Sue White were very much involved in the project. The PCC are also looking into Diversity at St. Michael's which came up at the first meeting. I am looking forward to seeing how the community at St Michael develops and changes after the Pandemic.

*Anne Glyn, Deanery Synod Rep*

## **FABRIC REPORT**



This past year has seen the church roof repaired and I am happy to report that we no longer have to run in the church and place buckets to catch the rain as it poured down from the roof! Thank you to Martine for finding the roofing company who did an excellent job. The hall roof was also repaired and loose tiles fixed.

Thank you to all who helped financially to pay towards the roof and for Linda, Martine and Ian who spent many an hour filling in forms for grants towards the cost of the roof repairs.

The garden is looking lovely and bulbs starting to bud, and I would like to thank John Gill and his hard-working team for all the hours spent mowing, cutting and planting. We really appreciate you all.

I would also like to thank Ros Watts and her team who provide us with wonderful flower arrangements on Sundays.

Thank you to Alison Newbold who faithfully washes and irons our church linen.

Thank you also to Caroline Gill who polished the silver and bronze items in Church.

Our boiler has been a major problem but now seems to be working and keeping us warm. I would like to thank James Hawkes who has been an amazing help in getting the boiler in working order.

Thank you to all who help to keep our church up and running; we really appreciate all you do.

*Sue White, Churchwarden*

## **CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT**

### **Children's Church**

Children's Church for our 3-11 year olds takes place during the 11am service in the Vestry.

Our mission statement for Children's Church is: a safe place for children to make friends and learn about Jesus.



There is a group of 12 children who attend most weeks and there are 35 children on the register who have attended at least once. There are 5 leaders and 5 helpers.

Where possible, we plan the sessions following the sermon series using a variety of online resources including *Energize*. The children have learnt that they are loved by Jesus and the various stories He told in the Bible including The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin and The Lost Son. They have also learnt about prayer and the meaning of the words in The Lord's Prayer. There were special services for Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas and there was even a visit from a local theatre group who performed a Pantomime. Do take a look at the children's learning on the display board in the Children's Corner.



At Christmas time we held a successful Messy Church event which was attended by many families from the congregation and local community. They participated in a variety of craft activities, heard the Christmas Story and sang carols.

There are a number of themed Messy Church events planned for this year including Eco-Church and Easter, which the Vicar and helpers enjoy as much as the children!

We would appreciate your prayers for our children as they continue to learn about Jesus and develop their faith.

*The Children's Ministry Team*

## **Youth Club**

We meet in the Church Centre every Tuesday. We are learning about Jesus and discussing Bible stories, and are building a healthy young people community. Now the number is growing, we are now twenty young people altogether. We also enjoy the time as we do activities together such as crafts led by Caroline Simonds, mini-Olympics, Partner dodge ball and other various games.

Every time we meet, our young people grow in their faith and learn more about Jesus. Gary and I, who give short Christian talks each week,



are focusing on teaching and demonstrating Jesus' love, with the hope that those young people will grow in faith and become people who can change the world.

We have a young volunteer, Aidan Price, who is very helpful, as well as the dedicated team of Gary and Caroline.

*Hansol Kim, Youth Minister*



## PASTORAL CARE AND OCCASIONAL OFFICES REPORT

Thank you so much to everyone who has helped with visiting the sick and housebound throughout the year.

There were three weddings at St Michael's. Juliet Theubet-Taylor, who used to be in our Choir and whose mum Veronique is a member of our church, married James Canham in April. Later in the month, a member of our Choir, Sue Hardwick, married Ron Hotchkiss. And in September we had the wedding of two members of our congregation, Terry-Ann Kelly and Victor Amoah.

There were seven baptisms of children in 2022 – for Andrea Puron; Emily Page; Solomon Hawkes; Atticus Guzman; Leonardo Khan; Charlie Searle; and Elvin Porter-Davies - and a service of dedication for Nathan Hiebert

There have been five funerals: for Maureen Kelly, a longstanding member of St Michael's and dear friend, in May; for Masaki Ko, the father of Lorna Ko, in August; for Dianne Batten, the mother of Helen Batten, in September; for Hilary Ward, another longstanding member of St Michael's and dear friend, in October; and for Chris Roberts in December.

*Martine Osborne, Vicar*



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We continued to bake and deliver bread every week, taking round about eight loaves a week to parishioners as a little gift of love and having a chat on doorsteps to see how people are. Many thanks to Hansol who has done the baking.

Alphabeats, our Wednesday morning Drop in for parents, carers and Under 5s, continues to be popular. And we our Community Cafe on Thursday mornings has also become popular.

Thank you so much to Elaine Hughes and Alison Newbold for all the delicious cakes you have baked for us.



We had a fabulous Pancake Party in March, a cream tea party in June and a wonderful Street Party in October, with live music, a free BBQ and lots of fun and games for all the family including pony rides. At Christmas, we did some carol singing at Chiswick Village as well as around the streets of Grove Park



and we had a lovely community Christmas Wonderland event in Church.

We also had some really lovely Church walks, arranged by Alison Newbold.



*Martine Osborne, Vicar*





### **Afterschool club**

We run the Afterschool Club in the Church twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, to serve local youth in a variety of ways. We have approximately ten regular attendees on Mondays and approximately twenty regular attendees on Thursdays. We received funds from Inspire Hounslow to purchase some equipment for this ministry, such as a pool table and a table tennis top, in order to make this place more enjoyable. We also received some board games from church members, which our young people enjoy.

Thank you so much to Ali, Luke and Zenith who help in running the Club.

*Hansol Kim, Youth Minister*

### **Alphabeats**

Alphabeats remains very popular with our local parents and carers and we have between seven and twenty children each week. It gives parents and carers a chance to meet together and have a hot drink while the children learn to share and play with each other.

A good time is had by all and very much appreciated by all who come.

*Sue White, Churchwarden*

### **Music lessons**



We offer free music instruction to young people whose families would struggle to afford lessons. I teach acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and drums. There are currently eight young individuals learning acoustic guitar, one learning bass guitar, and three people learning drums.

We received funding from Welcare Trust Hounslow to purchase guitars and other instruments last year. These guitars are used by young people who are currently unable to purchase their own, providing them with an excellent opportunity to begin learning music.

We have two talented young musicians, Dusty Dyson and Miles Dyson who were trained by this ministry. They recently joined the St. Michael's band and are enjoying serving in the 11 am Sunday service with the team.

*Hansol Kim, Youth Minister*



## Warm Welcome Space

On 10 November 2022, St Michael's opened as a Warm Welcome Space, to provide a "warm space" for people to work and stay during the day, to save on household heating bills, and create a welcoming community. We did this in partnership with Hounslow Council (who generously provided a grant of £1000 towards our resulting energy costs) and as part of the Warm Welcome Campaign, a community response to the cost-of-living crisis, organised by a coalition of Christian charities.

Our Warm Space was open 3 afternoons a week, and offered free Wi-Fi, hot drinks and refreshments, and an opportunity for a chat for anyone who wanted it. We opened on afternoons where the church was in use in the mornings, to make our energy use as efficient as possible.

Our experience in running the Warm Space is that, although there were not a large number of visitors each day, those who did come, often came out of the need for company, or to feel the comfort that a church can give.

In recent weeks, numbers have been increasing, mainly made up of parents and carers who welcome the child-friendly space, so even though the Warm Welcome Campaign is winding up for spring, we are looking into whether we are able to continue to open the church on some afternoons each week.

We are very grateful to our team of "warm welcomers", who gave up their time to make this project feasible - Caroline G, Caroline S, Clare, Florence, James, Lesley, Lina, Linda, Martine, Sue W and Susan C – and to Myra Ingham and her "Bookgroup Grandmas" who organised a soup lunch to raise funds for the project.

*Sarah Tonks*

## MORNING PRAYER AND BIBLE READING GROUPS REPORT

Midweek Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Bible Reading Groups have been well attended. At Bible Reading Group we read all the way from Ezra to Daniel, which is thirteen books of the Bible!

*Martine Osborne, Vicar*

## AUTUMN ALPHA COURSE

We ran an Alpha course on Monday evenings with 12-16 participants and went away for a wonderful Holy Spirit Away Weekend in Bletchingley in November.

Thanks to everyone who helped with this.

*Martine Osborne, Vicar*



## FUNDRAISING REPORT

In 2022 we raised a total of approximately £4,500 for external charities and local community initiatives.

Most notably:

- A fundraising auction raised over £3,500 for our annual community street party.
- Christmas carolling in the local neighbourhood raised approximately £400 for Save the Children.
- Donations of over £300 (and a £1,000 grant from Hounslow council) went toward funding our Warm Welcome project.

Of course, we also did significant fundraising (including applications for grants) to offset the costs of urgent major roof repairs.

A big thank you to all who made financial contributions and participated in fundraising efforts!

*Jordan Hiebert, Treasurer*

## PLANNED GIVING REPORT

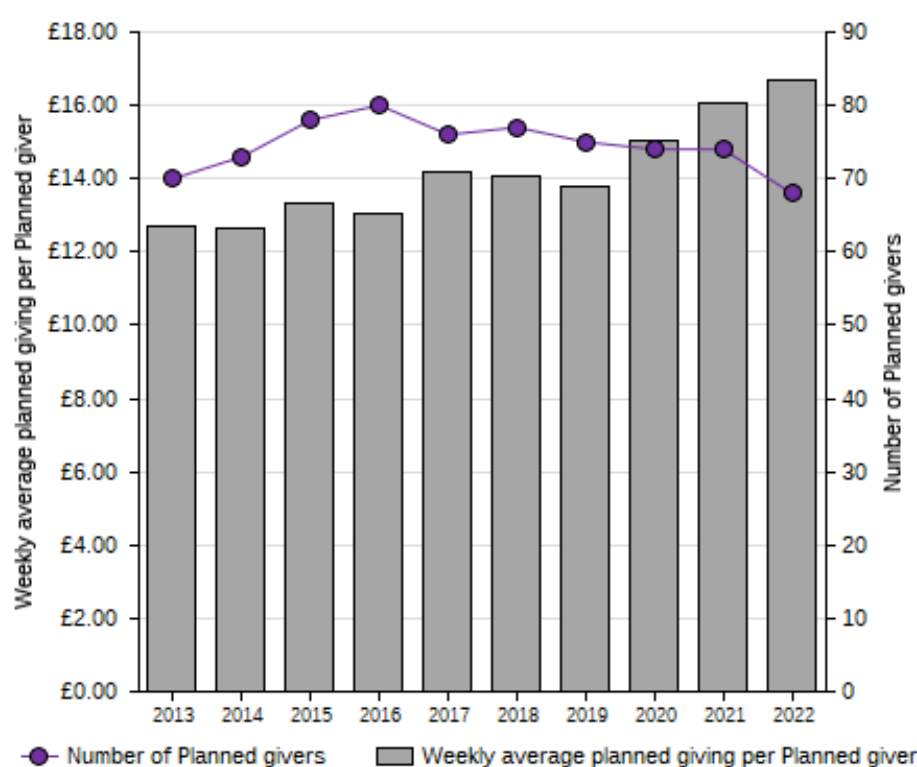
Thank you to all members of our planned giving scheme!

Regular donations allow the PCC to budget and execute on the church's financial plans with confidence. In 2022, regular participation dropped from previous years: we had 68 individuals or families contributing to the scheme, compared to 74 in 2021.

For regular givers, we saw a slight increase in average weekly giving of 3.9% when compared to 2021.

If you are not yet a part of the planned giving scheme and would like to learn more, please pick up a leaflet at the back of the church or contact me directly. Even a small amount makes a big difference!

*Jordan Hiebert, Treasurer*



## ST MICHAEL'S CENTRE REPORT

It has been another variable year for venue hire. For various reasons we have seen a reduction in the number of our regular Centre bookers, sadly saying goodbye to the Chiswick Choir, who felt they needed a larger rehearsal venue. Farina Alam's art classes and the Yoga group also left us. However, St Michael's Players, Art with Little Pics, Perform, Karate, Aerogym and Fantom Films have continued to regularly use our facilities and, together with the continued presence of the Montessori School and Hounslow Council using us as a Polling Station, have brought some well-needed funding.

Occasional bookings see events such as talks by WildChiswick, birthday parties and other family



celebrations taking place, and we hope these continue to increase in number through 2023.

We have increased our booking fees for 2023, and in the light of us losing some regular bookers, we do have some available slots for groups wanting a regular venue.

We are looking at ways in which we can make our Centre a real asset to our community and if you have any ideas about how this can be done, do speak with Martine, Sue White or Sue Riley.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Julia Watkiss who has managed the Centre and Church bookings brilliantly for many years. Unfortunately for us, she felt that Easter 2022 was the time to step back from these responsibilities and passed on the baton to us. We are grateful to you Julia for such sterling voluntary work for St Michael's and wish you many happy family hours to come!

*Hansol Kim & Sue Riley*

## **ST MICHAEL'S PLAYERS**

2022 saw us getting fully back into the swing of things, starting with our Spring production of *The War of the Worlds*, directed by Allison DeFrees. This was based on Orson Welles' infamous pre-war radio broadcast, which had some American listeners convinced that Martians really had invaded. Cecilia Coleshaw wrote some additional scenes to provide context and further background. The resonance between the invasion and our collective experience of the recent pandemic was striking.

In June, Paul Smith directed a dramatisation (not Hitchcock's) of Daphne du Maurier's *The Birds*. This 4-hander conveyed beautifully the tensions and claustrophobia experienced by a group of strangers forced together for safety. In August, we took the play to the Edinburgh Fringe, where it played to capacity audiences.

In October we staged Peter Hall's dramatisation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, directed by Bryony Wilman. The cast rose brilliantly to the challenge of making and acting in animal masks. Again, despite being based on a novel written over 70 years ago, the events of the play resonated with current world events.

A much more joyful event was the December performance of *Rapunzel*, another pantomime written by Director Chris Hulatt's favourite (panto) author, Ben Crocker.

It was enthusiastically received and our audiences went away happy. As with *Animal Farm*, we welcomed some new faces, who we hope to see more of in the future.

We also found time for some social events, including several play-readings - some to try out for possible performance, others just for fun - and the now-traditional summer barbecue.

All-in-all, a successful year. It was a huge relief to be able to operate free of Covid-related restrictions, if not always of Covid itself.

*Alastair Dewar, Chairman – St Michael's Players*



St Michael's Choir singing Christmas carols in The Copper Cow, December 2022

*St Michael's is a broad friendly church with a lively vicar and a modern outlook,  
driven by traditional Christian values.*

*We seek to be a spiritual haven from the everyday pressures of life  
in a beautiful church building.*

The Revd Martine Osborne [vicar@stmichaels-elmwoodroad.org](mailto:vicar@stmichaels-elmwoodroad.org)  
St Michael's Church, Elmwood Road, Chiswick W4 3DY Tel: 020 8994 3173  
[www.stmichaels-elmwoodroad.org](http://www.stmichaels-elmwoodroad.org)  
Charity No. CC:1149114

*Thanks are given to a number of people who provided photographs to enhance this Report  
including Hansol Kim and Martine Osborne*