

St Michael's Church Elmwood Road

Your local church



Annual Report 2023



Who we are

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, peace and healing to the world around us.

VICAR'S REPORT

In 2023 we celebrated the coronation of H.M. King Charles III and I was delighted to be invited to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, to see the wonderful 6th century St Augustine's Book of Gospels that had been brought out of storage for the occasion. We also welcomed our new Bishop of Kensington – Dr Emma Ineson – in November for our Confirmations Service.

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 Churchwardens, Sue White and James Hawkes; our Associate Priest, Rev Gary Piper; our Licensed Lay Ministers, Sarah Tonks and Simon Wethered; our new PCC Secretary, Sue Hardwick; and our excellent 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 another Street Party in Elmwood Road in September and I would like to thank everyone who supported this event, which is an important part of our work in the community.

We continue to pray for renewal of the Church and for the many needs of our world around us. Once again it has been a huge personal privilege to serve as Vicar at St Michael's.

Thank you all for being such a great support.

Yours in Christ
Martine Osborne, Vicar

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Membership of the PCC

Name	Designation	Term Expires
Martine Osborne	Vicar	Ex-officio
Sarah Tonks	Lay Minister	Ex-officio
Simon Wethered	Lay Minister	Ex-officio
Susan White	Churchwarden & Lay Vice Chair	Ex-officio
James Hawkes	Churchwarden	Ex-officio
Anne Glyn	Deanery Synod Rep	Ex-officio
Lesley Pendlebury	Deanery Synod Rep	Ex-officio
Sue Hardwick	PCC Secretary	April 2026
Sonia Cromey	Children's Champion from 2021	April 2026
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
Ron Gould	Member	April 2026
Alejandro Gomez	Member	April 2026
*members coming up for re-election or standing down		

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 that are held. St Michael's PCC has 9 elected members, with three 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 deal with urgent matters which it then brings to the PCC for approval.

The PCC meet in the church in 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 2023 the PCC met 6 times as did the SC.

Areas of discussion and action included the replacement flooring in both the centre and the church which was considered to be very successful. There was also significant discussion around replacing the chairs in the church. The faculty for the replacement has been granted and the chairs should be in situ in spring 2024. Solar panels have also been installed which should make a difference to our energy bills. The boiler seems to be behaving itself now! Thanks to all involved in the work involved in making these things happen.

Do please think and pray about serving as a member of the PCC. The vicar will be happy to give you more information on what it entails. 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, the churchwardens or a member of the PCC. If you would like to put forward items for PCC discussion, you should submit them to the vicar for consideration by the SC.

Sue Hardwick, Secretary

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

The number of those on the Electoral Roll in April 2023 amounted to 163, 10 higher than the number a year earlier. Of these 100 were resident in the Parish. The figures for the current year are not yet finalised but the total is likely to be well over 170.

As I mentioned last year, there will be a full Review of the Roll in 2025. If prior Reviews are a guide, there will be a fall in numbers, reflecting the number people who have moved away or have ceased attending St Michael's during the last five years. However current numbers compare respectably with those in 2012 and 2018, (the two most recent years immediately before Reviews) so we may have a reasonable base with which to enter the review process.

Ian Peacock, Electoral Roll Officer

WORSHIP REPORT

Sunday services at 9.30am 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.

We had a sermon series in Lent on 'Lent words;' and a summer sermon series on the book of Ezekiel.

In June we were pleased to welcome Shelagh Allsop to a Sunday service and she spoke about her work with Hounslow Refugees Welcome. In October we were pleased to welcome Revd RuthAnn Cannings, the founder of Arise Ministry.

We had four Messy Church services – Messy Eco-Church in February, Messy Easter in April, Messy Harvest in September, 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.



We had a lovely Harvest Festival in October and Confirmation Service in November led by Bishop Emma, at which Molly Cijffers and Chloe Staniland were confirmed.



At Christmas we had a full range of services and events, including a Christmas Fun Event with a Christmas panto. Thank you, Sue White, 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 in worship online. Thank you Hansol for doing this and thank you to Luke Hanna who helped us on the sound desk and behind the scenes with the tech.

Finally, huge thanks to Rev Gary Piper for many excellent sermons and fascinating anecdotes on the vicissitudes of being a life-long supporter of both Jesus, and Fulham FC!

Martine Osborne, Vicar

CHOIR REPORT

In 2023 the choir was delighted to be back to full strength with an average of 15 singers for every Sunday service and many more for special occasions. We currently have six basses, three tenors, three altos, five sopranos and five young people who sing regularly as well as many former regulars who are away at university or living elsewhere who are happy to come back when they can.

We have been very pleased at the progress made by our treble section this year. Chloe and Jess came back in 2022 after Covid and they have been joined this year by Jostan and Kennesaw who came with their mother soprano Say, and Maya. Chloe got her place at Durham University in the summer but decided to take a gap year working locally so we have benefited from her expertise as head chorister for another year.

The younger trebles have been working very hard towards their next RSCM ribbons tests, and we are delighted to have another two new trebles in the wings ready to start in the spring of 2024.



There were various highlights in the year in addition to the normal special services throughout the church's calendar. Of particular note was the wedding of another former head chorister, Hannah Ainsworth, who invited us to sing along with some of her choral society at her and Sam's wedding in May. We sang at the baptism of James and Amy's second son Elijah in October at which we were again joined by some of James's musical family and sang Charles Wood's O thou the central orb – a great favourite of the choir's. The confirmation service was in November at which we met the new bishop of Kensington.

We had a number of joint singing activities with the choir of St Paul's Grove Park during the year. On Passion Sunday a number of us sang Stainer's Crucifixion with them – a very moving work. Then we augmented their choir at the induction service for their new vicar in July which was a great occasion with an enormous number of local clergy and representatives from all the Hounslow faith communities. In November we joined them for their Advent Carol service, and a few people also found the time to sing with them at their carol concert later in December.

Once again we sang carols round the streets in December to raise money for Save the Children and raised almost £450. Mervyn very kindly hosted us for mince pies and mulled wine afterwards.

And of course our own service of nine lessons and carols took place in December, with 28 singers and a varied programme ranging from Handel to Vaughan Williams and John Rutter.

With a newly thriving trebles section we are extra keen to recruit new children to join the choir. They don't need to have musical experience as long as they can read words fluently and enjoy singing – the RSCM training programme is a great way to learn about music, and being part of an all-age choir is a really confidence-boosting experience for children which supports their general education and attainment. Please talk to Jan or any adult member of the choir if your child is interested and we will arrange for them to come to choir practice to see if they like it.

We currently rehearse at 9.30am for trebles and 10am for adults 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

BAND REPORT

Hansol continued to do a great job leading St Michael's Band at our 11 am service on Sundays and rehearsals on Thursday evenings. It has been wonderful to welcome Dusty and Miles Dyson and Rhiann Williams and James Narh as regular members of the Band.

Martine Osborne



SIDESPEOPLE / WELCOMERS REPORT

Many thanks again this year for those who regularly give a friendly face and a warm welcome to people when they arrive to worship at the 9.30 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

When there are joint services, it is these 9.30 stalwarts who are called upon to welcome when the service is held at 10.30.

Our thanks also go all those who step in to welcome worshippers at our 11am services. Although we don't have a regular rota, your welcoming ministry is valued just the same.

Linda Woods

HOUNSLOW DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

We had three Hounslow Deanery synod meetings in 2023. The first, in February, was at Christchurch Feltham and was about refugees and how we welcome them into our communities and churches. The second, in June, was at St George's Hanworth and was about how we make our churches and church life accessible to all people, including those with disabilities. The third, in October, was the beginning of a new triennium and Bishop Emma came to St Michael's Chiswick and presided at Communion and then the Area Dean interviewed her and she took questions and answers from the floor.

Martine Osborne, Vicar

FABRIC REPORT

We have had a very productive year in Church and the Centre. I think you will all agree with me that the floors look amazing in both buildings and have made such a difference; it has enabled us to make more space for the children and they can play without getting splinters. Thank you to all those who moved chairs and cleared the floors in August to allow this to go smoothly.

We now have solar panels on the Centre roof which will help with the cost of heating. This was arranged by Peter Wickstead, who managed to obtain a grant for us covering the cost of the panels. We are extremely grateful to him for the time and effort he put into this project.

The water tank under the sink in the kitchen sprang a leak. Thank you, James Hawkes for organising a replacement.

Thank you to all of you who regularly clean the brass, it is very much appreciated. Thanks also to the following people:

Alison Newbold, who washes and irons the altar cloths and purifiers,

Roz Watts and her team for the beautiful flower arrangements,

John Gill and his team for all their hard work in keeping our gardens looking wonderful, and last but not least, everybody who helps keep our church looking clean and tidy.

I look forward to the delivery of our new chairs and being able to use our space in a more creative way.

Sue White, Churchwarden

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT

Children's Church

During the 11am Sunday service we hold Children's Church for 5-11 year olds in the Vestry.

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

Our Bible verse for this year is to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Peter 3:18.

This year we made the decision to raise the starting age for Children's Church from 3 to 5 years. There has been an increasing number of children attending and the space in the Vestry is limited. This decision also means the regular attendees are closer in age which allows for more in-depth teaching. Children younger than 5 can complete colouring activities linked to the sermon or play with the toys in the Children's Aisle during the service.

We currently have four leaders and four helpers. Three of these helpers were recruited following the church's Mission Sunday last September. This term, Martine and Gary are leading blocks of sessions to help raise the profile and give a high priority to the ministry to our children. Going forwards, they are planning to be regularly involved.

Where possible, we plan the sessions following the sermon series using a variety of online resources including Energize. Do take a look at the children's learning on the display board in the Children's aisle.



We were able to hold Children's Church sessions at the 9.30 Sunday service roughly once every 4-6 weeks during 2023 but were not able to sustain that due to limited volunteers. Children are very welcome at the 9.30 service, and colouring and toys are available in the Children's aisle. We are continuing to explore options for offering Children's Church at both services.

Throughout the year we have held a number of successful Messy Church events around key church festivals (including Messy Easter and Messy Harvest) which have been well-attended by families from the congregation and local community. We participate in a variety of craft activities, hear Bible stories and share a meal together. There are a number of Messy Church events planned for this year too.

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

Every Tuesday, we meet in the Church Centre. We're learning about Jesus, discussing Bible stories, and forming a strong young community. As the majority of their faith in Jesus grows, we would like to devote more time to deeper faith-sharing. We also like spending time together doing things like crafts guided by Caroline Simonds, mini-Olympics, dodgeball, and other community games. Gary and I, who offer brief Christian talks every week, focus 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 two young volunteers, Chloe Harvey and Aidan Price, who are really helpful, as well as a 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 two weddings at St Michael's in 2023. Hannah Ainsworth, who used to be our Head Chorister and still sings in the Choir at Christmas, married Sam Davies in May. Then, in June, Rhian Williams and James Narh were married.

There were four baptisms – Elijah Hawkes; Thomas and Oscar Halliwell; and Ruby Kaur Matharu.

There were five funerals: for Pauline Twentyman; Geoffrey Over; Vinola Hinds; Robert Eccott; and John Walton.

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.

We ran 'Café Together' on Monday evenings, providing a hot meal and company for those who came along.

Alphabeats, our Wednesday morning Drop in for parents, carers and Under 5s, continues to be popular.



And 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 February, a Coronation Big Lunch in May and a wonderful Street Party in September, with live music, a free BBQ and lots of fun and games for all the family including pony rides. We hosted an exhibition of WildChiswick photographs of local wildlife in October. And at Christmas,

we did some carol singing around the streets of Grove Park and we had a lovely community Christmas Fun Day in Church.

We also went on some great walks arranged by Alison and Steve Newbold. And we had some interesting talks – one by Carole Andrews on the Lalibela Trust's work in Ethiopia; and one by Simon Wethered on the Camino de Santiago di Compostela.

Martine Osborne, Vicar

Afterschool club

On Mondays and Thursdays of each week, we operate the Afterschool Club in the Church in order to support local youth in various ways. Weekly attendance is approximately 10 people on Mondays and Thursdays. Welcare provided funds for the purchase of entertaining equipment for this ministry, such as board games, an indoor golf set, an air hockey table, and a table tennis top, and so on, in order to make this place more enjoyable. Much appreciation to Ali and Zenith for their assistance in running the club.

Hansol Kim, Youth Minister

Alphabeats

Alphabeats continues to be very popular with the local community and we average between 14-20 children every week. Having the new floor and more space has made such a difference to the group; the parents are able to enjoy a hot drink and meet other parents while the children play.

I have found it very encouraging to see some the parents come to Messy events, the crib service and our Pancake Party.

Sue White, Churchwarden

Music Lessons

Young people whose families would have a difficult time affording music lessons are eligible to receive free music instruction from us. Hansol teaches drums, bass guitar, and acoustic guitar. The previous year, we were able to acquire guitars and other instruments thanks to the assistance that we obtained from the Welcare Trust Hounslow. Young individuals who are unable to acquire their own guitars at the moment are able to make use of these guitars, which provides them with a fantastic opportunity to begin learning their musical instrument.

Hansol Kim, Youth Minister

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 Hosea to Luke, which is fifteen books of the Bible!

Martine Osborne, Vicar

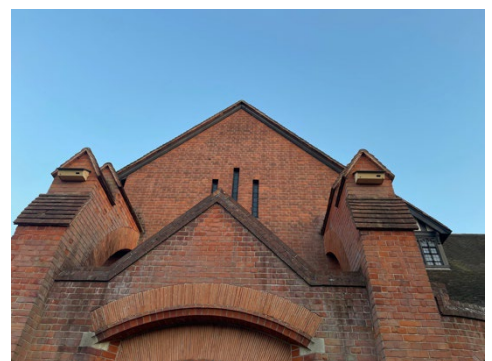
ECO CHURCH

We continued to support WildChiswick by hosting a number of events at St Michael's to promote awareness of our local wildlife. We also installed two swift boxes all the church and I hope that swifts will nest in them soon.

CHURCH RETREAT

We had a wonderful Retreat in Bletchingley in September on 'Significant Lives' in the Bible, led by Chris Chapman. Thanks to everyone who helped with this.

Martine Osborne, Vicar



FUNDRAISING REPORT

In 2023 we raised a total of approximately £10,500 for external charities and local community initiatives. Most notably:

- A fundraising auction raised over £4,800 for our annual community street party.
- We raised over £4,000 for the Lalibela Trust to rebuild medical stations in Ethiopia. Some of these funds were raised at a well-attended soup lunch in St Michael's Centre.
- A collection to benefit victims of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria totalled over £1,000.
- Christmas carolling in the local neighbourhood raised approximately £500 for Save the Children.



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

Jordan Hiebert, Treasurer

PLANNED GIVING REPORT

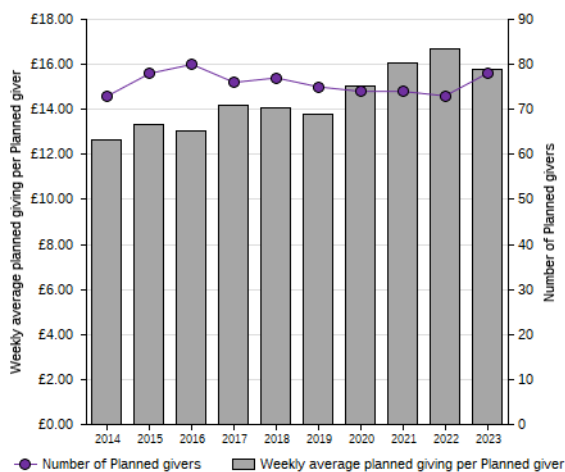
Thank you to all members of our planned giving scheme!

Regular donations allow the PCC to budget and execute on the church's financial plans with confidence. In 2023, we saw a notable uptick in the number of givers from previous years: we had 78 individuals or families contributing to the scheme, compared to 73 in 2022.

For regular givers, we saw a slight decrease in average weekly giving of 5.7% when compared to 2022.

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

Bookings have stabilised for venue hire this year. St Michael's Players, Perform, Karate, 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 again brought some well-needed funding. We have a few new regular bookings: Pilates, Stretching Club and Art & Craft Club.

Occasional bookings see the usual events such as talks by WildChiswick, birthday parties and other family celebrations taking place, and we hope these continue to increase in number through 2024.

Our booking fees increased again for 2024, and we do have some available slots for groups wanting a regular venue.

We are still 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, Hansol Kim or Sue Riley.

Hansol Kim & Sue Riley

ST MICHAEL'S PLAYERS

As I write this, we are all still coming to terms with sudden death of our dear Bryony Wilman. A member since 2007 Bryony had just been appointed Chair of the group in January. To have her taken from us has been truly devastating and we coming to realise what a huge hole she has left our society. A long-standing committee member, talented actress, accomplished Director, experienced stage manager and highly skilled seamstress and knitter are just a few of her accomplishments. Much more than these, however, we will miss her passion and commitment to the Players, her lust for life, her humour and friendship.

Before this terrible blow hit us the group had another active and successful year staging our usual 4 productions.

Our spring production was *The Titfield Thunderbolt* by Philip Goulding – directed by Guy Fairbank (his first Directorship with the group). With an affectionate nod to the classic Ealing Comedy, the plot followed the villagers of Titfield as they battle to save their branch line from closure in the face of competition and skullduggery from the local bus company. The production was unusual in that it was done “in traverse” – i.e. on the floor of the hall with the audience either side of a central ‘stage’. With lots of audience participation it also featured a steam train (ingeniously designed by Chris Hulatt) being built before their very eyes!

Summer saw us tackling Shakespeare for only the second time in the group’s history with our production of *Romeo and Juliet* – directed by Allison Defrees. Allison herself adapted the text to bring a different twist to the story – here the lovers were not young teenagers, but people finding love in later life, but still set against the same tragic family feud. No doubt this adaptation divided opinion - but it was both fun and challenging to try this different take on the play.

Our Autumn production was *Daisy Pulls It Off* a comedy play by Denise Deegan and Directed by Neil Dickens (another first Directorship). This parody of wholesome adventure stories about life in a 1920s girls' English boarding school had Daisy Meredith overcoming snobbish prejudice and schoolgirl pranks in her search for the missing treasure that could save the fortunes of the exclusive Grangewood School for Young Ladies.

In the process it provided an opportunity for the players (both male and female) to don their gym slips!



Our panto was *Mother Goose* by Ben Crocker and directed by Chris Hulatt. Ben and Chris are a very well-honed partnership and they brought us the usual cracking show full of slapstick, jokes, dancing and happily ever after - all accompanied by a fantastic live band. Sadly, Chris has decided to step away from Directing the panto after a decade of amazing shows, so we hope this production – played to 6 sell-out audiences – was a fitting finale.

The photo shows Amelia Barker, Sue Darrieulat and Jo Harry as Bog Trolls in *Mother Goose*. Between productions the group ran its usual programme of socials and play readings.

So, we now look forward to our 75th anniversary year – beginning with *The Government Inspector* by Philip Goulding on 17 – 20 April.

Alastair Dewar, Chairman – St Michael's Players

*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
St Michael's Church, Elmwood Road, Chiswick W4 3DY Tel: 020 8994 3173
www.stmichaels-elmwoodroad.org
Charity No. CC:1149114