

St Michael's, Begbroke



Annual Parish Report 2024

Introduction

Thank you to all who have continued to support St Michael's. We are immensely grateful to all whose dedication and care enabled us to sustain the church's ministry across the year. We did so through our regular pattern of worship, and pastoral care in our community. Alongside this we offered new and developing provision. St Michael's blessed by all members of our congregation and community as we seek to witness to Jesus Christ in worship, fellowship and service.

Particular thanks go to our committed and able PCC led by our wonderful churchwardens Neill Brodey and Caroline Waugh, ably supported by Rosa Cadd, Caroline Turnbull and Stan Rosenberg. We are also extremely grateful to Willie Black as our Treasurer.

We are hugely grateful to those offering ministry, especially our Associate Vicar Rev's Sue Spankie and Rev'd Dr Richard Turnbull. Their ministry is integral to St Michael's and supports the Rector, Rev'd Oliver Petter.

Two significant aspects of our ministry in 2024 related to our presence in Begbroke East. Throughout the year our Tuesday evening study and fellowship group continued to meet, bringing people from Begbroke and Yarnton together, and deepening our fellowship and faith. From the autumn, we offered a service on the first Sunday of the month in Begbroke Village Hall. Further reflection on these two ministries is below.

Aims and purposes

St. Michael's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Oliver Petter, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St. Michael's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish.

Diocesan and Benefice vision

St Michael's is the only physical Christian presence in our parish and we welcome Christians of all denominations to join our worship. Our tradition is simple, traditional worship, although we are open to change.

Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

Outreach is an imperative for our parish. The busy A44 has continued to provide a significant challenge with most of the villagers living on the other side from the historic church building. Hence our efforts to offer provision on the east of the village.

The PCC continues to look to the Diocesan Vision, of which four points continue to have great resonance.

- To make a bigger difference in the world and serve the poor.
- To share our faith with adults, children and young people and grow the church in every place; rural, urban and suburban.
- To serve every school in our community.
- To put the discipleship of all at the heart of our common life and set God's people free.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of St Michael's.

PCC

PCC members at the APCM in 2024 were: Rev'd Oliver Petter (Incumbent), Neill Brodey (Churchwarden, Secretary, Deanery Synod Rep), Caroline Waugh (Churchwarden, Parish Safeguarding Officer), Rosa Cadd, Caroline Turnbull. At the APCM Stan Rosenberg joined the PCC. Rev'd Sue Spankie was licensed as Associate Vicar in April , and joined the PCC ex officio. Thank you to all our PCC for their work in 2024.

Review of 2024 *(Achievements and performance)*

Worship and Prayer through the year

The principal pattern of worship continued to be the 9.30am service on Sundays. On the first Sunday of the month this was offered as an all age Service of the Word, and from September this was offered in the Village Hall. The regular service on all other Sundays was a Holy Communion in St Michael's.

Within the calendar year certain moments can be noted:

Epiphany Carol Service

In early January, our Benefice Epiphany service drew friends from Begbroke and Yarnton and was well received.

Shrove Tuesday Party

We held a Shrove Tuesday Party in the Village Hall, which was a well attended occasion, with members of the Begbroke and Yarnton community gathering. We were especially grateful to those who offered catering.

Lent, Holy Week and Easter

The Tuesday evening group continued to meet, journeying together through the season of Lent.

Rev'd Sue Spankie led us through the special days of Holy Week, and we had a joyful Easter morning service.

A note of thanks

The Rector was especially grateful to all the PCC for their help in the period where his family were temporarily housed for 8 weeks from early Jan to mid March, and in the time of paternity leave that followed a fortnight later.

From September - Frist Sunday Village Hall service "Come and See"

In September, St Michael's stepped out in faith and begun a monthly service in Begbroke Village Hall. This followed the more informal 'breakfast service' which had run on the first Sunday of the month in church from September 2022 for 2 years. The hope was to draw a wider involvement from our community, and to offer an Act of Worship, and offer of fellowship for those whose mobility, or circumstances make the journey to St Michael's difficult.

"Come and See" All in worship' began in September offering a more informal Act of Worship (whilst remaining a full Sunday C of E Principal Service). It featured a breadth of music including more contemporary music. The gatherings began with a breakfast, and included creative activities, reflecting on the biblical themes. The series included moving through Jesus's I AM sayings within the calendar. It was offered to be a warm and inviting point of contact for families and those new to faith, whilst being enjoyed by those who had been firm followers of Christ for decades.

With the arrival of the crossing in Begbroke alongside this, we hope and pray that we can continue to build new connections between our church community, church building and our fellow villagers

The series was planned to extend into 2025 and led to a successful mission grant application from the Diocese of Oxford Common Vision Development Fund.

Huge thanks are due to Sue Spankie who invested a great deal of energy and expertise into launching the service. Thank you to all our volunteers and core team who gathered to plan and facilitate the services.

We were pleased that Bruce and Annabel Cummings joined in with the monthly service , and attended our Tuesday groups. They have long sought to support community building and Christian outreach in the village, and they represent (informally) a valued partnership with the local Baptist church.

Harvest Festival

Many villagers and friends gathered for the wonderful traditional Harvest Supper in late September in the Village Hall. We were hugely grateful to Elaine Simmonds and her generous team of helpers, and grateful for the kind donation to the church.

Advent and Christmas

The Advent and Christmas season brought encouragement. Our two main Christmas services prior to Christmas night – the Carol Service and Crib service - both went well, and drew in new people. We had very good attendances at each and it was heartening to draw a significant congregation for the Crib Service in the Village Hall.

Christmas Night and Morning brought joyful celebrations. The church looked lovely for the Christmas period, and the hospitality for the Carol Service was commended by many, with special thanks to the Waugh bakery.

Thank you to those who helped to deliver our Christmas leaflets, to Caroline for the blackboard publicity, and to Sue and her team for their help in publicising our events within the village. We are also grateful to those who cleaned the church and adorned it with flowers for the Christmas celebrations.

Occasional Offices – Weddings, Baptisms, Funerals.

Weddings and baptisms

There was one Wedding in 2024.

Funerals, and Memorial Services

There were two funeral services in 2024 for Begbroke parishioners or families, both of which were at the Crematorium. There was also one Interment of ashes.

Parish Life

Electoral Roll The total on our Electoral Roll at the APCM meeting was 12.

Ministry at St Michael's

Licensing of Rev'd Sue Spankie as Associate Vicar

Sue was licensed as Self-Supporting Associate Vicar by the Bishop of Dorchester, +Gavin Collins on April 7th, the Sunday after Easter. Sue had been assisting with services for many months across the Benefice, and her pastoral gifts had been evident in her interaction with members of our church and village communities. We had already been most grateful for her dedicated ministry prior to her licensing and her contribution to the Benefice following her licensing has continued to grow. We have been grateful also to Sue's husband Gordon for his dedication and support.

We continued to be greatly supported by Rev'd Dr Richard Turnbull, who led our services once each month, and took on extra duties over the Christmas season. Richard continued to make a huge contribution to the Tuesday evening groups.

Ordinand on placement

We welcomed Pater Balchin on a month long placement in September. Peter was an excellent presence and preached at St Michael's.

Online worship

We were grateful to Neill Brodey for anchoring the online streaming of worship from St Michael's, which continued throughout the year on behalf of the Benefice.

Music

We were once again grateful to Malcolm Hawkins for playing for us throughout the year. Malcolm has been wonderfully faithful and consistent in playing for us on Sundays and for numerous occasional offices.

Deanery Synod

Neill Brodey continued in his role as our representative on Deanery Synod. The Synod provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church

Safeguarding

The PCC adopted the new Safeguarding Policy in January. Thank you very much to Caroline Waugh for her ongoing work as Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Pastoral Care

Our clergy visited members of the parish and brought holy communion to those who desired. Alongside this, our congregation lived out the love of Christ in extending Christian care and kindness to one another.

Mission and Evangelism

Study Group in Begbroke Village Hall

Our Tuesday evening groups continued to be a significant part of our parish life in Begbroke, fostering a community of learning, fellowship and prayer that has grown, and given much to be thankful for.

In autumn 2023 we had joined our Begbroke and Yarnton study and fellowship groups together for an alpha course in the autumn. These evenings included a meal together, as well as study and conversation. There was an exciting sense of community building up through these sessions and

the group often had 18-20 people. This group continued into the winter and start of 2024.

In 2024 we continued to hold our Tuesday evening group most weeks throughout the year. It remained a shared Yarnton and Begbroke group, meeting for a few autumn sessions in Yarnton Village Hall, but otherwise in Begbroke Village Hall.

The numbers attending ebbed and flowed a little through the year, dropping off slightly into the summer. Our Tuesday group continued to be an important part of our learning, prayer and fellowship, and a central part of our mission and formation as disciples of Christ.

We held the following series in 2024:

The Bible Society Bible Course (final sessions)

(A Shrove Tuesday party)

A study of the Letter of St Paul to the Romans over 15 weeks.

An Alpha Course from September – 8 weeks.

A series of film nights with Christian reflection in December.

Special thanks go to our clergy leading sessions, and in particular to the tremendous team offering catering through the year. The combination of bread, soup and cheese proved highly successful!

Churches Count on Nature Event

On Saturday 15th June we undertook a survey of the wildlife in our churchyard as part of the Churches Count on Nature week. This was led by Alison Riggs. We recorded well over 40 species, and enjoyed fellowship

Parish Walks

We held a walk between the three churches of our Benefice in May, finishing with Evensong and tea. It was an afternoon of thundery showers and no doubt attendance was diminished. The event worked well and similar ideas will be repeated.

There is ongoing interest from the Benefice in participating in the Woodstock Deanery project to create pilgrim paths between the churches.

The church in the community

LVS School

The School held a Christingle service in church in December, as has become an established tradition.

Begbroke Link

We continue to be very thankful for the Begbroke Link, for their support for the church and the Begbroke Community.

Hospitality and Care of the church

Open church

The open church is a place of sanctuary and rest for many, and we are mindful of the holiness of St Michael's. Thank you to Caroline Waugh for being willing to open and close our church.

Church cleaning

Thank you to all who have helped to clean our church throughout the year.

Hospitality

Thanks to Rosa Cadd and Caroline Waugh for provision of our delicious post service coffee. This is always much appreciated by the congregation. Special thanks are due to those who have provided the breakfast for our monthly all age service – especially to the team at the Village Hall “Come and See” Service.

Flowers

We are most grateful to our florists for beautifying St Michael's throughout the year.

Churchyard Care of the churchyard is a colossal undertaking. We are enormously grateful to Caroline Waugh for overseeing this, and giving so much of her time. In a related manner, we are most grateful to Neill Brodey for his thorough care of the churchyard administration.

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In Remembrance

Rev'd Jim Turner (1934-2024) was well known to many in our church and village communities in Yarnton, as well as in the surrounding area. He had been assisting as a priest in the Benefice of Yarnton, with Begbroke and Shipton on Cherwell since 2016. Prior to that he was well known as part of the team in his home parish of Kidlington and Hampton Poyle. Jim was a faithful priest and pastor who continued to be devoted to offering ministry well into his ninth decade. He did a wonderful job in overseeing the vacancy between vicars in our Benefice, which ran from late 2017-summer 2018. Jim and his wife Maureen made many friends both in church, and in the community. As a preacher he would always gently turn our attention to Jesus Christ and help his hearers to see the world in the light of Jesus, who was for him "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6) His contribution to the Benefice will be fondly remembered.

O God, without whom our labour is but loss, we pray that Your blessing may rest upon our parish. Bless our clergy and all who call upon your name in this place. Deepen us in your love and strengthen our desire to serve you, give us faith, love and courage without measure and as we daily offer ourselves to you, so we may all gladly give of what you have given us. So may the work of Your Holy Church go forward, and Your Kingdom be enlarged through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen