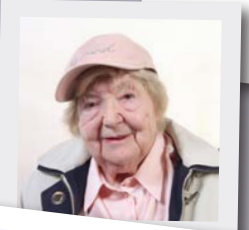


ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, CHESTER

Parish Profile





St Michael's Church, Chester

1. Welcome to St Michael's
2. About the parish
3. About our church
4. Where we are now & hopes for the future
5. The person we are looking for
6. What makes Chester special?

We are excited to find out who God is calling to be our next vicar. Thank you for taking the time to read our Profile. We hope you find it interesting and pray that God would help you discern if St Michael's may be the right place for you. There are details at the end of who to speak to if you would like to find out more about the post. We would be very pleased to accept applications from women and men. We are in the process of examining any partnerships we may have as a church that would not suggest this.

1. Welcome to St Michael's

We are a church family of 200 adults and about 60 children and young people. The church building is on Devon Road in Newton, Chester. We describe ourselves as Open Evangelical, with a high view of scripture and a personal relationship with God, and we long to see people from our community find faith.

We are engaged with our local community through a community cafe at the local Kingsway shops, a Toddler group and a monthly meet and eat group. We meet together during the week and monthly in homegroups, youth groups and prayer meetings. We support mission abroad through mission partners (in Asia, South America and the UK), prayer support and financial giving.

Sunday services are at 10am with two services per month at 8am (and previously a 6.30pm service). Our children and young people are a vital part of our family, and they enjoyed getting involved in putting this document together.

We currently have a part time Families and Community worker and a part time Childrens Co-ordinator who help run activities during the week and support the volunteer leaders working with the groups on a Sunday.

We are looking for a vicar who will join our church family and lead us forward.

- We are looking for a person of faith who can seek God's heart for the community inside and outside our church.
- We are looking for a leader who will develop plans for the coming years and focus the gifts and energy of the St Michael's family as we move forward together.
- We are looking for a pastor who will walk with us and help us to mark times of celebration and sadness in our life together as a church.

We are praying for you as you consider whether to apply for this post. Our hope is that this profile will help you as you discern whether God is calling you to join and lead us in our adventure of faith.



2. About the parish

St Michael's Church is the parish church of St Michael's, Plas Newton and is located in Devon Road, Newton, Chester, on the northern corner of the Kingsway housing estate.

Newton is a suburb of Chester (more info about the city later) in the northeast corner of the city. It is just over a mile from the city centre and has a population of 5,614 (2021 census). The parish was created in 1991, as a daughter church from All Saints Parish Church in Hoole, Chester. It began as an all-purpose building in 1965, and an extension in 1982 created a church.

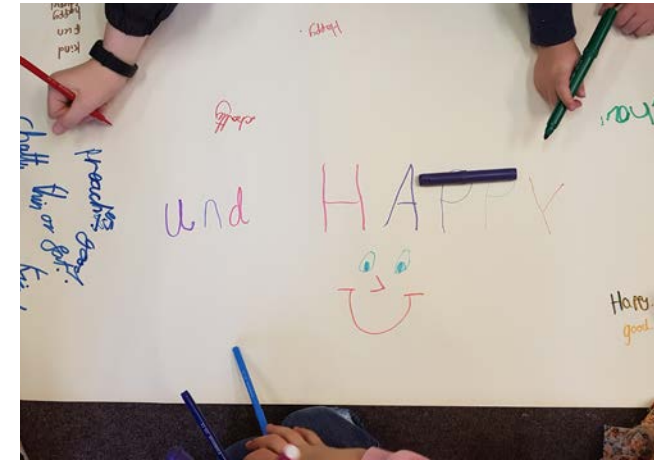
Our church wardens



There is one primary school, Newton School, situated in Kingsway West, one preparatory school and a small part of the campus of the University of Chester now occupying what used to be Kingsway High School.

There is a large high school situated just over the parish boundary in the neighbouring parish of Upton-by-Chester. We have built a great relationship with Millview School who use our building for events and invite our incumbent and congregation members to help support learning. The main shopping area within the parish is on the Kingsway estate, in the Kingsway Shopping Parade, where the church cafe, Kings Way Cafe, is situated. Kingsway Chapel, Kingsway (Brethren) and St Columba RC church are close by. There are other shops at the opposite end of the parish on Brook Lane and Dicksons Drive. Chester station is within a short car ride or a rather longer walk away. The M53 and M56 motorways are just a few minutes away giving easy access to Liverpool and Manchester and the rest of the motorway network. There is a regular bus service into the city centre.

The social challenges are similar to those of the nation as a whole: complex families, elderly pensioners and unemployment. There is a residential facility providing independent housing for the elderly, Kingswood, situated at the top end of Kingsway and another, Newton House, in



Plas Newton Lane. There is a recreation ground, Limewood Fields, situated near the Kingsway shops, Woodfield Park, and access to the pedestrian and cycle way that goes from Mickle Trafford out to Deeside.

3. About our church

**There is so much to say about the church!
We have divided it into:**

- Services and worship,
- Volunteers on a Sunday,
- Children and young people,
- Community,
- Staff,
- Home groups and house party
- Mission
- Our buildings.

Our church family is made up of about 200 adults, 25 young people aged 11-18 and 30 children aged under 10. The number of adults on the electoral roll was 181 in March 2023 at the last APCM. We have a weekly service at 10am (the main service) and twice monthly Communion at 8am.

We have a generous congregation, and we have much to be thankful for. People give generously in terms of time and financial resources, and we have healthy reserves which means we have been able to cover our costs.





3.1 Services and worship

St Michael's would be described as an Open Evangelical church. We have a high view of scripture and personal relationship with God and desire to see people from our community find faith. Most of the adults present at our services have been Christians for many years. We would like to welcome more people who are exploring a faith and have been encouraged by a number of people and families attending church as a result of our outreach work, in particular the Toddler group.

A Gathered Church

A small number of the congregation have been long term members of St Michael's. Many others have been part of other churches in Chester or elsewhere in the UK. Members of St Michael's have history in other Anglican churches, Baptist churches, non-denominational Evangelical churches and Catholic churches. Our congregation includes people who describe themselves as charismatic, liberal or conservative. We have recently looked at the Living in Love and Faith material which led to some helpful discussions. We look forward to the next Vicar helping us to discern how best to approach an issue on which there are a range of views within the congregation.

Leadership and Training

During the vacancy our Sunday mornings are led by lots of people. We have a team who are leading services and preaching which includes one self supporting curate, two licensed readers and two retired clergy and around 15 members of the congregation. We look forward to the teaching ministry of our new vicar but in this and many other areas there is support available.

The 10am service is attended by a congregation averaging 120 and includes babies, children, youth and adults aged from 19 to over 90. Music which ranges from hymns to Hillsong, is led by a band of musicians some of whom are part of our youth groups. Younger members of the church currently leave the service within the first 15 minutes to participate in children's and youth groups. Communion is shared monthly at 10am services with the children and young adults present. The strength of relationships and the welcome of visitors is evidenced by what people say when they come for the first time. Common Worship liturgy forms the basis of our services. Prayers in our services are led by members of the congregation as well as the licensed ministry team. Prayers consider both personal struggles and global issues (including our mission partners) and reflect our belief in the power of God to change both.

There are regular All Age services, when children join the whole service. During the summer months we have tried a variety of alternative arrangements. The creativity and capability of the congregation has been particularly evident during this time.

In the past we have had evening services at 6.30pm when an average of 12 adults gathered for worship which is more reflective and peaceful than in the mornings. Its teaching programme allows space for the addressing of a variety of relevant or exploratory themes.

Twice a month a Holy Communion service using the Book of Common Prayer is held at 8am. In a year we have about 3 infant baptisms and 3 dedications. Recently several of our young people were confirmed and some were also baptised with full immersion.



3.2 Volunteers on a Sunday

A large proportion of our congregation are on at least one of the rotas that help ensure our services run smoothly.



Refreshments after the service are an important time to catch up and get to know newcomers. There are 18 people on the coffee rota. After the morning service the church family spends time together, usually for drinks, occasionally for food. Children play, adults talk, life is shared.

We have large TV screens that are used for the liturgy and songs during the service and our sound and vision teams control the projection and sound.

We have a variety of musicians and rely a lot on our young people to help.

We have a team of 7 Stewards and 7 welcommers and some youth help who aren't on the rota, set up the church and are there at the end to clear up.

3.3 Children and Young People

We have 30 children aged under 10 and 25 young people aged 11-18 who meet on Sunday mornings as well as other regular groups. In the past we have employed both a Youth and a Families worker roles which we have not been able to fill. During 2023 we appointed two part-time roles: Children & Families Outreach Worker who leads our Toddler group and the monthly family Meet & Eat and a Children's Worker to help with supporting Sunday morning and other children's groups.

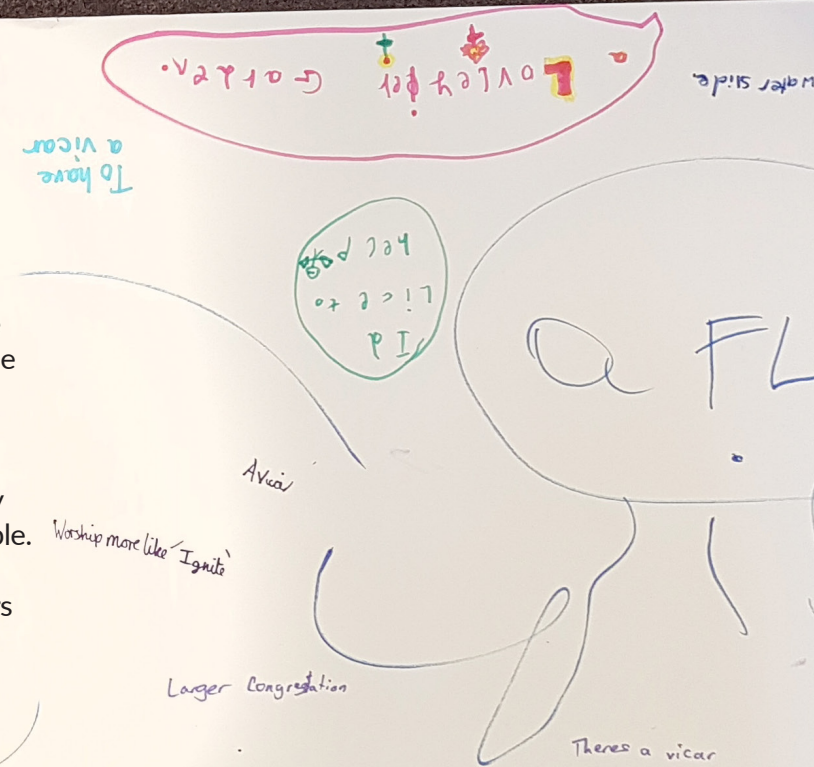
On a Sunday children and young people meet in five different groups which are led by members of our congregation. We have 25 volunteers who help with the different children and young people's groups.

Our children and young people meet during the week. These are:

Friday Night Social for young people in years 7 to 13. Games, snacks, crafts and fun with a time to listen and reflect on God's word. Numbers vary but we often have 10 -18 young people, some who are regular church attenders and some who are not. The young people also join with **YTHX**, a Chester wide youth service once a month.

Sunday Night Older Youth is for young people in Y10-13 and is an opportunity to delve more deeply into God's word. We regularly get 8-10 young people. Both these youth groups are led by volunteers.

Friday @ 5 meets once a month for children in years 2-6 who gather for food and fun, this is led by our Children's Worker.



What they said

Our children and young people like to get involved and our youth are a huge part of what we do. We got them to help with the preparation of the parish profile.

We asked our young people what do you most thank God for at St Michael's? They said:

“
Meet and eat
Sunday night youth
Friday youth night
Support and love
The biscuits are brilliant
”

We asked what would you pray for St Mike's to be like? And they said:

“
The church to grow
More social events
Lots of children
coming into youth
”

We asked what they would want our new vicar to be like and they said:

“
Has integrity
"better looking than
the last one!"
Supportive **A good preacher**
Got a vision
Is positive, sociable and caring
Dresses smart **Can cook**
Is confident and supportive
Has good music
Nice and kind
”



3.4 Community

There are plenty of things going on during the week.

Volunteers from St Michael's are supported by our Cafe Manager serve lots of people at the Kingsway Cafe six days per week. This opened around 20 years ago and provides an important link to the community. Volunteers help to cook and serve food and meet with people to chat or pray. In the past we have had an older group (known as TOGs) which met in the café. A men's group led by one of the congregation currently meets at the café which is also used for church meetings and groups in the evenings.

Our Toddler Group meets at Church on a Wednesday morning. The toddler group is well attended and is an important gathering place for parents and grandparents of Chester pre-schoolers. The group is well established and is the starting point for many friendships.

Meet & Eat provides fun and a main meal on a Thursday at 5.30pm. We regularly get 30 people coming along -about half are congregation members and half from our local community.

Located near to the church is Kingswood, providing independent living for the over 55s. In the past we have held communion services within the building.





3.5 Paid staff

We have a part-time Children's worker, a part time Children and Families Outreach worker as well as two members of staff who are based in the Church Office: Church Secretary and administrator (15 hours per week) and Book Keeper (14 hours per week). The church also employs a cleaner (9 hours per week) and a Cafe Manager (30 hours per week).

3.6 Homegroups and Houseparty

There are currently five homegroups. These are all different. Some meet each week and others meet for a period of time for a particular study. There are lots of people not in a group and we would like to develop this and ensure that everyone (who wishes) can belong to a group but currently lack leaders to enable this. In the past we have run stream groups which meet around a common interest or skill to build relationships. In the past we have run an Alpha course and an Alpha Marriage course.

Every year we go away together for a weekend of fellowship, teaching fun. This is an opportunity to get to know people better and to listen to what God is saying to us individually and as a church.

3.7 Mission

St Michael's has traditionally been a sending church and has supported many members of our church family serving overseas and in the UK. We currently support one of our own young people working with YWAM in Australia. We also have good relationships with and provide financial support to a number of mission partners. These include two couples working in multi-cultural areas within the UK; an area director of SIM, supporting partners in the Middle East; a couple based in Argentina with responsibility for supporting churches in a huge diocese; and a leader of a student organisation and church in Kyrgyzstan.

The Mission Committee meet regularly and consider and organise gifts, prayer support and preachers from a range of Christian charities working in Chester and abroad. They also organise speakers from the charities and groups and provide information for people to provide prayer support.

As well as all specific mission giving, a minimum of 10% of the total general fund giving is also distributed through the Mission Committee.

3.8 Pastoral Support

Pastoral support has always been part of life at St Michael's. A team offer support to those in need in various practical ways such as providing meals for new parents, hospital visits, transport, and bereavement visits. This has been especially important during the period of not having a vicar. This is an area that we would like to consider how we can develop in the future.



3.9 Church buildings

The church building started life as a hall for a Sunday School in 1965. By 1982 it had been extended to create a church attached to the hall. Further expansion of the building took place in 1991 when the church became a parish in its own right; and the garden was created in 1994. There is no church yard. Over many years discussions have taken place about how to make best use of the building and to create enough space for our children's groups. The building comprises a main worship area of 170m², a hall (140m²), a kitchen and another seven rooms of smaller sizes. The church also has a fantastic garden, which is great for gatherings after church and for the children to run free / wild.

The Vicarage, provided jointly by the congregation and the diocese and now maintained by the Diocese, is a modern detached five bedroom house in a secluded area within a 10 minute walk of the church. There are five bedrooms, of which three are large doubles and two small doubles with a downstairs shower/wc, utility room and integral garage. Also an upstairs bathroom/wc and a separate wc. It has very good reception facilities, a study and large garden with a good sized patio area. The house has recently been upgraded and is in excellent condition.

The church owns two further houses, both of which were paid for by the congregation. These are both currently rented out and, in the past, have been used for youth workers and curates.

In addition to the houses and the church building we lease a shop unit in the Kingsway shops area, about 5 minutes' walk from the church. This was fitted out as a cafe and has operated as a community cafe since 2003 with a paid manager and volunteers from St Michael's, Kingsway Chapel and others.



The vicarage



4. Where we are now & hopes for the future

We have used the vacancy as a time to discuss and reflect on our hopes for the future and to consider the person we are looking for as our vicar.

We invited people to contribute comments through paper and email forms and had various discussions in smaller groups. The comments from children and young people are gathered in section 3.

Where are we now

We asked the members of our church **what they thank God for about our St Michael's.**

They said....

- We are a welcoming, friendly, loving, caring, supportive and generous community.
- We are blessed with a large number of children and young people as well as young families
- We have a very gifted and capable congregation who are very willing to get involved
- We have a versatile building and large garden which enables us to use our space creatively
- We are an open evangelical congregation who place a high value on the Bible and prayer

Whilst we have a clear vision, we would like to appoint a Vicar who can help us develop a strategy to discern God's plan for our future life and mission and who will lead us to find new ways of growing the church and reaching the community with the gospel.

We asked the church family about their hopes for the future.

Here is what they said:

- We would like to be more outward looking and reach our local community with the gospel
- We want to be more creative in how we love and support our local community
- We want to see our congregation built up in their faith, especially our children and young people
- We would like to make our building and spaces welcoming and accessible for everyone
- To create services which the church family love to take part in.
- To create environments in which people with no faith-history can hear the gospel.

5. The person we are looking for

St Michael's is looking for a Vicar who will lead us forward. We listened to the congregation's views:

- A pastor who can engage with love and care for all members of the congregation
- Someone who has a heart for outreach and is able to encourage us to connect with our local community
- A leader who is able to nurture and use the gifts of our congregation and our staff team
- A good listener and communicator
- Someone who is enthusiastic and energetic and can lead us forward
- Someone with a passion for God's word and making him known to others
- A leader who can help to develop our vision and to strategically discern God's plan for our future life and mission and who will lead us to find new ways of growing the church and reaching the community with the gospel.
- Someone who encourages us to walk with Jesus in everyday life Monday to Saturday, as well as on a Sunday
- Is able to provide leadership on safeguarding and encouraging all to contribute to creating a safer church.

Prospective applicants are welcome to discuss the post with:

The Ven Dr Michael Gilbertson, Archdeacon of Chester

T: 01928 718834 ext 253 M: 07921 040154

E: michael.gilbertson@chester.anglican.org

Or

The Ven Kevin Roberts, Simeon's Trustee

M: 07880 762868

E: kevin.roberts@simeons.org.uk

6. What makes Chester special?

The city has a population of 92,742 (2021 census).

Chester is a beautiful walled city, with a rich architecture heritage. It is described as the best-preserved walled city in England. The double height shops known as the Rows are unique, not only in the UK, but in the world. Chester was founded as a Roman Fort in AD79 and has a Roman Amphitheatre as well as plenty of historic remains. There is great shopping in the city centre which is within walking distance of Newton. The relatively new Storyhouse is a cinema, theatre, library, restaurant, and coffee bar. It runs a series of festivals, Grosvenor Park open air theatre and Moonlight Flicks. Chester Cathedral is the North West's most popular tourist attraction.

Cheshire Oaks, the retail outlet village is only a short drive away and the award-winning Chester Zoo is also 5 minutes away. The historical racecourse is in a beautiful setting by the river Dee. Chester University has 14,900 students, and part of the university campus is within the parish. The Countess of Chester Hospital is very close and there is a range of pre-school, primary and high schools, with good or outstanding OFSTED ratings in the local area.

There are lovely parks: Grosvenor Park and Alexandra Park in Hoole have great children's play areas. There is a local football team, Chester FC and there are well equipped leisure facilities in Chester, such as Northgate Arena and the Cheshire County Sports Club.

There are good connections to Liverpool, Manchester and North Wales. For those who like the outdoors, there are mountains in North Wales, and the Peak district and the Lakes are close by. Cheshire has lots of walking and cycling routes, as well as beautiful places to visit.





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