

**The Parish Church of  
Saint Michael and All Angels  
Felton**



**ANNUAL REPORT  
AND  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
OF  
THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL  
For the year ended 31 December 2022**

**Priest in Charge in 2022**  
In vacancy since 5 April 2021

**Bank**

Barclays Bank Plc  
38 Bridge Street  
Morpeth  
Northumberland

**Independent Examiner**

Mr Ian Bell FCA  
10 Riverside  
Felton  
Morpeth  
NE65 9EA

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## Background

St Michael's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating, since the departure of our Priest in Charge Reverend James Harvey, on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2021, with the Alnwick Area Dean and Archdeacon of Lindisfarne, in promoting the whole mission of the church in the Parish, that is pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC also ensures effective maintenance of the church's finances and of its fabric, fittings and possessions.

Our new Priest in Charge, Rev'd Rich Townend, was licensed by the Bishop of Berwick on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023. In addition to St Michael's Felton, he will also be responsible for St. Mary the Virgin Longframlington with St. Peter & St. Paul Brinkburn, and St. Bartholomew Whittingham with Edlingham St. John the Baptist, and Bolton Chapel.

## Membership of the Parochial Church Council

Members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) are either ex-officio or are elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the year, the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

Priest in Charge	Vacant (5 April 2021 to 13 March 2023)	
Wardens	David Archbold Liz Scurfield	
Lay Representatives to the Deanery Synod	John Marshall Mark Winter	<i>Lay Vice Chair of PCC</i>
Elected Members	Alan Ferguson Anthea Smith Charlotte Clarke John Inglis-Jones Kathy McConnachie Nick Morton Nigel Marsh Peter Groves Richard Evans	<i>Safeguarding Officer</i> <i>Treasurer</i>
Co-opted	Rev Gabby Llewelyn	<i>Secretary</i>

## Committees

### Standing Committee

This is the only Committee required by law and it has the power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. The Standing Committee comprises the Priest in Charge, Wardens, and two lay members of PCC.

### Finance Sub Committee

The Committee comprises two Wardens, Hon. Treasurer, and one other PCC member.

## Church Electoral Roll

The number of electors on the Electoral Roll at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 was 95 and on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 was 97.

**Debra Philips, Electoral Roll Officer**

## PCC Review of 2022

The PCC met seven times in 2022. The meetings in January, March, May and July were held on Zoom because of continuing coronavirus pandemic restrictions, and meetings in September, October and November were held in church. As the church was in vacancy, with no priest in charge, all PCC meetings were chaired by the Lay Vice Chair, John Marshall. The number on the PCC was 14 and, on average 12 attended across the year. Other committees and groups met as necessary and reported to the PCC.

At the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held in church on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022, David Archbold and Liz Scurfield were duly re-elected to serve another year as churchwardens. At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on the same day PCC members elected at the previous APCM had stated their willingness to continue to serve. Mark Winter and John Marshall continued as lay representatives of the parish at the Deanery Synod. The PCC had nine elected members, one co-opted member and four ex-officio members: two Churchwardens and two Deanery Synod Lay Representatives of the parish.

In July, following the failure to attract applicants for the post of priest in charge as a 0.7 FTE, Archdeacon Catherine Sourbut Groves joined the PCC online to review options. Given the decline in attendance and in income through planned giving, the PCC and our churchwardens spent much time in prayer and discussions aimed at agreeing arrangements that would attract a new priest in charge. The PCC supported a proposal to open discussions with St Bartholomew's church, Whittingham, about a joint application, with us and St Mary's, for a full time incumbent.

Children and youth has been a pre-occupation throughout the year. During the Covid pandemic we made good provision for online and outdoor activities for the younger children. However, when we eventually returned to services in church the numbers of families with children attending was much lower and unpredictable than before Covid, making regular Junior Church activities unsustainable. In five of our seven PCC meetings we reviewed our work with families and children and made new plans. A proposal to employ a part-time Families and Children's Work Leader, in partnership with the Alnwick based charity Ignite (formerly Contagious) was approved in January 2022. An attempt to recruit for the post as a 0.4 FTE, average 15 hours per week, in May and June failed. Since then, discussions with Ignite (Alnwick), the Newcastle Diocese Youth team, the URC and others, have developed a more integrated approach to professional support for families, children's and youth work across the north Northumberland region and the possibility of a full-time post shared with Ignite and church initiatives in Alnmouth and Alnwick.

Through the year PCC also worked on a number of repairs and additions to the safety and renovation of the building set out in the Quinquennial Report: repairs to the Vestry roof and interior; West Window repairs; installation of lightning conductors and emergency lighting. The church heating boiler was a major concern because of frequent failures to ignite and problems with fumes entering the church. The boiler was finally condemned and the churchwardens and PCC face a difficult and costly task replacing it. These are all detailed in the churchwarden's report.

**Richard Evans, Secretary**

## Safeguarding

The safeguarding programme has been carefully followed according to the guidelines of the Diocese. We have now reached Level 3 on the Safeguarding Dashboard but still have that to complete. This will be achieved in the near future.

There have been no issues to report and all activities in the church have been covered by the Safeguarding guidelines and risk assessments.

**Anthea Smith, Safeguarding Officer**

## Churchwardens Report

Whilst being in post since early 2020, the current Churchwardens were formally re-elected at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (AMP) on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Nigel Marsh was appointed as Deputy Churchwarden and Nigel continues to assist us.

The typical pattern of services at St Michael and All Angels is a service of Holy Communion at 8.00 am plus either Holy Communion or lay-led services at 11.00 am. Prior to Covid-19, typical congregation numbers were between 11 and 15 at the 8.00 am service and between 55 and 70 at the 11.00 am service. Whilst the number of people attending the 8.00 am service of Holy Communion has remained buoyant with between 10 and 20 attending, the numbers attending the main 11.00 am service have decreased substantially since pre-Covid days with 35-45 people regularly attending. In addition to the aftereffects of Covid-19, the Parish has been in vacancy, and this has had an obvious effect on attendance.

Our Priest-in-Charge, Revd. James Harvey, left us for a new post in Darlington on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The 8.00 am service continued, led by several retired clergy who willingly came to support us in this most sensitive time with continuing coronavirus outbreaks. We are indebted to our Self-Supporting Minister, Revd. Gabby Llewelyn, who has provided amazing support and guidance to the Churchwardens and the church during this challenging time. Revd. Gabby Llewelyn also led many services and provided much needed pastoral support to church members and to the community.

Since the beginning of the vacancy, available members of the clergy, retired or otherwise, have also provided essential cover for our 11.00 am service. St. Michael's was delighted to welcome Bishop Mark Wroe and Archdeacon Catherine Sourbut Groves who led a number of services for us. We are grateful to them, and to the Area Dean, Revd. Alison Hardy, for their support.

During 2022, St. Michael's has maintained a two-service format throughout the year. No services were lost due to the lack of clergy support. A service of traditional Holy Communion is held at the 8.00 am service. A service of Holy Communion is held at 11.00 am on the first and third weeks of the month, the remaining services being taken by St. Michael's lay Ministry Team. It is worthy of note that, at both services, the attendees are surprisingly mainly of the older age range. We had anticipated that these people would have been more reluctant to return to church due to Covid-19, but it is the younger families, young people and children who have not returned in great numbers. This is a concern to the Churchwardens and the PCC, but we understand that this is typical within the Diocese and wider church throughout the nation. For Holy Communion, St. Michael's continued to serve the bread only due to the continuing threat of Covid-19.

St. Michael's also holds a Five O'clock Service. This is a contemporary service which is suitable for all age groups held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month and is well attended with frequently more than 40 people being present. We are pleased to report that this service is particularly attractive to younger families and children with 6 – 10 children and young people regularly attending this service.

Evening Prayer Time is held on the fourth Thursday of each month.

On Christmas Eve, we held the traditional Candlelight Carol Service which was led by a lay member of the team, Elisabeth Rowark, with the address being given by Revd. Ann Peters. We were delighted that almost 200 people attended, many of whom were new to the church. This represented a substantial increase over 2021 and we were pleased that we had, at last, returned to the numbers that we had experienced in the past. It is normal for us to produce a Christmas card outlining all our services and activities for the period. In 2022, we increased substantially the number of cards produced and, with the help of The Bridge and The Column, we circulated over 1,300 cards to the community.

During 2022, the church has remained open every day for private prayer and the church was visited by many people daily, lighting votive candles as part of their prayer cycle. The Coffee Plus, Courageous Women and Outrageous Women home groups have continued throughout on a weekly basis.

Over the year, we have continued to undertake repairs to the fabric of the church. As mentioned in earlier Reports, some previous repairs have not proven to be satisfactory and these have been attended to. The better weather during the Spring and Summer enabled us to complete external works including repairs and repainting. We have now addressed most items identified in the Quinquennial Report. The fabric of the building is now in good order and all valuables remain in good condition.

However, we have experienced increasing problems with the central heating boiler which, at times, has not provided any heat to the building. This is an extremely worrying situation as the church can be seen as unwelcoming to both the regular congregations and visitors. Manual starting of the boiler has been required on many occasions and it has been necessary to make early morning visits before services or any activity to ensure that a comfortable welcome awaits. This situation cannot continue and we risk losing any growth in attendance numbers.

The granting of a faculty for the restoration of the Nave West Windows is awaited before work can commence. Again, this is a worrying situation as potential cost increases caused by the war in Ukraine and the resulting increase in energy costs are being noted. Undertaking this essential work plus the costs of a new heating system will stretch current financial resources. Work on the Nave West Windows is expected to commence in mid-2023.

The churchyard has been maintained by one of our church members providing an attractive entry to our church.

During mid-2022, St. Michael's produced its Parish Profile in order to address the vacancy situation. It was agreed that we would produce one Profile covering both St. Michael's and St. Mary's with Brinkburn to project a uniform and attractive proposal, and the Churchwardens undertook this on behalf of the two churches. St. Michael's and St. Mary's, agreed to fund an advertisement in the Church Times with the assistance of the Diocese. At that time, the Diocese was offering the post as a 0.7 Full Time Equivalent and, unfortunately, this was not found to be an attractive proposition to any potential applicants. In the event, no one applied for the role. Further discussions were held with the Diocese, which proposed to add the churches of St. Bartholomew at Whittingham, plus its associated churches at Edlingham and Bolton Chapel (a Chapel of Ease).

This proposal was mentioned in last year's Report. A further revision to the Parish Profile was undertaken to add the new churches into a combined and lengthy volume. A second advertisement offering a full-time post on this basis was funded by the Diocese and resulted in only one applicant.

A third advertisement produced two applicants, one of whom, Revd. Rich Townend, accepted the offer in December 2022 and will take up the position in early 2023. A resume of Rich follows this section of the report.

St Michael's is blessed with a strong and enthusiastic group of lay leaders who lead services and preach The Word. As we look to the future, especially with the increased number of churches within the scope of the new incumbent, their role as members of the Ministry Team will be used to the full. St Michael's is a close family which works together, and we are very grateful to all of those who provide their time and talents to the work of the church. We look forward to the obvious challenges that we face into the future, but we know that there are many who will help the church achieve its objectives. We also offer our sincere thanks to those who prepare and maintain rotas, undertake cleaning, arrange flowers, look after Junior Church and the young people, and carry out repairs; their assistance is greatly appreciated.

**David Archbold + Elizabeth Scurfield  
Churchwardens**

### **Priest-in-Charge: The New Incumbent – Rev. Rich Townend**

I'm Revd. Rich Townend and am thrilled to be the new Priest in Charge of Felton and Longframlington with Brinkburn, Whittingham with Edlingham and Bolton Chapel.

I'm married to Emma, and we have three children Belle (14), Jasmine (12) and Zoey (2).

We've spent most of our married life living in villages to the south of York, before spending our most recent years in Durham and Bridlington.

A bit more about me:

I was born and brought up in York and studied Drama in Winchester before doing a Postgraduate course in Broadcast Journalism at Sheffield. After a short stint with the BBC, I took a change in direction and got into children's and youth work at a church in urban Middlesbrough. Following this, I accepted a role with national Christian youth charity, Urban Saints, as their North-East director. After several years, I took my second major change in direction and became a primary school teacher. I worked for six happy years in Barlby, a village near Selby in North Yorkshire, whilst also doing the children's provision at our local church in my spare time.

After a chance meeting with the former Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, I embarked on career change number three, which I hope and pray will be my final one! The family and I moved to Cranmer Hall, Durham for me to train for ordination. After two years, and in the middle of lockdown, we moved to Bridlington on the Yorkshire coast where I served my curacy at Emmanuel Church with Barmston. I've enjoyed almost three fantastic years in Bridlington, being part of a community-focused, growing church. I couldn't have asked for a better training experience and am excited for the next chapter. As a family, Emma, Belle, Jasmine, Zoey and I will be moving to Felton at the beginning of March, together with our elderly sausage dog, Taffy. We look forward to exploring Northumberland, making new friends, and inviting our family and existing friends to discover this wonderful part of the world for themselves. I look forward to getting to know you more and sharing more of our story in the coming months and years.

**In faith, hope and love, Rev Rich.**

## Environment & Sustainability

The PCC has previously adopted a church Ecosystems Policy and is also a member of the Alnwick Deanery Environment Group. An initial audit of our 'level' of sustainability has been undertaken using the A Rocha Eco Church tools but we have not yet sought accreditation; this is something that we hope to progress in 2023. Our current focus is on installing a new heating system to replace our old boiler which is now out of commission. Our plan is to have a replacement boiler working by mid-2023 after approval by the Diocese and successful justification against the new Church of England's *Routemap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030*, recognising that we have limited options based on our low occupancy rates in an old Grade 1 Listed building. Our setting means that most new low carbon technologies aren't appropriate for our needs. The focus will be on installing the most efficient heating system that is possible with an eye to future proofing options wherever practicable and considering other future options for on-site power generation such as solar. Our current grid electricity supply is from renewable sources as a part of our commitment to the environment.

**Nigel Marsh**

## Treasurer's Financial Review

The financial health of our Church is one of the things that enables us to fulfil our mission to celebrate and follow God's word. We are extremely grateful that St. Michael's and All Angels is supported so strongly and appreciative of all who give. We are in a healthy financial position but will find it challenging to meet the growing cost of the West Window repair as well as replace the boiler during 2023 without attention to fund raising.

During 2022, we have met our Parish Share payment of £29,051 in full. We have been able to give £1000 to two of our mission partners (Christians Against Poverty and West End Refugee Services) and £250 to our third mission partner (REAP). Our special collections also enabled us to give £578 to Newcastle Polish Centre to benefit Ukraine, our Harvest Festival collection of £68 went to Alnwick Foodbank and our Christmas collection of £536 went to West End Refugee Services. This giving is 9.7% of income to the General and Mission fund.

### General Fund

Planned giving to the General Fund has decreased by 15% from 2021 (following a 2% increase the previous year) and now represents 67% of General Fund income (a decrease from 77% the previous year). Whilst this high level of planned giving by so many people was a major factor in maintaining our income during the pandemic, and we are very thankful for people's foresight and commitment to giving in a planned way, we may now need to focus on recovering planned giving to at least the previous level. Gift Aid has been recovered to a greater extent during 2022, correcting the depressed recovery during 2021.

Payments from the General Fund include repairs to the boiler and escalating fuel costs, in addition to Parish Share and giving (as above).

The retained balance in General Funds of £39,868 is a little more than in 2020, so we are successfully managing our income and expenditure in the General Fund despite the reduced income.

### Restricted Funds

In relation to our Restricted Funds:

- The 'Building Improvement fund' now stands at £26,051 which we hope will meet in large part the cost of the essential repair to the West Window during 2023 despite the increases in cost of this repair.



- Expenditure for the 'Children and Young People fund' has been less than planned because of delayed developments and this Fund has accumulated a further £5000 during 2022.
- The PCC continues to administer the funds held within the Felton Relief in Need fund. No Grants were made in 2022 but an arrangement has been made with Christians Against Poverty that may improve the dispersal of this fund to those in need.
- The 'Admin Work fund' was generously supported by a third (and final) £10,000 contribution from Stewardship in 2021 to support the administration of the Church. A reduction in 'Other planned giving' of £10k results from the end of a very generous 3-year provision. Expenditure from this fund supports the high quality of services and the administration of weddings, funerals and baptisms.
- The 'Flowers fund' continues to support the beautiful flower arrangements of the Church.

### Joint Account

A joint account with Longframlington PCC is maintained to pay for the Vicar's expenses and other items of expenditure common to both churches. There has, of course, been less expenditure from this account during 2022 due to the vacancy. Any monies remaining in this account at the year-end have not been included in the assets of the PCC but both PCCs ceased regular payment into the joint account until November 2022. The joint account remains active and will return to its full use as our new vicar joins us.

### Financial Accountability

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis. Where Gift Aided donations are made to a restricted fund, the tax recovered is credited to that fund. The PCC has a Reserves Policy that aims to maintain a balance within the General Fund of £15,000, and we have achieved this during 2022. Other than those assets vested in the church wardens on special trust (i.e., inalienable assets) which are listed in the church inventory, Felton PCC does not own any item valued at over £1,000. Items below £1,000 are not listed as fixed assets but the church wardens maintain an inventory of all PCC property.

The accounts have been audited and approved by Ian Bell FCA, to whom we are also very grateful for having supported the development of our financial management.

We are extremely grateful for the generosity of so many people in the Church and look forward to fulfilling God's work in 2023.

**Charlotte L. Clarke, Hon. Treasurer**

**Independent Examiner's Report to the members of St. Michael and All Angels' Church, Felton, Parochial Church Council.**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

**Respective responsibilities of the PCC and Independent Examiner**

The PCC consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the PCC concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

**Independent Examiner's Statement**

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
  - to prepare accounts which accord with these accounting records have not been met; or
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed 

Dated 18/4/23

Mr. Ian Bell FCA  
10, Riverside, Felton, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9EA

Receipts and Payments Accounts				
to 31st December 2022				
	All funds	2022		2021
	Planned Giving - Gift Aid	31,318.00		41,503
	Gift Aid recovered	10,426.08		7,476
	Donations appeals etc	540.00		2,278
	Other planned giving	5,370.00		12,880
	Loose plate collections	3,005.53		1,381
	Giving through church boxes	1,631.78		449
	Fees for courses, groups and events			115
	Fees for weddings and funerals	2,464.00		4,501
	Bookstall & magazine sales – objects related	12.00		13
	Visiting speakers / locums	177.90		165
	Other incoming resources not covered elsewhere	2,239.77		1,785
	Legacies	500.00		
	Gift Aid - envelopes			10
	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>57,685.06</b>		<b>72,556</b>
	Parish Share	29,051		29,051
	Upkeep of services	4,752		7,326
	Church major repairs - structure	1,038		3,740
	Working expenses of clergy	500		2,306
	Donations appeals etc	68		1,612
	Mission giving & donations	3,420		4,000
	Church major repairs – installation			600
	Church running – electric, oil & gas	3,744		1,913
	Church maintenance	3,560		2,944
	Fees for weddings and funerals	1,684		2,880
	Visiting speakers / locums	72		486
	Other church running expenses	838		412
	Other donations to support wider mission work outside the Parish	126		111
	parish training & mission	67		90
	Magazine and books related PCC	45		83
	Church running – water	83		28
	Church running – insurance	3,533		
	Cost of generating funds	48		419
	<b>Payments</b>	<b>52,629</b>		<b>58,001</b>
	<b>Surplus / (Deficit) for the period</b>	<b>5,056</b>		<b>14,555</b>
	<b>Movement in Funds -</b>			
	Funds at 1st January	120,042		105,487
	Funds at 31st December	125,098		120,042



## Felton and Longframlington Joint Ministry Account - (£)

(Twelve months to 31 December 2022)

<b>Bank Balance at 1 January 2021</b>			1554.1
<b>Receipts</b>			
Felton PCC	500		
Longframlington PCC	500		
Diocesan Contribution for 2021	410.02	1410.02	
<b>Payments</b>			
Council Tax	0		
Vicar's Expenses	0		
Telephone/Internet	464.1		
Photocopier Lease	909.6		
Water Charges	0		
Photocopying Click Rate	0		
Mobile phone	0		
Stationery	0		
Advert for vicar	857.4		
Transfer to Felton PCC (deposit error by NDBF)	90		
		2321.1	
<b>Credit for the period</b>			-911.08
<b>Bank Balance at 31 December 2022</b>			643.02

## Alnwick Deanery Lay Representatives Report

It is hard to believe another year has passed in the life of Alnwick Deanery. For those of you who are new to our church, we are part of Alnwick Deanery which consists of 18 parishes stretching from Chevington right up the Northumberland coast to Rennington & Rock, then cross country to Rothbury, Whittingham and Upper Coquetdale. It is pleasing to say that, following the appointment of Rev Rich at our parish (alongside Longframlington and Whittingham), and Alnwick, our stipendiary clergy vacancies are now all filled. More challenging, but indicative of the times, is that this comprises 6 full-time clergy. That is why there has been much focus on parish groupings, lay leadership development and collaboration as the way to lead our congregations back into growth.

But it is not all about challenges. The Diocese has a new leader, Bishop Helen- Anne, and she and the whole Diocesan team are keen to work energetically to develop the role and contribution of local Deaneries. Work has begun too on the creation of a Deanery Development Plan, bringing together place-based insights into both the challenges and also the opportunities there are. It is hoped this will provide a platform for the sharing of good practice, resources and generally collaboration to ensure a thriving worshipping community as well as a Christian presence in every community. Our PCC will be helping pull together our contribution to this, utilising data already provided by the Diocese and supplementing it with rich stories from our community to showcase what we are doing already and can do more of to help grow.

Finance is also reviewed at Deanery Synod. Overall last year our Deanery contributed in line with its promised giving, which is a real achievement, and St Michael's met payment of its Parish Share in full. We have promised to do so again this year, along with most other parishes in the Deanery. It is clear though some are struggling, with the aftermath of Covid having accelerated declines in numbers of regular churchgoers. Current Parish Share payments are still only totalling roughly 80% of 2019 figures. It is vital that we do not see any further fall and work collectively to build back up to the pre-Covid numbers and beyond. By doing so we will provide the solid foundation for growth.

We had a presentation by the Generous Giving team from the Diocese at a Deanery Synod looking at how they can support churches to increase regular giving. Our view from this meeting was that there was not anything particularly recommended that was not already in hand at St Michael's but it was useful nonetheless. There are two planned Open Meetings of the Deanery Synod in March and May, 2023. and at these it is hoped the discussions will then inform the Deanery Development Plan.

If anyone would like to know more of what is going on, please feel free to speak to me or Mark Winter, our other Deanery Synod Rep. Change is afoot and we are keen St Michael's is at the heart of it.

**John Marshall & Mark Winter  
Lay Representatives to Deanery Synod**

## Leading Worship and Music

St. Michael's aims to provide a harmonious blend of both traditional hymns, accompanied by the organ, and contemporary worship songs at each 11.00 am service. This enables the congregation to continue to enjoy the rich poetry and music of traditional hymnody whilst exploring and enjoying more contemporary worship songs. This has proven to be a successful format.

It is common practice to use the church's audio-visual system to provide the backing music for worship songs. The organist is beyond normal retirement age and there are no obvious replacements at the present time. A previous initiative to provide an organ bursary has not revealed any enthusiastic musician in recent years.

The musical accompaniment at the 11.00 am service on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday and at the Five O'clock Service is provided by accomplished musicians playing various instruments. In addition, in all services where contemporary worship songs are used, St. Michael's uses iSingWorship backing tracks and an ever-increasing library of music used in previous services. Backing tracks and CDs (No Organist, No Problem) are also used for traditional hymns on the occasion that the organist is unavailable.

We are indebted to Libby Taylor, accompanying musicians and Sue Inglis-Jones. Without their skills and dedication, we would not be able to present live music or the splendid audio-visual slides which are projected onto the screen and monitors at each service. Nothing ever seems to be a problem and for this alone we are extremely grateful.

**David Archbold and Liz Scurfield  
Churchwardens**

## Mission Partners

### Introduction

As a church, we have 3 mission partners - 1 each within the 3 categories of local, national & international. Our commitment to our mission partners is as follows:

- Pray: We pray for our mission partners each month in our Sunday services.
- Engage: We nominate a member of our congregation to liaise with each mission partner over the period of our commitment, to gain information, feedback to our congregation and, if possible, arrange for a representative to speak at one of our services.
- Donate: We support each of our mission partners by giving a minimum of £1,000 a year from our general funds as a contribution to their work.
- Raise funds: We aim to hold at least one fundraising event each year for each of our mission partners, raising awareness of their work amongst our congregation, as well as raising additional funds to support their work.

### Mission Partner refresh consultation

During 2022, we engaged in a consultation around our mission partners.

In selecting our new mission partners, the following was undertaken:

1. There was an initial PCC discussion around whether, in the light of the pandemic, we should continue with our existing mission partners in some or all categories for a further 3 years. In this regard, the limited extent to which we have been able to support our national & local mission partners was borne in mind. However, the view of the PCC was that we should proceed with a refresh.
2. Suggestions were then canvassed from the congregation via an announcement during a Sunday service in March 2022. It was noted that, where there was an existing personal relationship, this would be very beneficial.
3. From suggestions received, a shortlist of potential mission partners was created. The PCC then took a view on which should be put to the congregation.
4. Further research was then undertaken on these potential mission partners, including details of their work and financial details.
5. A presentation was then made in church on these potential mission partners during a Sunday service in November 2022 and further feedback was then be gathered from the congregation.
6. Based on this feedback, a final decision was taken by the PCC in November 2022.

### New Mission Partners

- International: REAP ([www.reapwestafrica.org](http://www.reapwestafrica.org)) - As a non-governmental, non-profit organization, REAP works with partners to provide critically needed resources for schools to help children and young adults in war-affected West African countries successfully learn, stay in school, and prepare for life.
- National: Christians Against Poverty (CAP) runs a significant network of debt centres, job clubs and other services tackling the causes of debt and poverty and offering a lifeline and practical coaching to those trapped in debt. ([www.capuk.org](http://www.capuk.org)) CAP runs 303 debt centres throughout the UK and over the course of 2018, 23,166 people were helped by one or more of CAP's services.
- Local: West End Refugee Service, Newcastle (<https://www.wers.org.uk>) – WRES is a registered charity that provides support and opportunities to people seeking asylum and refugees on Tyneside. WERS works to bring about positive change to the lives of people whose futures have been irrevocably changed by past events in their home country.

**John Inglis-Jones**



## Children and Young People

### Food and Fun

For the past year the children and adults at Food and Fun have been enjoying breakfasts from 9-11 am. We now have three regular volunteers, with occasional but much appreciated help from church members.

Our weekly numbers have ranged from six to fifteen families, including mums, dads and grandparents, mostly from Felton and surrounding villages. We have had children aged from three years to eight weeks, but as the majority have been in the younger age range the carpeted space in church has been particularly suitable. A generous gift from the PCC ensured that we were able to buy toys appropriate for the younger age group.

Heating problems have made the church cold this winter, but the adults have been stoical. They have worn their coats and keep on coming! Looking to the future, we will continue the success of the breakfasts and encourage the mums to come to family services and Messy Church.

**Anne Byatt + Carol Groves**

### Creche, Junior Church and Messy Church (0 to Year 6 Primary)

We began 2022 with a very reduced Junior Church on a Sunday morning. A few children with their parents who attended occasionally but not regularly. A number of our previous Junior Church children had moved on to older mid-week groups, moved from the area or were involved in other Sunday activities. Our volunteer numbers were also reduced and most had commitments to other areas of church and village life. So the Junior Church team decided to try something different to reconnect with the primary school age families.

On Sunday March 6th we held our first Messy Church, a pancake themed one. It was a great success, with about fifty adults and children. The majority of the families had no or little previous connection with the church. They all had great fun and friendship. After a review we decided to try a regular monthly Messy Church and have held one on the fourth Sunday afternoon of each month, except for a summer break and around half term holidays. Apart from one in the October school holidays they have all been well attended averaging 30-40 adults and children. We have flipped pancakes, hunted treasure, made donkey poo, eaten lots of pizza and most of all learnt about Jesus and God. Can we say a HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who has helped with Messy Church in any way, whether its colouring , gluing , making yummy cake, washing up, serving coffee - it is all massively appreciated.

Some of the Messy Church families have also joined us at church for 1100 am Sunday AllTogether services and special events like 'Rolling the Stone' on Easter Sunday before the 1100 am service, Harvest Thanksgiving and our Nativity service drama – 'Time Machine'. There were four other AllTogether services for St Valentine's Day (February), Palm Sunday (April), Trinity Sunday (June) and The Good Samaritan (July). Our Back to School with God service in September was cancelled at the last minute on the Sunday after HM Queen Elizabeth died.

A number of teenagers, some of whom previously attended Junior Church, now go to the Youth Cell groups run by Ignite in Alnwick. They appreciate this time of friendship, fun, support and discussion of their Christian faith and discipleship.

Because of our limited number of volunteers, we no longer have a weekly Sunday morning Junior Church programme but we do provide families with activities at special events and baptisms.

In 2023 we will continue with our Messy Church events and continue to develop and grow our relationships with the families attending.

**Julia Butlin + The Junior Church / Messy Church team.**

### Young People (Year 7 to Year 13 Secondary)

During 2022, as we emerged from Covid we managed a full year of face-to-face sessions. We were very pleased to see the back of Zoom-based youth work! Our two youth cell groups range from school years 9 – 13 and we have regular contact with about 20 young people. A third group for Year 5- Year 8 started in January 2023. The groups continue to remain strong, growing in both depth and numbers. Both groups alternate on a fortnightly basis, meeting on a Tuesday evening at my house in Alnwick. The groups are led by Chris Friend, Claire Groves and me. We have not had enough youth workers to meet the groups weekly which hasn't been ideal. We have plans for this to change in 2023.

Both groups continue with a similar format of eating together, playing games and having Christian content communicated in creative and relevant ways to the young people we serve. We provide space for informal conversation, covering some of the big questions of life, enabling community and friendship to grow within the group.

We wanted to support the young people to be actively involved in local mission. As part of this Ignite is going to become a regional hub of the national charity 'Baby Basics'. This will involve providing Moses Baskets to vulnerable new mums in our local community; these baskets are filled with clothes, blankets, bedding and lots more to help with those first few months of motherhood. Plans started in the autumn term to encourage our young people to be actively involved in this project. They will provide support with fundraising, promotion, packing and budgeting. We will learn lots of new skills, whilst actively supporting those facing hardship in our communities. Expect to hear much more about this in 2023!

We were very excited to have our first youth service at Christmas. We gave our young people the task of exploring 'what is church?' and 'what would a service for us look like?' The result was a creative, authentic and sacred space. We had a thoughtful poem, beautiful singing, bubble tube prayers, music by Lauren Daigle, an Open the Book story, games and some of us shared our favourite Bible verses. What a joy and privilege it was to be part of! We hope this service will become a regular event in 2023.

During the second half of 2022 conversations began across denominations with people involved in Christian based youth work in the Duchess High School catchment area. Our hope is that through strong collaboration we will find momentum and energy that reach beyond our individual churches, creating new and pioneering approaches to connect with children, young people and their families where the Christian faith can thrive. Progress has been really encouraging as we wait and see what emerges from our discussions...

**Jessica McArdle**  
**Ignite Youth and Schools Worker**

## Home Groups

**Coffee Plus on Thursday mornings** We continue to meet on a Thursday morning each week gathering a group of 8-12 folk. We have eaten much cake and many cheese scones and encouraged each other on our spiritual journeys through various ups and downs. Over this year we have studied a book or two and watched podcasts which generate a bit of discussion. We are currently watching "J. John. Facing the Canon!" We meet at the Archbold's or with Gabby and would welcome anyone who would like to pop in and see us.

**Outrageous Women** We meet each Wednesday morning in homes around the village to explore the Bible. There's tea, coffee, cake, chatter & laughter & of course prayer. Over the last year we have studied & discussed a wide variety of topics. We looked at what we could learn from women in the Bible who showed outrageous courage, commitment, trust, love, persistence, faith & strength. We studied Paul's letter to the Philippians following 'A life worth Living' from Holy Trinity Brompton podcasts. Following with 'We are One' An eight part study/discussion on what it means to be united in purpose. Using Pete Greig's book 'How to hear God' alongside the 24/7 Prayer Lectio Divina Course videos. This was truly amazing & we are all excited to move into this year using Lectio Divina as we study God's Word.

**Courageous Women** We are a group of about 11 women who meet on a Monday evening in each other's homes for bible study, prayer and fellowship. Eileen Ferguson leads the group, but others have taken turn at preparing sessions. This year we spent a number of weeks considering the Fruit of the Spirit, followed by varied studies on Biblical Women. It was both inspiring and challenging delving into the lives of Old Testament women, and realising just how courageous they all were. We are currently following Pete Greig's Lectio Course. Over the Summer we enjoyed some shared suppers and had time to chat and to get to know each other better. Be courageous ladies and come and join us!

**Rev Gabby Llewelyn/ Liz Scurfield**

## Serving our Community

After release from lockdown it was a joy to restart some of our activities in the community.

**Community Teas** started again in September and has a new face! Posh cups and matching tea sets with pretty table cloths, thanks to Debra for organising this. We meet on the last Tuesday of the month in the village hall, 2-4pm. Sometimes our numbers are small but mostly there are 12-14 people who come. The Christmas tea was a blessing as we had the children from Felton Primary school come and sing to us and also Val brought along some cheery singers to get us going into the Christmas spirit. We have a team of 12 wonderful ladies who come on a rota and provide goodies and man the ship.

**Seniors Lunch** re-started, after the Covid lockdown, in March 2023. This is a wonderful and cheerful event for the older generation, again a wonderful team headed up by Julia McCormack provide a hearty lunch and pud.

The Village Fayre last July was held on a very warm day. We had a small patch and it was rather hastily put together, we will do better next year! We had crazy golf and bead threading, (Jewellery) making and bubbles and lollipops to give away. We need a bigger team and some meetings to prepare for this important event, we have some volunteers, but more please! Debra and Dave Philips are the people to contact to help!

Felton Primary School has invited us back in to run OtB (Open the Book) A team of budding actors and actresses go in up to four times a term to take "assembly". Dramatic reading of Bible stories. The children love it and so do the actors. The Christingle service for Felton Primary School took place in December and was a riotous and joyful affair.

**Rev Gabby Llewelyn**

## Weddings and Baptisms:

There were two weddings in 2022 at St Michael's Felton. They were in June and July and were both conducted by Gabby. I am continuing to co-ordinate the weddings, along with those at Longframlington and Brinkburn, (which was a total of 44 weddings during 2022) and have appreciated the great support of a whole team of local clergy (retired and in parishes) who have made this possible, whilst we have had a vacancy across our parishes.

We have also been able to restart the programme of 'Talking Marriage' days again post Covid. I am grateful to Michael & Gisele Hepper, Flo & Sam Driver, Christine & Mark Daniel and Gabby who have helped get this restarted.

**Sue Inglis-Jones**

We had nine baptism Services at St Michael's in 2022, and 12 children were baptised and welcomed into the church family marking the beginning of a journey of faith. All families have been visited prior to the baptism service and the help and support given by Rev Gabby Llewelyn, Rev Dr Ann Peters and Rev Michael Hepper has been greatly appreciated during this period of vacancy. John and June Holmes generously provide a bible for every child who is baptised at St Michael's and all of the services have been very special for parents, family and friends of the children.

**Sue Marsh**

## Churchyard Report

The churchyard continues to be maintained on a regular basis by David Phillips. Grass cutting is on a weekly basis when time and weather permits. Cutting will commence again as the weather starts to improve. In 2022 walkways were cut regularly around the church including the back of church towards the bottom. Last Easter, an area was cleared away at the back of the church to facilitate the Easter story led by Mark Winter.

The council have not maintained the grass for several years; however, it should be noted that this may need to be reinstated in the future, should David's commitments change.

There has been an increase in the amount of dog waste around the churchyard. A sign may be helpful to remind dog walkers to clean up after their dogs.

Any garden waste generated is removed and taken to Alnwick Waste Centre, leaving the garden waste bins empty for use of the flower providers.

**David Phillips**