

St Michael's, Horton

2016 APCM Reports

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St Michael's Horton APCM 2016

Vicar's Report

If God is for us, who can stand against us? Romans 8:31

The past year

July 2015 saw the arrival of Joseph and his family. It is a great privilege to be entrusted with the training of a curate. Joseph has already made a significant contribution to St Michael's through his Mozambique service, his challenging sermons, his participation in healing ministry and his personal engagement with us individually and as a congregation: not bad for his first ten months! I commend Joseph's own report to your attention.

Kathy has moved forward on her journey towards lay ministry. She has impressed us all with her commitment, her persuasive talks, her confident leadership, her insightful prayers and her compassionate support for other church members. As I write we are waiting eagerly to hear the outcome of her recent selection conference for lay ministry.

Kathy also took part with two other people from St Andrew's in a training course for Pastoral Care workers. We have a real opportunity here to broaden the Pastoral ministry of our two churches and build up the congregation.

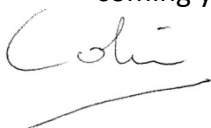
Perhaps the single most remarkable event of 2014-5 at St Michael's was the Travelling Home service last July. This was a genuine encounter between different groups within the community and some major bridge building went on. Mr Terry Doe's well researched and deeply felt talk was a revelation!

Teamwork remains a vital feature of St Michael's with different teams cleaning, catering, supporting funerals. Terry Doe's team have already made a difference to our churchyard with the prospect of more to come.

Last year my report referred to a decline in attendance at Tuesday communion. This has now been reversed: we regularly see ten or so attenders on Tuesdays. In large part this is due to Beryl's wonderful series of meditations in Advent and Lent.

Prospects for the coming year:

- The gentle numerical growth of the last couple of years has stalled recently and needs reviving. A confirmation course and an Alpha or another similar introductory course may help.
- We must follow up the Travelling Home approach and develop our ministry to the Romani community.
- The churchyard is all but full now. We need to make the most of our last few spaces and seek whether some land for a further extension can be found.
- St Michael's has lovely people who are growing in discipleship. We offer a warm and friendly welcome and are outward looking. There is a sense of awe in God's presence in our beautiful building and of prayerfulness in the congregation. With these qualities nothing can hold us back! I'm looking forward to our journey through the coming year as we discover together what God has in store for us!



14 April 2016

Curate's Report

Nearly a year has passed by since my ordination as Deacon and becoming the Assistant Curate in Horton and Wraysbury. In this period of time, I have been able to witness some of the life events and situations that are intrinsically connected with ordained ministry. It has been an immense privilege and responsibility to work alongside Colin looking after the people of St Michael's and St Andrew's.

- Funeral Ministry

Funeral ministry has been deeply touching and enriching. Those that took place for members of the traveller community were particularly interesting, insofar as I have been able to learn an awful lot about culture, customs and beliefs.

- Men's Breakfast

Two meetings have taken place so far. The food has been excellent, the speakers quite engaging, with good attendance, and very positive and encouraging feedback.

- Mozambique Service

It provided an opportunity to share the experience of mission trip to Mozambique from myself, Elisabeth and Rebecca four years ago, and to use the Kenyan Liturgy, which was so well received that it has been used several times ever since.

- Healing Ministry

I have been quite involved with the healing ministry at St Michael's, and although it is still in its infancy, the feedback so far has been quite positive and encouraging. The plan is to have regular services throughout the year.

- The year ahead

God willing, I will be ordained priest at the end of June. I look forward to what God has in store and hope to get to know more people, both in church and in the wider community, and to witness and help discern God's intervention and presence in Horton as well as journey together towards physical and spiritual growth of St Michael's

Joseph

LLM REPORT

This report must reflect my apologies to St Andrew's for so seldom attending morning worship with you. However, when I have covered attendances at both churches the warmth of welcome at St Andrew's has been so lovely and heart warming.

Areas of shared fellowship this past year included the Magna Carta celebrations and beautiful flower festival; Pop In services, Better Portion, the house group with shared leadership with Tony Hermes, the Canaan evening; and Lent Course shared with the Baptist Church. All these events continue to encourage us and there has been a real sense of God's guiding hand on all these activities.

At St Michael's, the Holy Dusters have continued to lovingly clean and polish and there's always a buzz of happy chatter as the 'worker bees' go about their tasks. It really has transformed church cleaning from a rather onerous task, to a joy shared.

We have this last year run a series of 4 Advent reflections on Tuesday mornings and with Easter following so quickly from Christmas this year, we have run 5 Lent reflections culminating with the Good Friday Meditation, focussing on Christ's last hour of suffering. It should be added that whilst these reflective services have run at St Michael's, they are of course open to the membership of both churches.

Harvest, and New Year informal services with lunch afterward - seems to epitomise the biblical example so beautifully of praying together and eating together. The lunches have now so many talented cooks it is a real gastronomic feast. Also this year we shared in the Travelling Home service and lunch organised in large part by Terry Doe and Kathy.

Since July we have been joined by our Curate Joseph and his family. Our worship has been enriched and I feel sure no-one could have come away from the Holy Week chanted Compline service, unmoved.

I thought when I began compiling some of the events of the past year it would be a very short report. However, if my ministry has moved from 'fully active participation' to a more meditative role, I thank God for all the opportunities given to find the quiet inner self and to be able to build on those quiet insights.

Be still and know that I am God. How blessed we all are that God reigns in our hearts - and it truly shows.

Beryl Walters
April 2016.

Thank you everyone who has helped in outreach in our churches and worked and prayed for our Mission Action Plan. Thank you also for the kind words of encouragement when I preach or lead from the front; they really do encourage me.

My highlight of this year was, at last, to get my role defined as Parish Evangelist. Since I started the Evangelism training through St. John's Theological College degree course in 2001, I chased Revs. Harper and Douglas Lane many times but Colin is the first to sort it; thank you Colin.

The base for my evangelism expertise is still provided via Through Faith Missions, also known as the Walk of 1000 Men, and I still lead a monthly Prayer Meeting for 'Walk Evangelists' in the Heathrow area. My 29th missions week serving other churches was to lead a team of men and lady Walkers at St. Michael's Church, Camberley in May. Also, as well as a team leader, this year I have been trained as a "Trainer for Missions"; a group of about 40 experienced leaders were chosen to attend a residential course at the Hayes Conference centre. We have a new brighter training manual to use and it usefully contains descriptions of the beliefs of 14 other faiths and sects and another section on apologetics; how Christians understand the key aspects of our faith. (If anybody needs a brief one-page explanation of these; please ask.)

My role definition reflects my reduced attendance at St. Michael's, but I still help with services and sermons as requested by our Vicar. Also, after 12 years, I have reduced the assemblies I lead at Colnbrook CofE Primary School. This year, I led worship or preached twice on Mission in Camberley, 2 New Life Services and 4 Communion at St. Andrew's and another at St. Michael's. I also managed the Moving on Course and taught at some sessions for this, the Start Course and this year's Sabbath Lent course for our three Churches Together.

As I do not know of anybody willing to accompany me on door to door evangelism, this has dried up, although Colin has said he is keen to join me if he can find a slot of a couple of hours one day. If anybody is willing to help – mainly as a chaperone – I would love to walk out with you. I still get very few requests for Welcome Packs to be delivered; very few people let me know that new neighbours have arrived; although we increased to 7 delivered last year. Surely a lot more properties had new owners or tenants in Horton and Wraysbury! Our records show that 'invited' people do attend our churches so it is well worth doing! New arrivals are grateful for the packs, even if just for the local contacts! Some of our people like an excuse to meet their neighbours and deliver the packs themselves but if not, I am happy to do it. We are wonderfully "welcoming" as churches; everybody who comes through our doors says so, but there is a difference between "welcoming" and "inviting"! We must invite people in.

I am hoping to run Alpha again this year, the first for 5 years. Please let me know if you are available to help and more importantly, if you know of anybody who might be invited as a guest. There may also be a further course to help people, who already believe, to develop their faith and it may be a Parish Weekend at a conference centre.

I still support Colin with the Baptism Preparations. Diane and I have continued to struggle with managing St. Andrew's website but the Link weekly news-sheet is uploaded every Saturday, so if you fail to collect one on Sunday, the service plans and news are on the web the day before the relevant Sunday. Diane has also managed to add a 'page 2' to the web version, so other items like the design of the extended worship area at St. Andrew's and adverts for concerts and other adverts that we are given also appear. Have you linked to the "Father's love letter", <http://www.fathersloveletter.com/> or <http://www.lookingforgod.com/>. Both are good to recommend to non-Christian friends. It is a relief to hear that a completely new St. Andrew's website design is nearing completion and we look forward to an easier life in that direction. As I have said before, we are wonderfully "welcoming" as churches; everybody who comes through our doors says so, but there is a difference between "welcoming" and "inviting"! We must be "inviting" Churches and a good website expresses our invitations when our voices fail for various reasons.

Thank you again, I trust I have been supportive to all who requested my help and I look forward to more outreach in our Parishes.

Mike Miller (Parish Evangelist)