

St. Michaels Church, Braintree



Parish

Profile

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ST MICHAELS CHURCH BRAINTREE

PARISH PROFILE 2017

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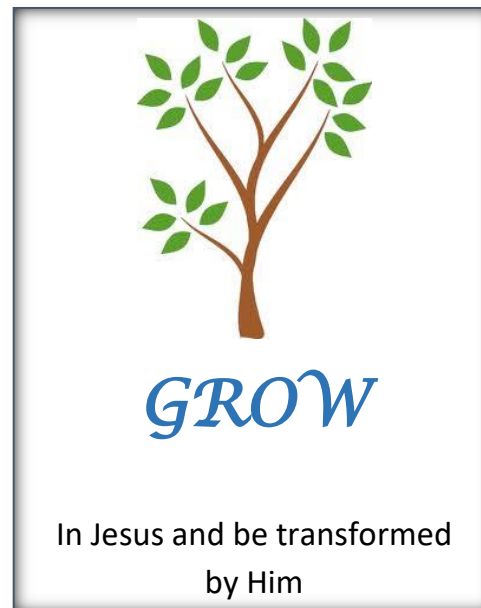
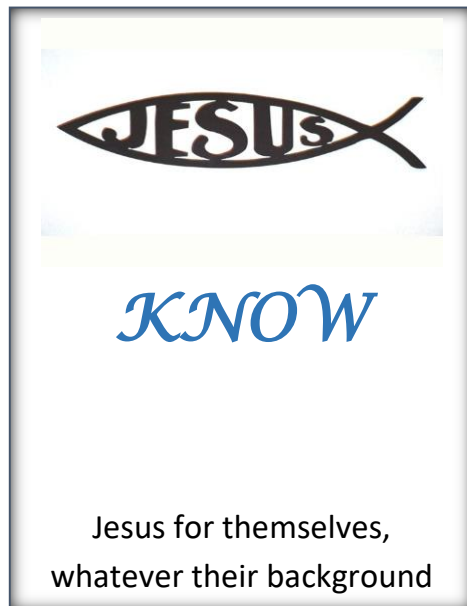
Please feel free to contact any of those listed above for an informal chat or viewing.

Are we the church to which God is calling you as our Priest-in-Charge?



Our aims

We are a
conservative evangelical church
seeking to bring glory to God
by helping people to:



St Michaels in numbers

- 1 Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ*
- 2 New-borns joined our congregation this year*
- 3 Services on Sunday*
- 4 Deanery Synod Representatives*
- 15 Elected PCC Members*
- 90+ Age of our two oldest members*
- 177 Average Sunday Attendance*
- 169 Average attendance 2016 Christmas services*
- 231 On the electoral roll in 2016*
- 1199 AD Church founded on site of present St Michaels*
- 1910 AD We embraced conservative evangelical principles*
- £77,699 Diocesan Quota paid in full*

Our values

As conservative evangelicals we hold to the doctrine of male headship in St Michaels but only in respect of our leader. To us the policy of mutual flourishing is equally important as nobody should feel unwelcome here. We are all equal in the sight of God. We are the family of God where everyone is involved in the leadership at all levels, including teaching; preaching and presiding at communion, **but** our male leader is the head of our family, as Christ is the head of His Church.

On 4th January 2017 the PCC ratified this policy by invoking the resolution in regard to women bishops and leadership.

For further clarification on this important issue please see the comment of our diocesan Bishop - Stephen of Chelmsford. This is to be found on page 22.



Our prayer is for a leader

Who is full of faith and prayer; whose life and ministry is rooted in the authority of the Bible.

Who views young people, and our work with them, as a vital part of St Michaels.

Who is keen to uphold our policies of mutual flourishing and every member ministry. Who has a warm and generous heart and a collaborative, all-encompassing style of leadership.

Who supports our orthodox views on marriage and sexuality.

Who heads an expanding church with a strong town message of the personal; transforming and redeeming power of Christ.



Who inspires us all to take risks for the sake of the Gospel.



We are confident that God is preparing the person of His choice to come to us. We are trusting that our new leader will see this as the major ministry and opportunity in their ordained life.

Who we are

Since 1910 we have been conservative evangelicals and we stand in that belief today, not out of tradition, but because it summarises our conviction that obedience to God under the authority of the scriptures defines us and is the source of our life in Christ. It is the driving force that transforms us corporately and individually into the body of people serving God in Braintree.

We are a committed, loving family of God. We are the town church. We are situated at the junction of two Roman roads and on the top of the hills of Braintree. We aim for the light of our Lord to shine over the town.



Our priorities

Youth and young families

Encouraging the next generation to know the Lord is our top priority. It is so important to us that, after paying our quota, it is the largest expense we bear. We fund both a Youth Worker and a Children & Families Worker.

Every member ministry

Especially during our vacancy, this policy has come to the fore. Many more of our congregation are now involved in the day to day running of the church and we want to continue this trend. Such things as maintenance issues; purchasing; administration and music for the services (this is not an exhaustive list) have been taken from the churchwardens and shouldered by others. We wish: *“to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”.* (Ephesians 4:12-13)

Teaching and preaching

We are an evangelical church and will never stop using the Bible as our yardstick. We expect the Gospel to be faithfully preached. We want all in the town to know about the Lord.

Pastoral care

We have many strategies in place to ensure that all members of the church family are supported. Our priority is that no-one's need is neglected. We now have a “Manna Fund”, used for those experiencing financial hardship and a Pastoral Referral Group whose task is to ensure that, as quickly as possible, those in need are partnered with those who can help. As we grow, we are determined that this area of the practical aspects of our faith is expanded.

Our five-year plan

We have put together a suggested plan for the next five years. This is not definitive and, as they say, is up for debate once the post has been filled.

Regular attendance at services and Youth Church will have increased significantly. Our aim is at least by 25%. Younger leaders will be working alongside our more experienced people.

Young families will be the main thrust of our evangelism. There will be nurturing groups set up to help grow their faith. We will build on our work in the local primary schools. We already have a clear presence in St Michaels School and wish to replicate this in John Ray Junior and Infant School.

We will restart our community meetings on the Goldingham estate in the south of Braintree. This closed down some years ago because of falling numbers. It now needs more of an emphasis on the younger families. We will continue to support our rural churches through the ministry of our Readers.

Our system of house groups will expand to cover not only Bible Study but the pastoral element.

We were a training parish and we wish to be so again. We have sent many out from the congregation into the ministry and want to continue the practice.

Our current pattern of services may need changing. Café Church, for example, is something we would like to explore.

Our youth church

The expansion of our children's and families work has resulted in more young families attending church. This has focused our minds upon providing appropriate groups for their children. This is the bedrock of our work in the town.

Tiddlywinks (mother and toddlers) meets in Church House on a Tuesday afternoon and offers friendship, tea & coffee, play time and Bible stories.

Except for the first Sunday of the month, **Followers** (3-5); **Explorers** (5-7) and **Next** (10-14) meet at Church House during the 10am service. As we believe that the Bible is the source of all knowledge about God, the main thrust of these groups is to study and understand it. However, fun is included – there are nibbles, games, songs, prayer time and quizzes.

'Focus' (15-20) meets on a Sunday evening from 7.30 until 9pm. They have snacks, chat-time, games, Bible quizzes, Bible study time, and short prayers together. They encourage and learn from each other as they grow and develop their faith in Jesus.

All are encouraged to serve in numerous activities, for example; SMASH Club (***St Michaels Alternative Summer Holiday***) and Christingle service, but also, and importantly, to participate in our monthly family services – **CFW** (Church Family Worship) through Bible readings, leading services and drama.

Their involvement is essential for their development and for the church congregation to see them volunteering, which encourages us all as a church family.

Our place in the deanery

The group of churches to which we belong is facing reductions from four to two stipendiary posts but this is not expected to come into force until 2025.

St Mary and St Peter, Bocking share an Anglo-Catholic spirituality. St Paul and St Michaels, Braintree are both evangelical churches and share a common patron in CPAS.

The Braintree Deanery is committed to finding a way forward for this group of four which fully respects those differences and enables all within it to flourish whilst retaining a whole town approach. The main aim will be to offer those in the town, seeking our Lord, different styles of worship with a unified approach.

The concept for St Michaels within this new structure is to maintain its current strong and visible role as the town centre church and to continue to resource other churches in the Deanery through its Readers, who regularly lead services in the smaller rural churches. During the last few years at least five members of our congregation have stood for ministry. We are pleased to report that another one will begin training for ordination in September 2017.

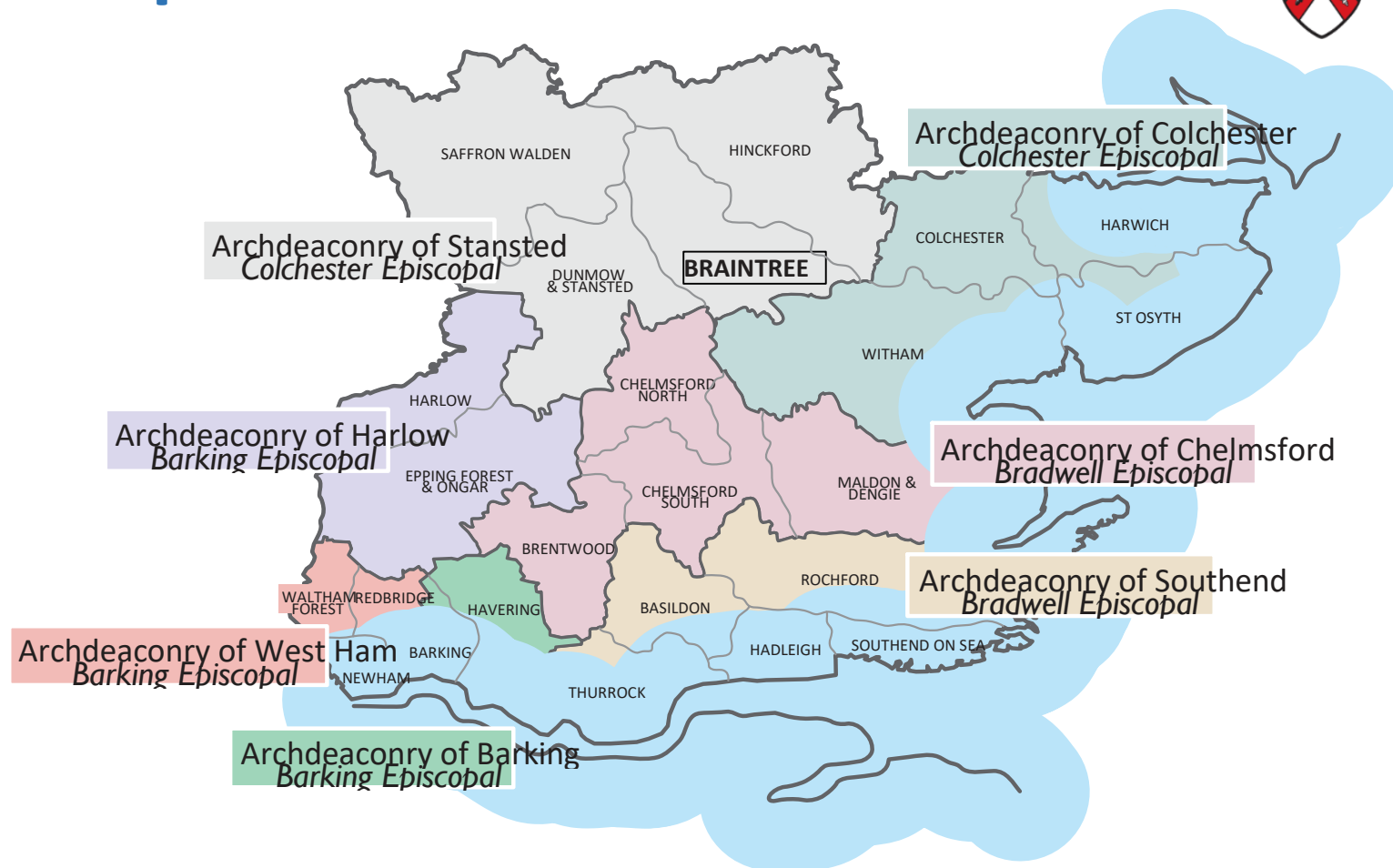
The current task for our new leader, therefore, will be to work with the other churches to maintain our uniqueness but also our unity.

Relations between the current clergy are good. Just recently they have begun an exercise of looking at how to improve them further. There is a monthly ministers' breakfast and (on a rota basis) each 5th Sunday a United Service is held at 6.30 pm.

Our place in the Diocese



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford



Our Bishop (Stephen of Chelmsford) has laid out his plans for the future of the diocese in an article '**Transforming Presence**'. If you would like to read a full account of this please look on our website under *Local Area Information*, *Transforming Presence*.

Our leadership and staff

One of the exciting results of our policy of mutual flourishing and every member ministry had been the number of people prepared play more of a leadership role within the church. Our two wardens and four deputy wardens, in particular, have shouldered a great deal more responsibility.

As far as preaching and presiding is concerned we are being supported by our Honorary Curate Reverend Stephen Bailey and our three Readers. Also, we have been able to draw on the wider community of clergy in our deanery, especially at communion.

With respect to the youth of our church we currently fund both a full-time Children and Families Worker and a part-time Youth Worker.

The Eldership Team (consisting of the two churchwardens, three lay readers and four deputy wardens) continues to meet fortnightly to pray for our congregation and the wider community.

The churchwardens also meet with the staff on a fortnightly basis to discuss any issues and pray for each other.

The Standing Committee (Churchwardens, Treasurer and three other elected members of the PCC), whose task it is to handle urgent matters, meets between PCC meetings. It reports back to the PCC at its bi-monthly meetings.

Our new leader at St Michaels will find that he does not have to do it all as he will be the first amongst equals. He will head a team where the ministry of both men and women is encouraged.

The parish of St Michaels

The population of the parish is approximately 11,000 souls. Our electoral roll stands at 231, (*November 2016*) not all of whom live within the parish boundaries. Clearly there is an opportunity here for growth.

As you would expect of a town parish it is a densely populated one with estates as well as older streets. We have private and social housing. We have a substantial Polish community and a growing number of Eastern European families.

Our church activities

Details of our many and varied active organisations which meet regularly are detailed below. Some examples of our non-regular events are our annual SMASH Club for 5-11 year olds; the Ladies Conference; the men's SUMMIT conferences and prayer suppers. We have an Evangelism/Outreach committee which has been responsible for such diverse events as Christianity Explored courses, Family Fun days, a Summer Festival and the Easter and Christmas experiences as well as street visiting. Our Pastoral Referral Group ensures that the lonely are visited, people are taken to and from hospital appointments, lawns are cut and many other small acts of caring are quietly undertaken.

Throughout the year we have social events for the whole church – these cover the Christmas Lunch, Rambles, Quiz Nights and Open-Air All Age Worship in the summer with free BBQ. We also host the Remembrance Sunday Civic Service.

The church also promotes missionary interests both at home and abroad. The PCC as well as individuals, contribute towards missionary causes. We currently have personal links with Kenya and Ecuador as well as Manchester and London.

Our outreach and partners

Locally, we are gradually cementing our links with John Ray Junior and Infants School through assemblies and the hosting of their Christmas Services. For the past two years they have also attended our Easter and Christmas Experience interactive displays in the Church. *(For details of our work in St Michaels Church School, please see the relevant section.)*

Our Children's Workers have recently been joined by our Evangelism Enabler, thus allowing for an expansion of their work to cover families as well. Baptismal and wedding courses, Christianity Explored; day-time bible studies are available but there is so much more to be done. This is an exciting new challenge.

We have friendly and positive links with other Braintree Anglican, Roman Catholic and Non-conformist churches and play a full part in the Braintree Area Churches Together fellowship. United services and other events are held from time to time.

We actively support Christian Youth Outreach (CYO) which is a non-denominational evangelical organisation working in the local schools and the Braintree Youth Project, a Christian organisation, creating a caring and safe community in which young people are respected, valued and offered opportunities. Volunteers from the congregation act as Street Pastors on a Friday night. We also play an active part in the local Food Bank project. The Scouts and Cubs are linked to us as they use the Church Hall regularly. Church parades and a presence at the Remembrance Sunday occurred this year. We will strengthen this bond as time goes on.

Further afield support is also given regularly to our patrons - CPAS., to Crosslinks; Action Partners; SAMS; MAM., Tearfund; Fishermen's Mission; Langham Partnership; Leprosy Mission; Barnabas Fund; Samaritan's Purse; A Rocha and the Children's Society. We are also particularly keen to support Christian workers who have had personal links with our Church.

Church weekly activities

Day of week	Time	Name	Age group
Monday	12.15pm	Spotlight	St Michaels School
	5.00pm	4 th Braintree Beavers	6-8 years
	7.00pm	Badminton	Over 16's
	7.30pm	"White Horse Tavern" Theological Study Group	Over 16's
	7.30pm	Bell ringing	All ages
Tuesday	1.15pm	Tiddlywinks	Mothers & toddlers
	7.00pm	Christianity Explored	Over 16's
Wednesday	9.45pm	Meeting Point Bible Study	All ages
	6.30pm	4 th Braintree Cubs & Scouts	6-8 years
	8.00pm	Life Builder Bible Study	Over 16's
Thursday	2.15pm	Women's Fellowship	Women only
	3.30pm	ASK	Years 5 & 6 St Michaels School
	7.30pm	Rose Hill Bible Study	All ages
	8.00pm	Carry on Exploring Bible Study	All ages
Friday	5.30pm	4 th Braintree Beavers, Cubs and Scouts	6-14 years
	7.30pm	Flower club (once a month)	All ages

Our buildings

The Church

The attractive parish church, founded in the 12th century is situated in the town centre. It is surrounded by a large, closed, churchyard whose upkeep is the responsibility of the District Council. Grave stones have been removed and the resulting area is very useful for community outreach events and open air services.

The church interior has evolved over the centuries and is now a warm practical space. There are areas for socialising; for music; a small vestry and crèche room.

Church House (the Halls)

This lies 200 metres away from the church in what was the Vicarage; a large Victorian building which houses a Parish Office used for wedding interviews and small group meetings, a reprographics room for in-house printing, the 'small hall' which seats around thirty and a larger one that seats approximately one hundred. Also on the ground floor there is a good sized kitchen, with separate washing-up area, and several toilets. On the first floor are several smaller rooms used for meetings, the young people's group (Focus) and an office for the Youth and Families Workers.

The Youth Church makes full use of these facilities on Sundays, and other groups such as the Scouts, Tiddlywinks, Ladies Groups, activity classes, community groups and the St Michaels Flower Club meet there regularly during the week. There is a garden of a useful size for Parish events and games for the children.

Changes have recently been made within the church buildings to ensure that physical access is as good as it can be, bearing in mind the age of our properties. Measures are also in place to protect our most vulnerable members

The Vicarage

(Pictures available on Google earth - 10a Marshals Road, Braintree CM7)

The current Vicarage was built in 1969 and stands in a fairly secluded *cul-de-sac* about half a mile from the church and town. Its entrance hall has been modified to include a study/interview room and cloakroom. Downstairs consists of a large lounge, smaller dining room, reasonably sized kitchen, utility room and manageable garden at the rear of the property. Upstairs there are five bedrooms (one *en-suite*) and a family bathroom. The front is mainly paved and there is a single garage.

The Church School

St. Michaels Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School was founded in 1867 and moved to its modern premises in 1975. The number on roll currently stands at 421. The school received an “Outstanding” from the Ofsted inspection in December 2015.

The Foundation Governors are anxious to maintain the Christian witness and influence of the school by appointing committed Christians to the staff whenever possible. The Vicar is an *ex-officio* Governor.

The church has an excellent relationship with the school and various members of the congregation are actively involved on a voluntary basis. The Vicar; the Children’s Worker and one of our Readers take assemblies on a rota basis. The Youth and Children’s Workers also run a regular after-school club (ASK); a lunch-time activity (SPOTLIGHT), and host children’s events in the church e.g. ‘Experience Christmas’ or ‘Experience Easter’ and ‘Christingle’.

We also have good relationships with the John Ray Infant and Junior Schools in the parish and many children from both schools attend the summer SMASH Club. Both these schools hold carol services at St Michaels in December.

Finance

Our Financial Report for 2015-16 is available for inspection.

Over the years we have consistently witnessed the Lord's faithfulness in providing our financial needs through His people, in particular our Diocesan Quota has always been paid in full.

Youth and children's work are a high priority which is reflected in the yearly expenditure.

We operate a Free Will Offering Scheme and actively encourage the use of Gift Aid and monthly standing orders.

We have endeavoured *not* to raise money through other means (such as the National Lottery, Jumble Sales).

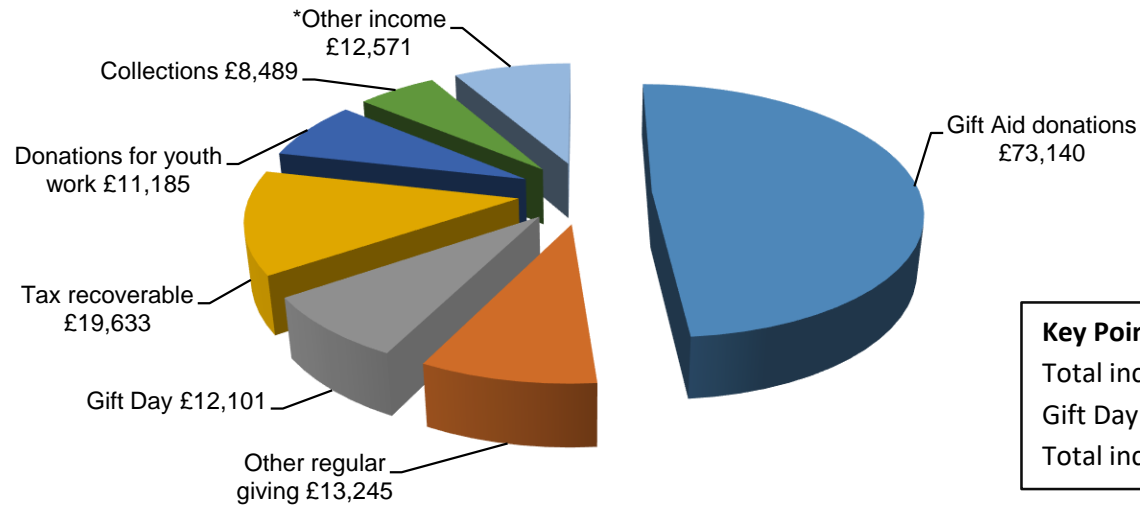
Many years ago it was agreed at PCC that any legacy monies will be used for capital expenditure only. As a consequence, the following projects have been completed:

- 1 The church has been re-ordered to include a server, toilets, iron outer porch gates and interior porches/automatic disabled entry system.
- 2 A large "Welcome Area" has been created in front of the server and this hums with conversation and fellowship over coffee at the end of our services.
- 3 Church House has benefitted from a re-fit of the kitchen and toilets and improvement of access for the disabled; new windows throughout and the central heating extended to include the rooms upstairs.
- 4 The boilers in both buildings have been replaced in recent years, and solar panels were fitted to the Church House roof.

Church House large hall will be re-painted and re-floored during 2017 and improvements to the lighting and sound system in Church are under consideration.

Summary accounts for year ended 31st December 2015

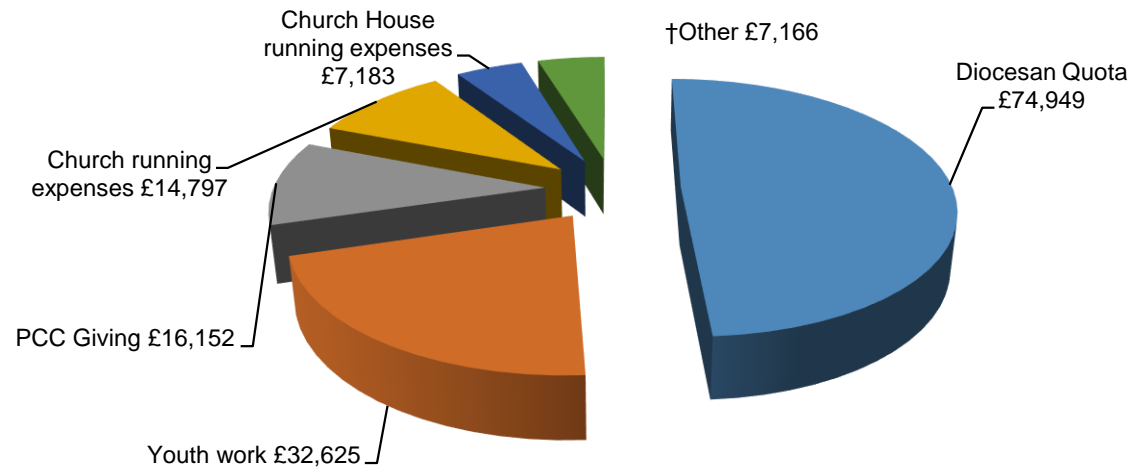
Income



Key Points

Total income down by	3.8%
Gift Day short of target by	£2,899
Total income:	£150,364

Expenditure



Key Points

Total expenditure up by:	4.0%
Total expenditure:	£152,872
General Fund deficit for the year:	£2,508

Pattern of Sunday services

We currently hold a range of services to suit varying needs and tastes. With the exception of the 8am Holy Communion, there is no requirement for the wearing of robes. We use the ESV Bible and Mission Praise.

Sunday in the month	8.00 am	10.00 am with crèche	6.30pm
FIRST	Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i>	<i>All-age Service</i>	5.15 pm Evening Prayer <i>B.C.P.</i> 6.30 pm <i>Service of the Word</i>
SECOND	Holy Communion <i>B.C.P.</i>	<i>Service of the Word</i>	<i>Holy Communion</i> <i>Common Worship Order 1</i>
THIRD	Holy Communion <i>B.C.P.</i>	<i>Holy Communion</i> <i>Common Worship Order 2</i> <i>Contemporary Language</i>	<i>Service of the Word</i>
FOURTH	Holy Communion <i>B.C.P.</i>	<i>Service of the Word</i>	<i>Service of the Word</i>
FIFTH	Holy Communion <i>B.C.P.</i>	<i>Holy Communion Common</i> <i>Worship Order 2</i> <i>Contemporary Language</i>	<i>United Service with other</i> <i>Braintree Churches</i>

We have all ages represented over the various services but would particularly like to see more people in the 20-35 age range.

Our morning services combine Common Worship liturgy and a blend of traditional and modern music led by our music group.

Our evening services have an informal feel, contemporary liturgy and worship music. At the centre of all our services is the preaching of God's word.

Youth Church takes place in Church House at 10am except for the first Sunday

Comment by Bishop Stephen of Chelmsford

For many years St Michaels, Braintree had passed Resolution B. According to its conviction about male headship, this enabled the parish to have a male incumbent but also to participate fully in the life of the diocese and enjoy and receive the ministry of women clergy from within the deanery. A number of women clergy have led worship, preached and presided at Holy Communion during this vacancy.

Following the ordination of women to the episcopate; the phasing out of Resolutions A, B and C; and in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests; St Michaels PCC (by a two thirds majority) passed a resolution on 4th January 2017 asking me to enable them to continue these arrangements. This request has received my whole hearted support and approval.

St Michaels is, therefore, now looking for a male Priest-in-Charge who will:

- a. support their theological convictions
- b. maintain the unity of the congregation and
- c. continue to work with both the men and women clergy in their neighbouring parishes, with whom they enjoy an excellent relationship.

Photo album



Our Church

It's a cold grey day. Come into the warmth and be welcomed.



Look at our bookstall; let the little ones play; or just stay for tea or coffee. We have biscuits too!



Our Church

It's a lovely summer's day. Come into the garden and enjoy.



Summer Festival and Barbeque and SMASH Club



Our Church

Use our halls for all your activities.

Ladies Conference; Scouts; Youth Church



Our Church

Weddings and baptisms during 2016.

The majority of our baptisms and thanksgivings take place during the Church Family Worship service.



This document has been prepared for the Diocese of Chelmsford for distribution to those who may apply for the post at St Michaels. It was prepared by the Parish representatives in consultation with the PCC and ratified at their meeting on 19th January 2017.