

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?

1. Welcome to St Michael's

We are a church family of 211 adults and about 70 children and young people. The church building is on Devon Road in Newton, Chester. We describe ourselves as 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 café at the Kingsway shops and a Pre School in the church building, a Toddler group and a weekly group for older people. We meet together during the week in homegroups and monthly prayer meetings. We support mission around the world through mission partners, prayer support and financial giving.

Sunday services are at 10am and 6.30pm with two services per month at 8am. Our children and young people are a vital part of our family and they enjoyed getting involved in putting this document together. We have a full time Children and Youth Worker who runs activities during the week and supports leaders working with the groups on a Sunday.

Recent months have been encouraging at St Michael's. So many members of our church family continued to volunteer and support the church as we have ministered to each other. Members of the congregation have led worship and preached; together we have cared for each other.

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 north east corner of the city. It is just over a mile from the city centre and has a population of approximately 5,250. 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



Newton is essentially a suburban dormitory area with a static population. The houses were built mainly in the 1930s, late 40s, and 50s, the majority being semi-detached, most are owner occupied. Approximately 10% of the housing is Local Authority (Housing Trust) owned, built in the late 1950s, and made up of houses and a number of blocks of low rise flats, centred around the Kingsway Shopping Parade. The population of the parish comprises a cross section of society with a mix of professional, executive, manual and unemployed, with no one sector pre-dominating.

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. The main shopping area within the parish is on the Kingsway estate, in the Kingsway Shopping Parade, where the church café, Kings Way Café, is situated. Kingsway Chapel, (FIEC), a partner with us in the Café is situated nearby. There are other shops at the opposite end of the parish on Brook Lane and Dickson's 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 newly built 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 youth club in Newton Lane and a recreation ground, Limewood Fields, situated near the Kingsway shops, 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, mission and the buildings. Our church family is made up of about 211 adults, 31 young people aged 11-18 and 40 children aged under 10. The number of adults on the electoral roll was 193 at the last APCM. We have a weekly service at 10am (the main service), twice monthly Communion at 8am and either a service at 6:30pm or a Café Church service in the afternoon.

The congregation have proved to be generous and we have much to be thankful for. People give time to support the work of the church and financial giving has always been adequate to cover costs.





3.1 Services and worship

St Michael's is best described as evangelical. The church has a high view of scripture and personal relationship with God and desires to see people from our community find faith. Most of the adults present at our services have been Christians for many years; people finding faith at our church has been infrequent in recent years. We desire to see this change.

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. Chester is a gathered city with many people moving here to work in the area. Members of St Michael's have history in other Anglican churches, Baptist churches, non-denominational Evangelical churches and Catholic churches. Some of the churches from which we are gathered are more charismatic or more conservative than St Michael's.

Leadership and Teaching

In the absence of a vicar, a Ministry team of 5 licensed Readers (including two Emeritus) and two retired clergy initially assumed responsibility for teaching or preaching at the majority of 10am and 6:30pm services. Other members of the congregation have been invited to preach over recent months. In all, during the first 4 months of 2018, 15 members of St Michael's are scheduled to preach. We look forward to the teaching ministry of our new vicar but in this and many other areas there is support available. We also have a lay reader in training.

The 10am service is attended by a congregation averaging 135 and includes babies, children, youth and adults aged from 19 to 90. Music which ranges from hymns to Hillsongs, 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 after 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 the time it takes us to share the peace with each other. Common Worship liturgy is used. 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 and reflect our belief in the power of the gospel to change both.

There are regular All Age services, when children join the whole service. During the summer, families were invited to lead all age services focussed around meals with Jesus. The creativity and capability of the congregation was particularly evident during this time.

At 6.30pm 20-30 adults gather for worship that is more reflective and peaceful than in the mornings. The liturgy usually (but not always) follows Common Worship. Its teaching programme allows space for the addressing of a variety of relevant or exploratory themes. Once a month there is a service of Holy Communion with Prayer for Healing, which is of significant value to all those who experience health needs, or those of their friends or families.

For four years an afternoon Café church service has been led by members of our congregation. The informal service features worship, prayer, discussion and community for all ages in one room. Themes explored in café church have included Social Justice, Prophecy, healing, prayer and the Holy Spirit. Congregations for this service have ranged from 50 to 80 people.

Twice a month a Holy Communion service using the Book of Common Prayer is held at 8am. The number of baptisms per year has varied from five to 16. Most of these are children and babies but facilities for total immersion are available.



3.2 Volunteers on a Sunday

Almost everyone is on one of the rotas that help ensure our services run smoothly.



We have a team of 14 stewards who welcome people, set up the church and are there at the end to clear up.



Liturgy and songs are projected during the service and our projection and sound teams control the projection and sound.

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

Children and Young People

Sas McConville has just started as our Children and Youth Worker. Her work includes support for volunteers who lead groups on Sunday morning, as well as coordinating groups that meet during the week.

We have 40 children aged under 10 and 31 young people aged 11-18.

On a Sunday they meet in their groups. Creche is for children under 2½, Scramblers are aged 3-5, Godly Play is 5-8, KYF are aged 8-11 and Pathfinders 11+.

We have 30 volunteers who help with the different children and young peoples' groups.

Young people during the week

Our children and youth worker and volunteers run a number of groups during the week. These are:

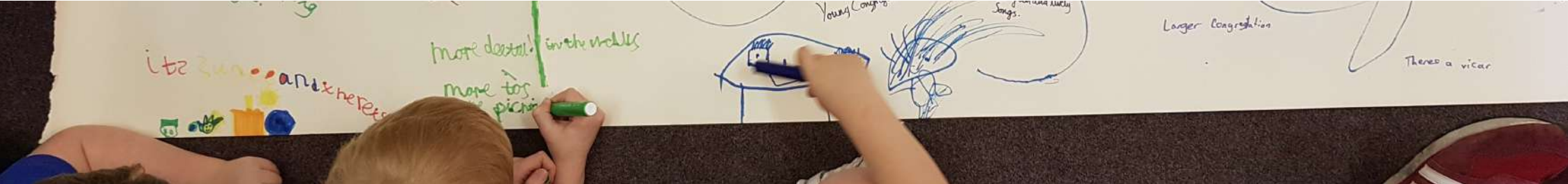
Camel Club – for children in year 6 to 9. Games, snacks, crafts and fun with a serious slot called Camel Time. Numbers vary but we often have 12 -15 young people, some who are regular church attenders and some who aren't. Camels go along to Ignite a Chester wide youth service once a month.

Football on a Wednesday evening gets between twelve and sixteen youngsters, some of whom are members of the church. Drop in happens once a week at church for crafts, hot chocolate and chats.

In the past we have supported the CU at the local high school and have good links with primary school, this has included visits by the incumbent visiting church.



Refreshments after the service are an important time to catch up and get to know new comers. There are 28 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.



What they said

Our children and young people like to get involved. We got them to help with the preparation of the parish profile. We asked what do you most thank God for at St Michael's. They said:

Band Climbing frame Drinks Playing
 Singing Quizzes Garden Snacks
 Fun Laughter Kind Active Music
 Church family Everybody gets along
 Football after church Talking Biscuits Leaders
 Age range Playing at the front of church
 People make you feel welcome Friends
 Juice Fun groups Kindness All age service
 Everybody is different Learn about God

We asked the children and young people: "what do you most want from our new vicar?"

- Someone who is kind, strong, likes music, helpful gives advice and is funny.
- They must love God, listen to us, welcome people of all ages and have a good sense of humour.
- They should know Jesus well and preach good.
- We would like them to be inspiring, child friendly, tell stories and not be boring.
- They should be someone we can talk to and who loves God.

We asked them, "what would you pray for St Mike's to be like in 5 years time?"

- Social activities for young people, more groups and more people our age.
- More socials and modern music, we would like to see more young people leading and speaking and a youth takeover.
- Try to bring more people to church and good advertising for what church is really like.
- We would like better snacks and a steam sauna, more picnics and church days out.
- More groups like Camel for younger people.
- We would like bigger rooms for our groups and we want church to be somewhere we feel comfortable to bring our friends.



3.3 Community

There are plenty of things going on during the week.

Volunteers from St Michael's and Kingsway Chapel supported by Tina Peters our Café Manager serve lots of people at the Kingsway Café six days per week. This opened 15 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. The Older Group (known as TOGs) meet at the Café on a Wednesday afternoon for fun and friendship and includes people who are not part of the congregation.

Our Toddler Group meets at Church on a Wednesday morning. The toddler group is fully subscribed and is well known in the area. It 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.

Our Pre-School is managed by a sub-committee of the PCC and currently provides for over 30 children. Our manager Penny Haskell manages a team of nine people. The pre-school use the church hall side of the church building as well as the garden. Three hour sessions are offered for children aged 2-4 years old on: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings and Wednesday afternoons.

Located near to the church is Kingswood, providing independent living for the over 55s. A monthly communion service is held there and other special events.





3.4 Paid staff

We have a full-time Children and Youth Worker as well as two members of staff who are based in the Church Office: Church Secretary (18 hours per week) and Book Keeper (14 hours per week). We also pay an administrator for four hours per week to manage the bookings for the church hall and we have a cleaner who works nine hours per week.

The church also employs a Café Manager (30 hours per week), and a Pre-school Manager (33 hours per week) and a team of nine part-time staff who work in the Pre-school.

3.5 Homegroups

There are currently seven homegroups. These are all different. Some meet each week and others meet for a period of time for a particular study. There is currently no programme for the groups, each leader plans the sessions. 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.

In the past we have run an Alpha course, there is currently an Alpha Marriage course taking place in the café with meals provided by members of the congregation.

3.6 Mission

St Michael's has been described as a sending church and has supported many members of the congregation serving abroad. Anne de Reybekill has just retired after 30 years of working for Interserve in Pakistan. Olive Frost works in many countries teaching and supporting Christian medics. We have a long term relationship with Hugo and Techí Vegara in South America and a long standing relationship with the local leadership of UCCF. We also support a couple in Bristol working with the homeless and the immigrant community. The Mission Committee have recently undertaken to support a young man in Kyrgystan to obtain formal theological qualifications in order to build up a new generation of pastors there and another UK based person who works as an advocate in the Middle East with the persecuted church, a lady involved in biblical translation work and another involved in a centre for homeless addicts and the dying in Kyrgystan.

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.



Our mission partners from South America



The Mission Committee enjoy a meal with two of our partners

3.7 Pastoral Support

Pastoral support has always been part of life at St Michael's. A team offer support to those in need with meals for new parents, hospital visits, transport, and bereavement visits. This has been especially important during the period of not having a vicar.



3.8 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 gained a parish; and the garden was created in 1994. There is no church yard. In the last five 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 7 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. This is a modern house with five bedrooms, of which three are large doubles and two small doubles. It has very good reception facilities, a study and large garden with a good sized patio area. The church owns two further houses, both of which were paid for by the congregation. One is two doors away from the church on Devon Road and was purchased by the church in 1998 to house a youth worker. This is used as needed for a youth worker or is sometimes rented out. In about 2001 the church bought another house, on Mannings Lane South, to house a curate. This is about five minutes walk from the church and is a nice 3 bed semi, currently rented out as we are without a curate.

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 café and has operated as a community café 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....

- **The Church Family:** we support each other in bad times and rejoice together in good times. We are a community with fellowship, fun and laughter and a sense of warmth. We are welcoming – join whoever or wherever you are in your journey.
- **The spiritual maturity and depth in the congregation.** Collectively we have a lot of faith-history we can draw on together.
- **Our wonderful children and young people** and the volunteers who lead them. We are alive with children.
- **The involvement of congregation.** We are grateful for the number of faithful people teaching us from the bible and serving in ministry to keep the church going.
- **The inclusiveness of all ages making a reality of "one family in Jesus".**
- **That we are a Jesus centred church** and that changes are happening through the Holy Spirit.
- **That we are seeing Gods answers as we pray together.**
- The sense of expectancy and excitement which we feel.

Hopes for the future

We asked the church family about their Hopes for the Future. Here is what they said....

Mission

- To be more outward looking; to serve and reach out to the local community and beyond.
- To be a bold presence in our parish, to lead people to faith and see lives changed.
- For our church to be attractive to people who have never been part of a church.
- To have a heart for the marginalised and to love and care for people around us. To be a place of refuge and love.
- To have contact with all of the families in our community and to see more people of all ages finding faith.
- To be united in shared vision.

Growth

- To grow in number and grow in the knowledge and love of God.
- That we continue to be a caring church home for established Christians.
- To understand and address why we see so few adults finding new faith in our church.

To encounter God as we meet together

- To be challenged by the Bible and led by the spirit. To allow God to set the agenda.
- To present timeless truths in creative ways.
- 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.

The church family

- To be united in focus on Jesus and empowered by Holy Spirit for service.
- To help everyone in church to develop their gifts and put them to use.
- To continue to care for each other and to keep better track of those who drift away.

5. The person we are looking for

St Michael's is looking for a Vicar who will lead us forward.

A person of Faith

First and foremost a follower of Jesus

- Who has strong knowledge of scripture and is able to turn it into straightforward life-based application.
- Who has a daily and real experience of Jesus that is expressed naturally and enthusiastically.
- Who can help us understand what it means to be Kingdom people in a post-Christian society.
- Who is prayerful and expectant of God's power.
- Who can help us listen to the spirit and discern what is next for St Michael's.

A Leader

A vicar with proven leadership and emotional intelligence who can:

- Discern and articulate bold vision for the next stage of St Michael's life and develop strategies to move us towards that vision.
- Mentor and guide current and emerging leaders within the congregation.
- Encourage and empower everyone to identify and use their gifts.
- Demonstrate perseverance and courage in leadership and care for the congregation.
- Help us to create settings, services and environments in which people with no faith history can find community and encounter God.
- Help us act with the same courage and vision as those who planted St Michael's 50+ years ago and to seek how to share the same Jesus with a very different world.
- Help all of us engage with and listen to culture but be rooted in Christ. Willing to innovate.
- Keep us focussed on Mission beyond the walls of St Michael's locally and internationally.
- Lead the church to reach out and serve the local community.
- Represent us in making or maintaining connections with Chester Link Up Churches, and local schools and community groups.

A Pastor

- Who can encourage our young people and their work to reach the unchurched.
- Identify with and care for all ages through whatever life brings us.
- Show empathy for all age groups and nurture a family church.

6. What makes Chester special?

The city has a population of 81,500 (in 2015).

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 recently created 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 great 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.





St Michael's Church, Chester

Devon Road
Newton
Chester
CH2 2PX

Church Office: 01244 315129
Email: office@stmichaelschester.com

