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REPORT BOOKLET

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Vicar's Report

Well friends, another year has passed. 2024 saw some significant changes amongst our personnel, and was the year when our wonderful Associate Minister Helen, was able to enjoy a well-earned sabbatical.

Following a fall during Holy Week, our faithful, longstanding Parish Clerk and Verger, Arthur, found himself experiencing a long stay in several hospitals, eventually culminating in his residency in an excellent local Care Home.

Arthur's contribution to the life of our Church has been significant over more than 4 decades, and its full extent became more apparent as we found ourselves needing to fill the substantial gap which his unexpected absence and subsequent retirement brought upon us.

We were delighted to host a joyous Evensong on Sunday 10th November to celebrate the past 46 years Arthur has served our Parish faithfully, as Parish Clerk & Verger, with a packed church, including many of Arthur's friends from years' past. Tributes were paid to Arthur in person, and several presentations were made, in appreciation of his long service amongst us.

Now that Church House Cottage has been cleared and cleaned, we have a once in a generation opportunity to consider how we might best use this space, and how that might fit within our vision as a Church. This is currently under consideration by our PCC. A generous offering of £9,000 was raised on our gift day, which has been put aside to contribute towards improvements to the cottage, once its future use has been determined.

First fruits of our new Church vision saw the eventual appointment of Chris Coyston, as our new fulltime Children & Families Minister, following a successful interview process. We are delighted to welcome Chris and his family into our Church, and are excited by what the Lord has in store in the future, especially amongst our younger members.

Lynn Brooks stepped down as our Parish Administrator after seven years of service, as Lynn & John moved to Northamptonshire. We are grateful to Lynn for her hard work and dedication throughout her time with us.

Ben Brice stepped seamlessly into the role, and has done an admirable job as our new Parish Administrator.

Our vision statement is: "To know God's love and to share that love with everyone". These words help to shape all areas of our church life, including how we engage with our local community, and how we seek to ensure that our buildings and facilities are fit for purpose, impacting our parish with God's love in every way.

Recruiting a new Children & Families Minister has taken more than two years, but God's timing is perfect. This appointment has meant a significant investment in the future of our church, and could not be made possible without generous sacrificial giving by members of our church. Thank you. We have also been blessed by a grant of £45,000 over 3 years from Oxford Diocese, which has enabled this appointment to be made possible.

Hughenden Churchyard is the final resting place for countless souls. Mourners, nature lovers, walkers and visitors to Hughenden Manor visit our Church and Churchyard every day. A glance through our visitors book reveals how much people appreciate having the opportunity to visit, and to find an open church. Many comment on the sense of peace that is found within.

The St Michael & All Angels climate/eco group facilitated the installation of a beautiful quiet garden area near the west door of our Church, including a bench, and a solar water feature. It has already become a favourite place for rest and peaceful contemplation for many.

Sadly, we said goodbye to several much loved members of the St Michael & All Angels church family during 2024: Denise Ridley, Meg Freeman, Grantly Hoath, Ian Desborough, Paul Ceurvorst, Mary Harris and Dave Booth. Their memories live on in the hearts and minds of many. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

In October a group attended a Parish Weekend away at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, where our key note speaker on Saturday morning was Associate Archdeacon Canon Chris Bull. It was an enriching time of extended fellowship, teaching, rest and refreshment.

2024 has been an unimaginable period to live in the Holy Land. We have continued to support our link missionaries Fr Kevin & Jen Cable, who are based in Jaffa, although during the troubles, they relocated for some time to Christchurch Guest house in Jerusalem. They returned to the UK for a short visit, and we were delighted to welcome them to Hughenden on Saturday 4th May, where they spoke at our Men's Breakfast, and then hosted a coffee morning, open to all. Speaking with them in person was humbling and eye-opening in equal measure. The first hand accounts they shared with us about life in a war zone made the hairs stand up on the back of my neck. Fr Kevin has since been offered a post as a parish priest in Wisconsin, USA, which they have accepted, and plan to take up in the Spring of 2025. Our connections with the worldwide church were strengthened further in the autumn, when we hosted two lay visitors from Nandyal diocese in South India for a time of sharing and prayer in the Church. I had met these friends during my time on sabbatical in India during September 2024. They were visiting our diocese on an educational trip, and visited several church schools.

Fellowship in person with our brothers and sisters in Christ, both near and far, reminds us that we worship a faithful God who calls us to love, encourage and support one another. It often puts the challenges we face firmly into

perspective, when we hear first-hand accounts of life as a Christian in Israel, India, or other diverse nations.

We hosted some wonderful celebrations over the Christmas period, from Hughenden Singers, Scouts and Schools, to our Christmas Eve services alone, which saw a combined service attendance for our 4 services amounting of 541. Especially popular were the Crib service for families with young children and the two Family Carol services, which we trialled for the first time, following the unprecedented popularity of last year's Family Carols.

Our church wouldn't exist without dedicated volunteers, generously giving of their time and their talents. We are so blessed that Helen is our Associate Minister – her gentle, pastoral approach to the priesthood is life-giving and a joy to minister alongside. Thank you Helen. So too are our Churchwardens – Frank and Andrew. Thank you both so much for your willingness to roll your sleeves up and contribute significantly to the life of our church. If you are wondering how everything seems to go smoothly behind the scenes, that's usually because Frank and Andrew have been hard at work repairing water heaters, organising tradesmen to attend to our historic church building, keeping me on my toes, completing funding bids, compiling rotas and attending countless meetings. Thank you Frank and Andrew.

And thank you as well. If you steward the car park, arrange the flowers, serve refreshments, bake cakes for the Mothers Union Coffee mornings, serve on the Prayer Ministry team, are a bellringer, help with the livestream, operate an iPad, overseeing our Parish Safeguarding, mow the grass, lead intercessions, sing in our music group, choir, play organ or keyboard, or other such contribution to the life and worship of our church. Thank you.

THE FOLLOWING OCCASIONAL OFFICES TOOK PLACE DURING 2024:

- Funerals 22
- Weddings 8
- Baptisms 6
- Confirmations 1

My hope and prayer is that as we seek to more fully embrace our vision as a Church, we might be filled with the fullness of God's love, share that love with others, and build up God's kingdom in Hughenden Parish and beyond.

Rev. Keith Johnson
Vicar

Churchwardens' Report

ARCHDEACON'S VISITATION

The Archdeacon's visitation took place at All Saints Parish Church in High Wycombe, where we were formally admitted into the roles of churchwarden.

HIGH LEIGH PARISH WEEKEND

The High Leigh Parish Weekend, held from 20th – 22nd September, was a resounding success. The attendees were down on the previous occasion due to the weekend clashing with university first days and was not quite as popular as the previous early October sessions. The cost per person had also risen by some 30% so any future activity must note these issues. The weekend focused on how as a church we can build both our faith and involve more within our communities and had a brilliant talk given by the Rev. Chris Bull. The many parishioners attending and participating in the various social and spiritual events really enjoyed it. Frank sends many thanks to all in the organising team for their hard work and dedication in making the weekend a memorable occasion.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & FIRE DRILLS

The Fire Risk Assessment has been completed and reviewed. No significant issues were found; however, we are reviewing actions regarding the safe egress from the ringing chamber and bell tower due to concerns on the potential fire risk from equipment in the Tower Vestry. Fire drills were conducted after 2024 APCM and a specially arranged one on a Tuesday evening for the bell ringing team which included some visitors. All members of the congregation are reminded of the importance of familiarising themselves with the fire safety procedures. Should the alarm ever go off everyone **MUST** immediately leave the building and assemble by the gate at the bottom of the path.

PEST CONTROL

Pest control measures are being managed effectively. Regular inspections are being carried out, and there have been no significant pest-related issues reported in recent months. We will continue to monitor the situation and take any necessary actions to maintain a pest-free environment.

CLEARANCE OF CHURCH HOUSE COTTAGE

The clearance of the Church House Cottage has been successfully completed. This was necessary following Arthur's retirement. The space is now being used for Youth work whilst the Vision Group prepare plans for the longer-term use of this space. Special thanks to all volunteers who assisted with this work as well as Chris the church cleaner and the clearance company we used.

VISION GROUP

The Vision Group continues to meet to discuss the future direction of the church. Recent discussions have focused on the need for toilets attached to the church as well as a dedicated vestry for the clergy team and a possible " Plant and Equipment room for electrical and IT equipment. The group is actively progressing towards the solution that will guide the church's growth and community outreach efforts in the coming years.

DESTRATIFICATION FANS

We are looking at installing destratification fans in the church. These fans are designed to improve heating efficiency by circulating warm air from the ceiling down to the pews, creating a more comfortable environment during the colder months. A team from Hughenden visited East Meon Church in Hampshire to look at an installation and were impressed with these units, feedback from the congregation at East Meon was positive, and we will be trialling a unit to monitor the visual impact and its effectiveness.

CHANGE OF TIME FOR ALPHA COURSE

The Alpha Course which is normally held in the Autumn has been changed to start in February 2025 to test if this is a better option for people wanting to attend.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES MINISTER

Frank was very actively involved in obtaining the grant that enabled the Church to progress with a full time Appointment. 50% of the cost is being financed by the development fund of the Diocese of Oxford and we would like to record our sincere thanks for their involvement and assistance. The appointment commenced on 1st January 2025 and we are delighted that Chris Coyston has joined us in this role.

VOLUNTEERS

As Church Wardens we must reach out to all who volunteer in so many different ways to keep our wonderful Church and the Church Family progressing so well. Thank you so very much. There is so much to do but many hands make light work so if you have not yet considered actively doing something please talk with Andrew or Frank who will be able to suggest activities that you might help in and enjoy.

LIGHTING IN THE CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD

This has been a major issue over the years but we now have a minimum energy lighting system installed in the Church thanks to the efforts of Lionel Erasmus

and the effect of the lighting has been remarkable. The beautiful wall frescos alongside the main altar, now illuminated so well, are an excellent example of this development.

THE PROJECTORS AND SCREENS

We have really seen the benefits of the incredible clarity of these screens in the church and once again our thanks to those who have enabled so many services to benefit from them.

THANKS TO THE CLERGY TEAM

As the Church Wardens are the representatives of both the people and the Bishop we would like to sincerely extend our thanks to our dedicated and very special Clergy Team. Thank You Keith and Helen for all you do make this church such a positive and loving environment and for your teaching and encouragement for all to know Jesus Christ better.

Frank Hawkins & Andrew Cole
Churchwardens

Finance

OVERVIEW

The year 2024 proved to be a lot calmer following significant expenditures in previous years dedicated to repairs, maintenance, and enhancements to our beautiful church. We concluded the year with a small surplus of £921, a testament to the continuing generosity of our wonderful congregation.

VOLUNTARY INCOME

Voluntary income for the year came to £80,799, reflecting a commendable increase of 16% compared to 2023. This rise has brought us closer to fully covering our Parish Share, which remains a key goal. Most encouraging is that this growth has predominantly stemmed from Standing Orders rather than one-off donations, indicating a shift towards more sustainable, regular giving that supports our church's future.

GIFT DAY SUCCESS

Our annual Gift Day garnered an impressive £12,471, dedicated to the upcoming renovation of Church House, planned for 2025. Ongoing discussions are currently taking place regarding the specifics of the planned works, and we will

communicate updates to the congregation in a timely manner. These renovations are anticipated to represent the primary investment in our facilities for the year.

EXPENSES

On the expenses side, utility bills remain manageable, totalling £8,371.95 for oil and electricity in the church and £2,012.92 in Church House. However, general expenses increased to £12,225. This rise can be attributed to the retirement of Arthur Johnson, who faithfully served as our Verger for 44 years, and the transition of Lynn Brooks, who stepped down as Parish Administrator upon her relocation. This highlights the often-overlooked contributions made by our dedicated staff. Ben Brice has since stepped in as Parish Administrator, and Arthur's duties are now being shared among other team members. Nonetheless, the need for outside cleaning services has led to a notable rise in cleaning costs.

NEW LEADERSHIP

We welcomed Chris Coyston as our new Children and Families Minister at the beginning of 2025. His arrival has already positively influenced energy levels and attendance within our community. As we invest in the future of our church, our employment costs will be higher in 2025; however, a 3-year grant from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance will help offset these expenses.

CONCLUSION

As we reflect on 2024, we are grateful for the support and dedication of our congregation. Together, we are building a sustainable future for our church while ensuring we honour the contributions of those who have served before us. We look forward to a year of growth, community engagement, and continued generosity.

Brian Morley
Treasurer

Deanery Synod

Our church is one of the 35 local Anglican churches in Wycombe Deanery, whose vision is to see the churches flourishing individually, working effectively together, and contributing to the renewal of the wider church. This Deanery is one of the most inspired and inspiring Deaneries of our Diocese. Our church is represented by Keith, Helen and myself, though up to three more reps would be allowed, and visitors to the Synod meetings are always welcome. Come with us sometime. There are 4 Synod meetings per year, held at a different church each meeting. The meeting theme follows one of the Synod's four "SF" aspirations: Serving Our Fellowships | Shaping Our Future | Spurring On Our Friends | Sharing The Fire. One of the meetings in 2024 had a particular emphasis on the Environment and Care for Creation, which was of special interest to me, as the Deanery's Environmental Advocate.

Within the Deanery there are small struggling churches and others which are larger and thriving. (I'd say our church is one of the latter). St Mary and St George has been revitalised by a church plant of 35 people from St Andrew's. St Mark's (Bourne End) is likewise beginning a new community at 2pm on Sunday afternoons. Sunday afternoon Wild Church services in the rural areas are supported by Christians from all over our Deanery. Churches with few youth are supported by the Deanery youth work co-ordinator. Our church gives support to activities at St James' Downley. All very worthy, and there is plenty of scope for further partnerships. The Kingdom of God is far wider than one's own parish. Some churches and some individuals within the churches have the vision for such mutual co-operation. Some have yet to see it.

In 2024 the Parish Share was paid in full by every church in the Deanery, and the Deanery thereby earned a rebate in excess of £20,000, which will be given out as grants for mission work to any church applying. Think what our church might apply for.

Rev Dave Bull has been the Area Dean for the last 8 years and particularly inspirational. He has recently been appointed as Bishop of Buckingham (our local bishop). A new Area Dean will be appointed shortly.

Mike Hill

PCC

The PCC met 6 times during the year with the APCM taking place in May 2024.

At that meeting Julia Grant resigned both as Churchwarden and as a member of the PCC. Julia was thanked by the Vicar for her hard work during her time as Churchwarden.

Andrew Cole had been proposed as Churchwarden and agreed to take on the role. He was welcomed by the Vicar and the congregation.

Roger Grant became the only new member of the PCC.

AS OF MAY 2024 THE PCC WAS CONSTITUTED AS FOLLOWS:

Clergy: Rev. Keith Johnson, Rev. Helen Peters

Lay Reader: David Tester

Churchwardens: Frank Hawkins, Andrew Cole

PCC Secretary: Susan Brice (ex officio)

Deanery Synod: Mike Hill

Elected Members: Janet Booth, Clare Godfrey (Lay Chair), Roger Grant, Arthur Johnson, Brian Morley (Treasurer), Antony Rippon, Ben Sharp, Mark Sherrington

As of March 2024 the Vicar asked Clare Godfrey to fulfil her role as Lay Chair and to lead the PCC meetings.

During 2024 the PCC have continued to move forward with their vision for our church, they have considered the future use of Church Cottage and have welcomed Chris Coyston as the new Children's and Families Minister.

Susan Brice
PCC Secretary

Electoral Role

The number on the Electoral Role, after a complete revision this year, is 130. The is down from 178 the previous year.

52% of those on the Electoral Role live in the parish.

Ben Brice
Electoral Role Officer

Safeguarding

INTRODUCTION

- Safeguarding is a standing item at all PCC meetings (see formal obligations below).
- To keep abreast of changes and developments the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) attends regular safeguarding meetings with members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and other PSOs across the diocese.

FORMAL OBLIGATIONS

- Under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 all authorised clergy, licensed readers, ministry group leaders and helpers, churchwardens and PCC members must comply with the safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops (this includes both policy and practice guidance).

THE PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

- Roger Grant, 07909 960938, roger_h_grant@hotmail.com is the current Parish Safeguarding Officer, DBS Recruiter and Verifier.
- He provides safeguarding training for the PCC, the outcomes from which contribute to the church's safeguarding action plan. As a working document, the action plan guides the work of the church in this area.
- Roger has also provided PSO Induction training for the Basic, Foundation and Leadership level courses for the Diocese.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY, GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION

- A copy of our current Safeguarding policy, approved by the PCC, is displayed in the entrance to the church and on our website.
- Guidance on 'what to do if you have a safeguarding concern' is available also on the church website.

SAFEGUARDING LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- With few exceptions, we do very well in ensuring that those performing a ministry role within our church, paid or voluntary, undertake the necessary level(s) of safeguarding training.

SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY

In November, our Vicar led a service to mark Safeguarding Sunday. This important initiative is an opportunity for congregations, across the country, to use their regular Sunday service to listen and talk about how communities can work together to prevent abuse and create a world where every child and adult can feel and be safe.

SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

At the time of this report, there are no recorded safeguarding concerns.

NEXT STEPS

- With our church leaders, including our newly appointed Children and Families Minister, to develop a wider understanding of safeguarding across our church and its community.
- Continue to ensure compliance for all ministry groups in relation to role descriptions, DBS verification and training demands.
- Contribute to the annual safeguarding audit.
- Continue to meet with and to learn from the work of PSOs locally.

Roger Grant
Hughenden Parish Safeguarding Officer

Children & Youth

As a church, we acknowledge the importance of offering a warm welcome and appropriate provision for children and young people every Sunday and the need to build trusting relationships with new families in our community to fulfil our church vision:

'To know God's love and to share that love with everyone, that all may know Jesus Christ, become his lifelong followers, and grow into mature members of the church'.

As I wrote last year, children and young people in our congregation at St Michael & All Angels are a real blessing. It has been a delight again to see them mature this past year, moving on to university, moving up in school year groups and taking on new responsibilities including taking part in All Age services: leading, reading, creating dramas, delivering prayers, and volunteering in the life of the church.

The reality we have faced this past year is that whilst families may support the All-Age Service on the first Sunday, we have seen fewer children and young people the rest of the month.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have faithfully prepared provision for different ages on a Sunday – which may or may not have been necessary: to Lucy Rippon, Ester Comunello, Vicky Eaton, Lucy Leonard, Agnes Dodwell, Janet Booth, Chloe Rippon; Zoe Sharp; Shelagh & Steve Sheppard; Scott Clay; Jen Mueller; Polly Spanring.

The PCC of St. Michael & All Angels has recognized the importance of ministry to children, young people and their families within St Michael and All Angels and in our community and long for it to grow. It was a delight, in January, to welcome Chris Coyston as our Full-Time Children & Families Minister, together with his wife Sue, Lilly & Kayleigh.

Looking forwards we are excited to see how we can work with Chris to further develop relationships with families, to encourage exploration of faith and deepening of faith with all ages and to welcome new families into our church community.

LUCY RIPPON WRITES:

We are delighted to welcome Chris Coyston and his family to the team and look forward to working alongside him to develop the children and youth work in the church.

Bubbles and creche have been very poorly attended over the last months and as leaders we struggled with spending time planning and preparing sessions that were not needed. A huge thank you to the leaders who persevered, Ester, Vicky

and Lucy Leonard who kindly joined the team to support our younger and very able volunteers Chloe and Zoe.

Moving forward we hope that over time we will increase the numbers of children attending church. For now, our aim is to provide a safe and fun space for children Reception age and under to play during the 11 o'clock service, except on the first Sunday of the month.

Safeguarding rules rightly demand that we have two adults aged 18 and over present in North Room. We would love more volunteers please; the role would mean committing to attending church on a particular date with the knowledge you might be called upon to support under 5's in North room. This might involve playing with the toddlers or chatting with parents whilst young ones play. The more people we have on our rota the less you will be asked and there would always be another adult with you. If you feel you can help or have any queries please do email me – lucy.rippon@gmail.com

SHELAGH & STEVE SHEPPARD WRITE:

JC club is a group for primary school children usually meeting in Church House during the 11am service. Currently it is a very small group – some Sundays there are just one or two children – occasionally more, sometimes none – which can feel disappointing.

During 2024/25 we have learned about:

- Jesus always being with us
- Jesus being our friend
- The Ascension of Jesus – making Ascension banners
- We made 'wanted posters' for new Disciples and looked for their names in a word search.
- We have talked about how to grow goodness, love and kindness.
- We learnt about our own talents and how we can use them for others.
- We learnt about Jesus' baptism and made a beautiful craft to illustrate it including a flying dove.

SCOTTIE CLAY WRITES:

The monthly Sunday Youth Group over the past year has been fun and positive, albeit with some of the Sundays having very low attendance. We have had lots of fun playing a game or challenge that I create so that we can all enjoy and interact as a group. We have also had many discussions and covered topics of themes in the Bible such as; What does it mean to you being a Christian, How does Jesus guide us, worry, and a large ongoing theme has been prayer. In addition we have had lots of fun and created a space to chat a little about everyday things and what each of us has been up to over a hot drink and sometimes a choc bar.

A FEW OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Keith, myself and now Chris have continued to take weekly Collective Worship at Great Kingshill School.

As a church we hosted Christmas Unwrapped jointly with Wycombe Youth for Christ for Hughenden and Great Kingshill Year 6. We are currently making plans for them to join us again for Easter Eggplained.

The Scouts enjoyed their Christmas service, and Pipers lower school enjoyed their Christingle with us. Chris hosted a fun morning with Abbey View's reception class who were studying 'Christian artefacts'.

Rev. Helen Peters
Associate Minister

Communications

MEMBERSHIP

Ben Brice, Richard Peters, Guy Mannering, Andrew Collard, Jane Tyrer

During the year, Alison Stacey resigned from the group after many years of service, originally as a representative of the 8 o'clock service. Our grateful thanks go to her.

TECH MATTERS

- After the welcome screen was installed (reported last year) there were a few 'issues' now resolved, thanks to Ben Sharp and Richard Peters, who have also made the screen more automated, to relieve burden on 'Church key holders' from the need to switch on and off.
- More recently the projection screen developed some mechanical problems, which occasioned some quick adaptation and printing from the ministry team.
- Sometimes the live-stream does not transmit, for which apologies, and although this is very occasionally operator error, or indeed unavailability, more often it is a problem outside our control.
- On the plus side, one of our new recruits to live-stream operation (Colin Wilkinson) has gone from strength to strength and provides a much-needed addition to the team. Two more initial volunteers found that other claims on their time meant they were no longer available. We are still therefore in need of additional tech operators INCLUDING for proclaim (using the tablet to move along the words of hymns and readings etc for the 11 o'clock service: which is relatively unskilled!) Please contact me if this is something you feel you could do.

NOTICE BOARDS

Ben Brice continues to mastermind most of the posters for display, and they are generally displayed with remarkable precision. One of the posters created for a charity was so liked by that charity that they asked if they could use it themselves.

BOOKCASES

The area behind the font and the removal of publications to the large bookcase has created a much more visually pleasing and tidy entrance and it seems that fewer items are 'dumped' at the back of church.

CHRISTMAS AND EASTER LEAFLETS

Leaflets were again designed by Ben Brice, and delivered in record time by members of the congregation for which many thanks. (Members of Hughenden Singers also helped with Christmas deliveries, and this was instrumental in ensuring the early deadline to publicise the Christmas Sing- a -long was met)

These leaflets are distributed to each household within the parish, significantly enhancing festival attendance. It is also an important outreach to our parish, to ensure that our presence and vitality is known and recognised.

GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

We contribute regular news from the Church to Hughenden News (quarterly) and Naphill Gazette (monthly).

The Church website carries details of events and of services.

FUTURE

- We hope in the future to be able to enhance visibility of the body of the church for the organist, and to make live streaming controllable from the inside of the church, possibly for use in weddings and other events
- We also seek to enhance accessibility for the visual or hearing impaired.

I continue to be grateful for the involvement, expertise and good sense – and good humour - of all members of the group.

Jane Tyrer
Group Chair

Eco Church

THE CHALLENGE

Human induced climate change and the deepening global ecological crisis will fundamentally affect the lives of all of us and is already having a devastating effect in many developing countries.

As Christians, we believe that God calls us to care for creation, to help those in most need. The Church of England has recognized the climate emergency and has called all parts of the Church to become net zero carbon by 2030.

We are so fortunate to have a beautiful church in a National Trust park and to support us have enrolled with the 'Eco Church' programme, which will bring the care of God's creation to the heart of our Community. We now have an active team who meet regularly to take forward this agenda.

ECO CHURCH SCHEME

Eco Church is an award scheme for churches in the UK organized by a charity called 'A Rocha UK'. It provides a framework and a toolkit of resources to support the Church to take practical action on caring for God's earth. It also provides an action programme to support the improvement of biodiversity, address climate change and make a real difference to nature restoration.

The three awards available are Bronze, Silver and Gold and at St Michael & All Angels we are almost at the first level of Bronze. Our Church building, as a listed ancient church, provides challenges in some areas. However, the resources cover five categories: worship, teaching, buildings, land, community and global engagement.

THE OVERALL AIMS OF OUR ECO CHURCH GROUP ARE:

- To reduce the carbon footprint of our Church building and protect it for the future.
- To understand the habitats and wildlife in our churchyard.
- To improve the habitat for the benefit of wildlife and the facilities for the local community.
- To increase the number of people engaging in nature and encourage their understanding of climate change. To ensure at our services and events, we minimize waste and actively engage with the recycling scheme.

SO WHAT PROGRESS HAVE WE MADE SO FAR?

We are delighted that this year we managed to achieve a Bronze award in January and Silver in June. To achieve this we now have LED lights in the Church replacing most of the old lighting; we have stopped using disposable cups, and review every event in the light of our Eco Church goals; we use Fairtrade products wherever possible and are aiming to purchase 'Green' cleaning products where possible. With an increasing awareness of the environmental crisis, our worship and teaching are frequently focused on the environment and God's creation and this includes the teaching with our children's groups.

We have undertaken an Energy Audit for the church and are currently looking at how some of this can be implemented. We also carried out an Environmental Lifestyle survey with our congregation.

THIS YEAR

This year we have become more active in the environmental management of this space and to encourage wildlife. We installed swift boxes in the Bell Tower when the repair work took place last year and now have a number of nest boxes in the trees in the Churchyard, which are monitored. We also have an 'Owl box' in the grounds for Tawny owls which will be monitored by Bucks Raptor and Owl Group.

We have developed some areas where we can manage the grass to create wild areas to encourage bees, butterflies etc. and also have built a 'Bug & Bee hotel'.

We have recently had a second 'Nature Quest' with a trail around the churchyard to explore the Fauna and Flora and encourage participation in the project and encourage people to engage in other nature events such as the RSPB bird watch.

Every day, churchyards are visited by many people, whether or not they come to Church services and have become extra important as a place for relaxation, contemplation, prayer, or to connect with friends. This is particularly important in our own churchyard, where we have many National Trust visitors to the Church.

QUIET GARDEN

This year we were fortunate to receive funding from North West Chilterns Community Board to create a 'Quiet Garden' at the back of the church. We built this in an overgrown area and it is now a dedicated restful area for people to spend time: with a bench, small water feature and plants to support wildlife. We have had many encouraging comments about how beautiful this area is and how peaceful.

Julia Grant

Mission Support Group

In encouraging our church family in the support of Christian mission, near and far, we have focussed on a different mission in each quarter of the year, inviting a visiting speaker to talk on the organisation's work on a Sunday in that period. Each focus is introduced by articles in Outlook and on the church website, and by displays on our mission noticeboard. This last 12 months, we have looked at: Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) in Apr-Jun; Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) in Jul-Sep; followed by Chosen in Oct-Dec. In Jan-Mar this year, our focus has been Growing Hope.

FORTHCOMING

For the rest of this year, in the quarter Apr-Jun our focus will be Lighthouse, and our own Ben Sharp, Chair of Trustees of Lighthouse Central, will be speaking at our services on 18 May. For Jul-Sep we will focus on A Rocha, a Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world and committed to equipping Christians and churches in the UK to care for the environment. Then for the last quarter, our focus will be YMCA.

CHURCH FUNDING

In addition, the MSG advises the PCC how to donate the church funds it allocates to wider mission causes. Last year (2024), the £7000 was donated as follows:

- £2000 to Church Mission Society (CMS) or to Church's Mission to Jewish People(CMJ), to support Kevin and Jen Cable in Jaffa.
- £500 each to 4 local charities that we support annually: Growing Hope High Wycombe, Love Wycombe, Lighthouse, and Wycombe Youth for Christ.
- £100 to each speaker's focus charity in 2024, i.e. Wycombe Homeless Connection, MAF, HART, and Chosen.
- £300 each to Open Doors, Children's Society, Wycombe Refugee Partnership, Wycombe Women's Aid, and Project Possible.
- £1100 was earmarked to respond to crises/disasters and so, in a follow-on response to the crisis in the Middle East, £550 was sent to Christian Aid to support the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal for the Middle East, and £550 to Kevin and Jen Cable's work in Jaffa.

CHRISTMAS COLLECTIONS

The MSG also recommends the causes to be supported by our collections over the Christmas period. The total for Christmas 2024 was 2765.65, split between Embrace the Middle East, Shelter, and Wycombe Women's Aid. Many thanks to all those who contributed so generously.

KEVIN AND JEN CABLE

During the year we continued to support Kevin and Jen in their difficult ministry in Jaffa, and we were delighted to have them speak in person at events here in our church in May this year, at quite short notice. That visit, and subsequent attacks in Israel, only reinforced in our minds how hard life has been there for over a year now. Indeed, they have felt led to reassess where God is calling them: after much prayer and helpful guidance they have decided that Kevin should accept the offer of a post as rector of a parish in Wisconsin, USA. That move should happen early this year. We wish them well in their new ministry there.

FUTURE CHURCH SUPPORT TO MISSION OVERSEAS

The MSG has considered how the church should support overseas mission after the Cables move on and decided that our main effort should go to support Embrace the Middle East's work in Israel/Palestine or Lebanon (TBC), for an initial trial period of 2 years. The charity's partners in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Israel itself have continued to operate throughout the recent crisis under extremely difficult conditions, demonstrating the love of God to all in need. Indeed, the reports of their work have been incredibly moving and bear witness to the impact Christians can have in the area. Supporting Embrace will enable us to be involved in rebuilding lives in the region in the window of opportunity and hope that the ceasefire provides, however fragile that break in hostilities may be. While we will not have the immediate personal contact we have had with the Cables, and the Santanas before them, we are promised regular updates from a wide range of projects and annual visits from Embrace's speakers. It may even be possible to have visits from some of the partners themselves. With its offices in High Wycombe, Embrace has been working in the area for over 170 years, and we can be assured that they are there for the duration!

YOUR HELP NEEDED!

The MSG also needs the congregation's help:

- To make the link with Embrace work smoothly and effectively, we would like to appoint a church "ambassador" to be the link with the charity. If getting to know the Middle East better, and working to improve it, appeals to you, please do speak to Keith.
- We need people to join the Mission Support Group and to take it forward. After helping to set the group up and leading it for the last 7 years, David and Charlotte Tester will be stepping down in May. Again, please do speak to Keith.

David Tester

Social & Outreach

Last year we saw the church and our community once again enriched by the tireless energy and enthusiasm of the Social & Outreach (S&O) committee, its support team and those all-important participants, as the Church laid on another eclectic programme of events throughout the year. The year started with the New Year's Day Walk, which has become a welcome annual tradition. There was an option for more serious walkers to do a bit extra followed by a group of walkers and non-walkers coming together in Church House for refreshments and some 'bring-and-share' snacks, made all the better by people clearing out their cupboards after the excess of Christmas.

This was followed by an unforgettable Burns Night, ably led by Julia & Roger Grant. 70 people (plus a support team of 17), including many from the community, enjoyed a fantastic evening, which was a mixture of fun and tradition, underpinned by a superb dinner, bagpipes, ceilidh, fabulous decoration and on-the-night support, all of which preceded by extensive pre-event organisation. Post event, the Hughenden Residents Association shared some very positive feedback about what a great evening it had been and offered to organise it next time, citing that they would like to see the Church better integrated into village life.

In March, a team from the Men's Breakfast laid on a Women's Lunch, which was attended by 18 ladies. There were a good mix of age groups with the emphasis being on relaxation and fellowship. Roger Grant led the event and as usual, he was supported by a good team. The feedback from the ladies was that it was a very enjoyable and they would be keen for it to be done again!

In April some 40 people enjoyed a bring & share lunch together in the Mothers Union Garden and, later in the month, this was followed by 'A Night at the Musicals', when a full Church sang along with the Hughenden Community Singers (choir). Although not organised by the S&O committee, they continue to strongly support the choir's programme.

June was a bumper month which started with 10 keen people getting up very early to enjoy a beautiful dawn chorus at Holmfield Wood, which included a short walk and sighting of local orchids and then the Church congregation met on the Rye in High Wycombe for Love Wycombe. Although not organised by the S&O committee, this biennial event provides a vital link with other churches with an opportunity to form and strengthen relationships with other local Christian groups and many others in our community. Those attending were treated to amazing worship courtesy of a fantastic band, which included our very own Andy Spanning on the bass. We ended June with the 'Summer Walk 'n' Talk', organised by Andrew Collard. Around 35 people joined in, which included a small number of people from outside of the Church congregation, making a positive impact on our wonderful community.

The summer BBQ in July was attended by a lower number than usual at around 50 people. Once again, Anu and Lyall Thompson generously laid on a generous offering of drink and food at their home, working tirelessly before and during the event, supported by a team of helpers. Huge thanks go to the Thompsons for their efforts and this year we'll be giving them a well-earned rest. Making the most of the weather, we had another BBQ early September, this time at Church and focussed on youth & families. Later in September and organised by its own committee led by Frank Hawkins, many from the church gathered for another successful parish weekend at High Leigh. In November, we ran the Church quiz, which was quiz-mastered by John Callow. Much work went on behind the scenes to prepare the quiz questions with a delicious 'chip shop' supper for those attending.

Finally, in December, we had a trip to Otmoor nature reserve, near Oxford, to see the spectacle that is a murmuration of starlings. These birds gather in their tens of thousands and can be seen in acrobatic displays across the dusk sky.

We are so grateful that there are many of you who already support and help at the committee's events, even though you're not on the committee, with a number of you being on the Social & Outreach Support Team – thank you. The S&O committee has been struggling with member numbers in recent times, and you may remember me standing at the front of the church in February to 'plug' the committee and explain how important it is to church life. I'm pleased to say that Lucy Rippon and Michael Kitching joined the S&O committee in response to this 'calling'.

We've had a slow start to 2025 as many of the committee members have put much work into progressing the next steps on the Church's 'Vision Programme'. As we look forward to the rest of 2025, the committee needs some 2-3 new members to sustain the regular, varied and high-quality events & activities, that help to nurture the fellowship within the congregation and to continue to draw us closer to the community in pursuit of our Church's Vision. If you do wish to join the committee to help to drive our S&O agenda, we ask that you be willing to help create and plan events and be willing to lead the occasional event or in partnership with someone. Our committee has a fun & friendly feel, with wine and cheese served at most meetings. If this is of interest, please come and talk to me. Finally, we do hope you'll manage to join us for some, if not all, of our 2025 events and as always, we wish to thank the volunteers, and of course our church and community participants, who make it all possible and worthwhile.

Take Care and God Bless,

Antony Rippon
on behalf of the Social & Outreach team

Bellringing

What a lovely year I've had. Thank you to everyone for your help and support and for making my first year as TC such a (scary, but) enjoyable time. Here follows a summary of what we all got up to and have achieved in the last twelve months (in chronological order):

27TH FEBRUARY – 3RD MARCH - THE OXFORD DIOCESAN BELL FUND, LEAP YEAR SPONSORED RINGING EVENT

The year started off with Diane, Keith and Daniel bravely taking on the challenge of ringing continuously for the duration of half of a quarter peal. The purpose was to raise funds for the Oxford Bell Fund a very worthy cause and thanks to the generous sponsors from the Church congregation, raised £158. Sadly, since then Daniel has moved to Yorkshire and Keith has stopped ringing, however with three new ringers, the band is expanding again.

The contributions from the sponsored ringing meant that our branch won the shield for raising the greatest amount per head of membership. The main contributors were Wycombe, Amersham and ourselves, and given that there are 15 Branches and over 400 ring-able towers in the ODG, that was quite an achievement.

14TH MARCH - ANNUAL TOWER DINNER

We had a very pleasant evening at The Full Moon, Little Kingshill for our annual tower dinner in March. This year's dinner will take place on Sat 8th February at The Bull and Butcher in Turville, following a kind invitation from the Tower Captain to ring at Turville Church immediately beforehand.

16TH MARCH - ART MODULE 1 TEACHING BELL HANDLING COURSE

To improve our teaching skills, Cliff and I attended the Association of Ringing Teachers' (ART's) 'Module 1 Teaching Bell Handling' course in Abingdon, and participated in a day full of practical sessions and discussions. We now use ART's teaching methods and techniques and follow their Learning the Ropes scheme with all our learners. The year finished with me gaining accreditation and becoming a member of ART.

16TH APRIL, 16TH JULY & 12TH OCTOBER - THE LORNA NEWTON STRIKING CONTEST

It was wonderful to get through the first two knockout stages to the final, after beating Turville in Round 1 (held at Penn on Tuesday 16th April) and then beating Windsor Curfew Tower in Round 2 (held here on Tuesday 16th July with 18 faults against their 22.5 faults). The latter was a great feat seeing as they won the contest last year. In the final, held at Fulmer on Sat 12th October we came third behind Marlow and Wycombe (I'll perform better next year).

24TH APRIL - FUNERAL OF OUR FELLOW RINGER AND FRIEND, IAN JOHN DESBOROUGH

We said a sad farewell to our friend Ian Desborough in April, after he died on 24th March aged 73 years, following a long battle with leukaemia. He was a very popular, dedicated and reliable member of our band since joining in 2011 (having been a ringer since his childhood) and he was our Tower Secretary for several years too. We were therefore very sad when his illness struck and caused him to make gradually fewer appearances on our practice nights and Sundays. His final appearance with our band, which he made with great effort, was to join us when we rang for the King's Coronation in 2023. Cliff wrote a touching tribute to Ian, from the ringers' perspective, and that was published in Outlook. We rang the bells half muffled for his funeral, and the congregation filed outside to listen to our ringing in memory of him. We have also had his name inscribed into our memorial board in our ringing room.

12TH MAY - BELL SUNDAY

Bell Sunday is an annual opportunity to celebrate the contribution of bell ringers to the life of the church, so we contributed in a very small way by rustling up some homemade shortbread bell-shaped biscuits for the congregation to enjoy with their coffee in Church after the morning service.

19TH OCTOBER - LEARNING THE ROPES SUCCESS

In October Diane passed her 'Level 1 Bell Handling' assessment with flying colours. She is the first ringer at Hughenden to be awarded this certificate and as such, has demonstrated that she's developed sound and safe, basic handling techniques, laying the foundation for good future progress. Well done Diane.

NOVEMBER 11TH - REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

We marked the event in the usual way, ringing half muffled up to the start of the 10.45 am Service of Remembrance. At the end of the section where the names of local servicemen who had died during the two wars were read out, Cliff expertly tolled (& stood) the tenor for one whole pull to signal the start of the 2 minutes silence at 11am. At the end of the two minutes silence, he rang the tenor again for one whole pull to signal to mark its end.

NOVEMBER 12TH - TOM'S NEW ARRIVAL

November also brought the wonderful announcement of the safe arrival of Lyra Maria Annie Davies, daughter to Tom and Mia and granddaughter to Cliff and Annie. We might even be able to look forward to three generations of Davies's ringing here together one day in the future.

17TH NOVEMBER - HOW TO JUDGE A STRIKING CONTEST COURSE

In November I attended a 'How to judge a Striking Contest' course in Bradwell, along with others from local towers.

The year ended with two new potential ringers responding to a recruitment poster in the Church. Lessons have just started with them and with the addition of our current two learners, we look forward to the possibility of increasing our numbers further in the future.

Verity Nicholls
Tower Captain

Flowers

Throughout 2024 and into 2025 St Michael & All Angels has been decorated with beautiful flower arrangements, apart of course, from the two periods during which there are no flowers in church, i.e. Lent and Advent.

Following the flower arranging demonstration at the early part of the 2024, which showed how to arrange flowers ecologically, we have tried various methods, particularly using chicken wire to hold the flowers, with some success but we are still learning. Using floral foam to arrange flowers is definitely the easiest method, but not the most eco-friendly, so we will continue to work at the other methods. We now have a team of six ladies to do the flowers and we would be very happy if anyone lady or gentleman, wishes to join us. We have a Flower Fund so the cost of flowers can be met by this. We had a couple of requests and donations for special arrangements in memory of a loved one, which we were pleased to do.

As usual, daffodils tied into small bunches by members of the team, were distributed to all ladies at the three services on Mothering Sunday. There were several weddings, including that of the daughter of our Associate Minister, Helen Peters. Later there was the wedding of the daughter of one of our team, at which we helped with all the arrangements with very pleasing results.

The Christmas decorations were much admired, with lovely, variegated holly, fir and ivy complemented by gold flowers, baubles, cones and various Christmassy decorations. This year, there were no berries left on the churchyard large holly tree, despite it being covered in October. An early raid by, I suspect, redwings stripped the tree of colour, but they obviously needed the food so it is not begrudged to them.

Another Flower Festival is planned for the August Bank Holiday weekend 2025 with the theme of 'Holidays'. We hope there will be lots of entries – please do have a go. Once again teas will be served so a plea for cakes will be issued in due course. Details will be in the Church Notices and on posters and flyers.

Thanks to all who have helped in any way to make our church look beautiful throughout the year.

Sylvia Clark

Friendship Morning

Throughout 2024 The Friendship Group met on the third Thursday of every month in Church House. We had 30 members on the register. The attendance was steady throughout the year. We provided a range of activities for members to participate in as well as giving them plenty of time to chat. We held a quiz in February and a Soup lunch in March; Alan Jaycock gave a photographic presentation in April and in June Neil Brice gave us an Organ Recital.

On 15th August we had a very interesting visit to the RAF Naphill Officers Mess which had been very kindly arranged for us by Michael Kitching. 21 members of the Group attended along with the Friendship Helpers and Keith and Helen. Everybody enjoyed the visit. There was a Group Photo.

In November we held a very successful Fish and Chip lunch in Church House and in December we enjoyed festive food and sang Christmas Carols accompanied by Nicky Fairbairn which was most enjoyable.

Sadly, as each year passes, we lose much loved members. Jean Godfrey has moved to a support home to be closer to her two daughters as she was no longer able to cope safely in her own home. Ann Bartholomew has been very tired for a long time and is now comfortable in a residential Home and dear Meg Freeman sadly passed away in the Summer. They are all greatly missed. We have also had the pleasure of greeting new members to the group. Those who are no longer mobile enough to attend the group are visited at home.

I would like to thank the dedicated team of kind helpers who are Cathryn Carter, Alison Stacey, Carol Plested, Jennifer Neighbour and Yvonne Cook for all their support and for providing and serving delicious homemade scones and cakes with tea and coffee every month. Yvonne has not been well but I hope she will be able to join us very soon as a participant. I would like to thank Keith and Helen for visiting the group regularly. I would also like to thank all the people who help with transporting members so that they can attend the Group.

I handed over the leadership role to Helen Peters just after my 86th Birthday in the Autumn. I have enjoyed leading the Group for approximately 10 years and I have now joined the group of helpers and can continue to enjoy supporting the Group in a more relaxed role.

Penny Austin

Mothers' Union

Our branch held a variety of meetings during the year. They were a mixture of the work of various charities and topics of general interest. The lunch in May was a very successful innovation and will be repeated.

Our coffee mornings and the Ploughman's lunch in July continue to be a success as outreach into the community. Thanks are due to Dianne, Shirley and Elizabeth for their hard work.

Membership numbers are static which bucks the trend nationally.

Donations to the Women's refuge and various charities provide much needed support to the community and the diocese.

We are indebted to Ben Brice for providing exceptional publicity posters.

We look forward to 2025 with confidence that the MU can provide a thought provoking and helpful contribution to the parish and beyond.

Ann Gee

BAPTISMS

There have been six Baptisms at St Michael & All Angels Church, during 2024 and one in the early part of this year, all taking place on a Sunday and usually at the 11am Family Service. The custom of a Mothers' Union member offering support and presenting a Baptism Card and Gift to the candidates has continued; Nicola Fairbairn arranges for an MU member to be present at this Baptism Service.

During the service, the parents and Godparents learn of the MU support that is available should the family be in need of it. There is always a note accompanying the card and gift introducing the church's 'Hughenden Weekly Baby & Toddlers Group' which includes the monthly Tiny Tots Service. Two members of the church's Tiny Tots Team attend this weekly Thursday Toddlers Group in the North Room, providing coffee, tea, biscuits and support of any kind: this has proved to be a very worthwhile PR exercise and undoubtedly encourages some parents to consider having their child baptised at St Michael & All Angels.

I am very grateful to the Mothers' Union representatives who have attended the Baptism Services. There is no doubt that this representation and support as part of our outreach programme continues to be appreciated and parents plus their families see it as a warm, welcoming gesture.

Nicola Fairbairn

Parish Magazine - Outlook

Another successful year for our magazine which continues to deliver interesting and varied items in a colourful and attractive layout. Again, a big thank you to Ben Brice who produces such innovative design and clever format.

We continue to use The Parish Pump as an aid but are very thankful and grateful to all our contributors, regular and occasional, who help to make the magazine interesting. We welcome the new-this-year regular piece sent in by Mike Bevan which makes for fascinating reading. We would be pleased to receive any articles, stories, poems, items of interest which you, our readers, would enjoy – reports of theatre trips, shows, holidays, adventures, enjoyable books, sports events, fictional stories, etc.

Our grateful thanks go to Andrew Cole and his team who print the magazine each month and particularly to Andrew who delivers copies to distributors for onward delivery through letter boxes. The copies delivered to the Community Shop seem to be taken up each month. Thank you to all concerned. We enjoy our editors' meetings at which we discuss all aspects of producing Outlook and try to develop ideas for future editions. Suggestions from our readership are always welcome.

Sylvia Clark, Christopher & Jane Tyrer, Susan Brice
Editors

Tiny Tots

Tiny Tots has continued to meet weekly in termtime (usually in North Room, or in the summer months, the MU garden) with a monthly service in Church. The monthly service introduces the children to Bible stories, simple songs with piano accompaniment (thank you Nicky!) and prayers. There is also an age-appropriate fun craft activity related to the story, prepared by Charlotte. On these 'service weeks' there are lavish homemade refreshments, supplied by the Tiny Tots Team. We still refer to this monthly event as 'Piano-Cake Church' (named by one of the children). On the other weeks the welcoming team are there to set up and clear away as well as providing tea/coffee/hot chocolate and biscuits, and the 'mums' bring a healthy snack for the children.

We are delighted that Chris Coyston our children & families minister has made himself available to the group and is looking forward to getting to know everyone in the year ahead. The children have already enjoyed Chris's guitar, which he has bought along to lead them in fun songs at the end of their weekly session.

As I emphasise every year, Tiny Tots is very much a team affair. I would again like to thank Charlotte Tester and Jane Tyrer for taking the administrative lead in the group and keeping us well communicated via our WhatsApp groups, and emails. A huge thank you too for the rest of the very committed team: Christine Powell, Nicky Fairbairn and Barbara Willson, Diane Walker who take turns attending weekly sessions, providing refreshments, helping set up, clearing away – and lending a listening ear and prayer when appropriate to mums who need that.

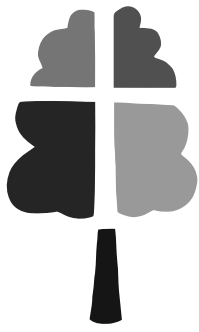
We continue to find that as we build relationships, we gain trust, and so conversations can go deeper. The welcome and friendship aspects of the group make it particularly special to those who attend.

We have a lovely regular core of families who join us on a weekly basis. It's always bittersweet when we say goodbye to our regulars when they leave for school – but we send them off with prayers and little present to remind them of their time with us.

The group is very welcoming of new people – with new faces attending at different times throughout the year.

When I was away on my Sabbatical after Easter, the group enjoyed meeting in the Mothers' Union garden and throughout the summer where the annual Teddy Bear's picnic was celebrated in June. As ever, the MU provided a wonderful picnic for which we thank them enormously, and the beautifully warm weather was an additional bonus.

Rev. Helen Peters



St. Michael & All Angels

CHURCH IN THE PARK | LIVING, LOVING, SERVING