

# THE MESSENGER

## FROM OUR NEW CURATE...



Jonathan Croucher joined St Michael's as a non-stipendiary curate in February 2008. He and his wife Yvette, with their four young children (aged 9, 8, 8 and 7) were attracted to the community at St Michael's after visiting the church in Summer 2007. As well as playing an important role as part of our clergy team, Jonathan looks after our team of musicians and works with our children and young people.

At the end of last year, Jonathan took the decision to leave his full time job in the city and join the St Michael's staff team on a full time basis. We asked him why...

"Is Jonathan mad?" That was the rather curious text Sandy used as his starting point for his sermon at my licensing as a full time curate at St Michael's back in June. Why would anyone give up a successful career in a city law firm to work full time for the Church of England? Well I hope the answer to the first question is short and simple (that's 'no', by the way). The answer to the second takes a little longer.

I qualified as a lawyer in 1994 and have stayed at Taylor Wessing ever since – finally becoming Chief Operating Officer in 2007. I have been very fortunate always to have enjoyed my career and work for a great organisation. For many years, going back to university, I had felt a sense of calling to be ordained. Lawyers are great at prevarication and I put off that decision until 10 years later, beginning training for ordination in 2001 – firmly convinced that God was calling to me to ordained ministry in the workplace.

Since ordination in 2004, it has been a huge privilege to serve in two local parishes as a volunteer curate whilst continuing with a very busy and fulfilling secular job. The last six years have been incredibly demanding, with the excitement of four children thrown in, but they have also been incredibly satisfying. My sustenance comes from knowing that God is Lord of the whole

of our lives – not just 'religious' bits – and that the teaching of Jesus remains relevant and inspiring for each of us in every aspect of our lives. Since many of us spend the majority of our waking hours at work, it is crucial that those ordained in the church can speak both from the workplace to the church, and the church to the workplace.

So why, in light of all of that, make the change? Over the past three years, I've had a growing, 'nagging', sense that God wanted me to move into full time church work. Not an easy decision, and no neon lights in the sky pointing me this way, but that same strong sense that this is the right time, God's time, to take on this very different role.



*Jonathan with his wife Yvette*

It's a little frightening – but enormously encouraging too, thanks to the support of work colleagues, my family and friends here at St Michael's and elsewhere. I hope to meet many more of you in the parish over the coming months.

Jonathan Croucher

# 2

## THE GABLES - VERY MUCH A PART OF ST MICHAEL'S



The Gables, which is at the Lee Road end of Blackheath Park was built in 1896 as two separate private houses. For over 25 years it has been a care home for adults with learning difficulties and is divided into four comfortable, well-appointed, self-contained flats with three or four residents sharing each flat. During the week residents enjoy their activities at day centres and every so often are taken on holidays by members of the staff.

## WHY WE LIKE COMING TO ST. MICHAEL'S

I asked some of "our" children aged 3-10 recently why they came to St Michael's and what they liked about what they did.

Answers to the first question resulted in

*"It's the nearest church";*

*"My Dad's the Vicar, and my Mum runs Sunday School and I like doing the readings in church";*

*"My Mum persuades me to come";*

*"I've been coming all my life".*

Several children said *"I come because it is fun"*, whilst others said *"I come to learn about Jesus and to have fun and play games"*.

In terms of what people enjoyed about what they did every Sunday the picture was one of activity:

*"I like making things, such as the crowns we made and all the crafts*

St Michael's is very pleased that The Gables lies within its parish boundaries and feels privileged indeed to welcome some of its residents who are regular, faithful and active members of the church. They take full part in the services and enjoy singing the hymns and songs. They are very friendly and caring and especially like the buzz and talk over coffee and biscuits in the hall after morning service. One of their number helps with distributing the service books and sometimes plays the guitar in the services.

From time to time there have been rumours that The Gables would close, but still it remains as a very fine example of what a good care home should be. Long may it continue!

*we do"; "I like dressing up like when we dressed up as Noah, and as a shepherd (though I didn't have a real sheep); "One of the best things was wrapping everyone up in toilet paper, like mummies" (a session about rising from the dead I understand); "I like the football and cricket after church".*

One person said that she especially liked giving money to the collection *"because we collect money to give away to other people in other countries."*

*"I like playing games and having fun here....there's always so much to do"* was the phrase I heard most often.

by Sarah Burnard

# St Michael & ALL ANGELS

## MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE

Ever since St Michael's opened its doors in 1839 it has supported the work of the Bible Society, the organization that provides Bibles to everyone in the world who wants them, in their own language and at a price they can afford.



You see, without the Bible there would be no St Michael's or any other Christian church. We wouldn't know what the gospel was and we wouldn't know about Jesus - what he said or what he did.

The people who work in Christian relief organisations wouldn't know that when they give relief to the hungry, the poor, to refugees or the homeless they are doing the very things that Jesus tells us to do.

The Society is completely inter-denominational and works hand in hand with all churches - Church of England, Roman Catholics, Baptists, Orthodox and others. It has staff in over 200 countries, even in places of conflict like the Palestine Territories and Israel.

There are many people in the world who dream of having the Bible they can afford in their own mother tongue. St Michael's will continue to support the Bible Society in its work to make that dream come true.

by Peter Moss

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## ALDINGTON HOUSE



Pete Moss's article in a recent Messenger made me think about St. Michael's commitment to and involvement with older and vulnerable people in the parish.

Over the years many individuals have, informally and willingly, looked out for people who live on their own and who are lonely and isolated. There have also been close links with residential establishments including Morden College, Drake Court (now closed) and Aldington House where sadly some people are also lonely and feel a sense of isolation even though they are well cared for.

For most residents there may have been no real choice about entering residential care. There is a great variation in how people adapt to their new environment and for many the transition to residential care is eased by relatives and staff, for others the move is not always seen as a positive one.

Marian Curtis and Rachel Povey began visiting Aldington House some years ago; when Marian left we joined Rachel, offering a brief monthly Sunday service. Whilst recognising we do have a captive audience, we do get a sense that residents value the visits, the social contact, the singing of hymns and the spiritual content. When you first visit Aldington House

you could feel that the residents are static figures staring into the middle distance but this is certainly not the case. We are now recognised as regular visitors and people are pleased to see us and have conversations with us.

We very much enjoy talking with everyone, getting to know their stories and their concerns. People in residential care in Blackheath are members of the parish and we cannot ignore their social and spiritual needs. We have been privileged in getting to know people at Aldington House and would like to visit more often. If anyone is interested in visiting with us we would be glad to hear from you.

by Jenny Pringle-Kanga

## ST MICHAEL'S CRICKETERS COMPLETE VICTORIOUS SEASON

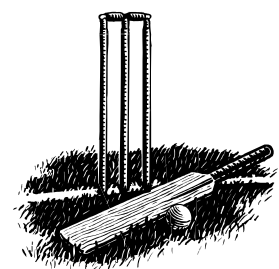
St Michael's cricket team won all their four matches for the first time this season, finishing with an emphatic seven-wicket victory over St Margaret's on a balmy early autumn day in Greenwich Park on 12 September.



Batting first St Margaret's, who had never played before, scored 76 for 9 in their 25 overs, with captain Neel Dakshy and Nick Reynolds top scoring on 25 and 23, and St Michael's then knocked off the runs with ease. Hugh Ridsdill Smith retired after making 23, but the 32 extras (including 26 wides) really won the day.

St Michael's had started the season in fine style with a convincing 26 run victory over St John's in the Park on June 6, scoring 129 for 5 and bowling them out for 103 to win the inaugural Richard Chiesman cup.

On a hot July 18 summer Sunday a far stronger St Michael's



team easily beat St Nicholas to retain the Mallone Cup. The All Angels batted strongly to reach 182 for 6 and then bowled St John's out on the final ball of the match for 97.

A week later in Eltham they beat All Saints by 33 runs, scoring 126 for 6 against their opponents' 93.

by Our Sports Correspondent John Bartram

# 4 WHAT'S ON IN ST. MICHAEL'S

## SERVICES IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

St Michael's is a Church of England Church, and our main morning service is at 10.30 a.m. The first Sunday of the month is a shorter all age service, and on the other Sundays children leave for Sunday school after about 15 minutes. There is a crèche for under 3's. On the second and fourth Sunday of the month the service includes communion.

The evening service at 6.30 p.m. is quieter and more reflective, with communion on the first and third Sundays of the month.

Book of Common Prayer Communion service is at 9 a.m. on the fourth Sunday of each month.

Raise the Praise on the third Sunday of the month at 5 p.m., a half hour service designed for children under 8 and their families, which is followed by tea in the hall.

### Special services

3rd October - *Harvest Festival*

31st October - special evening *Youth service*

14th November - *Remembrance Sunday*, with an evening service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving for those who have been be-reaved

28th November - *Advent Sunday*, with Advent Carols in the evening

## ST MICHAEL'S SPORTS CLUB

Are you in school years 3-6?  
**DO YOU LIKE PLAYING GAMES AND HAVING FUN ?!**  
Come along and join us on alternate Wednesdays from 5pm to 6pm at St. Michael's Church Hall.



St. Michael's Sports Club is about having fun, learning new skills and making friends. Every week we play a sport or game. We start with warm-ups, some special skills-build sessions, and we always play a match at the end of each session.

This is our programme for the autumn term:

6th October – Table tennis

3rd November – Football

17th November – Cricket

1st December – Family Party!

**BRING YOUR FRIENDS!**



**ALL ARE WELCOME !!**

Want to find out more? Email  
Sarah at: [sarah@rosepeach.co.uk](mailto:sarah@rosepeach.co.uk)

# St Michael & ALL ANGELS

## FROM THE REGISTERS

### Thanksgivings

29th August 2010 - Isobel Grace and Abigail Rose Cawthorne

### Baptisms

5th Sept - Charlie James Hewson

### Weddings

4th September - Georgia Akuffo-Kumih and Dusan Bozek

11th Sept - Karen Pinkney and Martin McLaren

### Funerals

August - Vera Maggs

September - Mary Skipper

## ASK SEEK KNOCK

The next prayer meeting will be on Thursday 7th October at 8.15 – 9.30 p.m. in the Church Hall and then on Thursday 4th November at the same time – you are welcome.

If you have any specific requests for prayer or would like someone to listen and pray with you, please do contact Sandy Christie, our Vicar on 020 8852 5287. All calls will be treated in the strictest confidence.

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## St Michael's: making time for the things that matter

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