

4 WHAT'S ON IN ST. MICHAEL'S

SERVICES IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

St Michael's is a Church of England Church, and our main morning service is at 10.30 am. 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 6.30pm is quieter and more reflective, with communion on the first and third Sundays of the month.

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

Raise the Praise is on the third Sunday of the month at 5 pm, a half hour service designed for children under 10 and their families, followed by tea in the hall.

25th September -

Back to Church Sunday

Joe and Lauren

We are looking forward to welcoming Joe and Lauren Crisp-Hihn to St Michael's as our new youth workers. It is an eventful year for them as they have both just completed the three year Christian Youth Ministry Course at Ridley College, Cambridge, were married in March and they will be joining us in September with their dog Betsy.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK



Christian Aid Week is one of the most prominent acts of Christian witness in the UK and Ireland. During the week in May, around 200,000 people joined with others in their churches and communities to give, act and pray for lasting change in the world. St Michael's Church was no exception and we are delighted to be able to let you know that we collected a best ever total of £4,391.69. We are truly grateful for the generous donations from those within our parish boundaries and the final total proves individuals *can and do* make a difference – *thank you*.

At the time of going to press, Christian Aid had just launched an emergency humanitarian appeal to help people across the east and Horn of Africa after two failed rainy seasons left 10million people on the brink of starvation. From HIV awareness raising to supporting human rights, Christian Aid doesn't just tackle poverty – it challenges its causes. To find out how Christian Aid and its partners are working to bring an end to poverty around the world - tackling its root causes as well as its effects visit

www.christianaid.org.uk

Daphne Clifton

St Michael & ALL ANGELS

FROM THE REGISTERS

Weddings

11 June - Jonathan Gordon Evans and Victoria Caroline Wadham

Baptisms

29 May Thomas Jobling

5 June Edward Salisbury

12 June Daniel Saunders

10 July Milo Shire

17 July Arthur Longman

24 July Rosie and Scarlett Rogers

Funerals

Patience Harper

John Hough

John David

Rose Howell

Janice Goodwin

Margaret Tyzack

ASK SEEK KNOCK

The next prayer meeting will be on Thursday 8th September at 8.15 – 9.30 p.m. in the Church Hall.

While Sandy our vicar is on Sabbatical until October, if you have any specific requests for prayer or would like someone to listen and pray with you, please do contact Jonathan Croucher, our Curate on 020 8852 6913. All calls will be treated in confidence.

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St Michael & ALL ANGELS

THE MESSENGER

MARRIAGE AND THE CHURCH



Since working full time at St Michael's, I have been involved in many more baptisms, marriages, and funerals and it is a privilege to meet and get to know people when they are dealing with significant moments in their lives. Yvette, my wife, and I have just run a marriage preparation course with four couples who are marrying soon. It has helped everyone think carefully about what marriage is and how to work together to nourish a marriage relationship that brings great joy and sustains one another through thick and thin.

But if you are going to be married why get married in church? The Church of England's research highlights three main reasons – venue, vows and vicar.

More and more people choose to be married at St Michael's because it's such a beautiful setting and with simplified rules about who can be married where, we are able to open the doors to many more people from outside the parish. After years of decline the Church of England is reporting an increase in church weddings across the country and not just in their beautiful buildings. There is more to it.

And so we come to the vows and the sheer beauty of the Anglican wedding service. The introduction to the service, and the vows themselves, all speak so deeply of who we are, of what we are doing in marriage, and of God's plan for two people who come together as husband and wife. And so we pray not just for mutual love and companionship, but for holiness and commitment; we promise not just to love, but to cherish; to honour with my body and share all that I have, but also to give all that I am.

Our service talks of marriage being a "gift of God in creation through which husband and wife may know the grace of God". I love those words – because it speaks to the depth and mystery of human relationships, but also of the reality of God's grace – his unearned love for us – which the love between two people coming together in marriage flows out from.

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In my experience of many weddings in many different settings nothing comes near our liturgy for beauty and depth of meaning.

The final V is for vicar - from the other side of the chancel steps, it is a privilege to meet couples of all ages and from all walks of life and to walk with them on the journey from engagement through the months of planning to their wedding day. The marriage service begins with a wonderful outline of the purpose and nature of marriage and includes the charge that no-one should enter into it lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in the sight of Almighty God. And our marriage preparation at St Michael's is designed to help couples do just that.

"Marriage is a gift of God in creation through which husband and wife may know the grace of God. It is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind, as Christ is united with his bride, the Church."

Jonathan Croucher

An innovative way of planning a church wedding by web has been a surprise hit with couples. What began life as a pilot less than two years ago is now at the heart of one-third of Church of England weddings, statistics suggest. www.your-churchwedding.org draws a third of a million visitors a year (27,000 unique visitors a month) and since its launch in October 2008 has been used to plan more than 28,000 of about 90,000 Church of England weddings.



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

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43 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE



Genesis Chap 2 v24
"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh"

When we get married we all have hopes & dreams of a happy future life together. But a happy marriage is far from easy. It has to be worked

at. It is important to put God first in our lives. We need to set aside time to pray and read the Bible with our partner asking God to fill us with his Holy Spirit and give us strength to face the challenges of the day ahead.

You may experience many problems including financial pressures and different ideas about bringing up your children. Don't bottle things up – keep the communication lines open. As you discuss problems you will learn to trust each other and establish a mutual sense of values and common objectives. If you commit your relationship to God and make a conscious decision to put God and your partner first your marriage will be able to weather any storm.

It is important to meet and worship with other Christians; by going to church regularly and joining a Bible study group. This will strengthen your faith and your relationship with each other and other Christians. "And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another." (Hebrews Ch. 10 v 24 & 25).

It is important to have interests in common which we can do together and to find time to relax and go out, especially when the children are young, say once a week for a meal, to the theatre or cinema or visiting friends.

KEEPING THE ROMANCE ALIVE

It is the little things that are the big things. Remembering to say "I love you"; speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways. If you have had a quarrel it is important to forgive and forget. Never go to sleep angry Keeping your marriage strong is something you have to work at. But building a good marriage is not that complicated or difficult if you are willing and committed to make it work. A sense of humour can often save the day!! It is not only marrying the right person it is being the right partner!

Celia and Stewart Herdon

St Michael & ALL ANGELS

tearfund

Tearfund partners in East Africa are stepping up efforts to help people going hungry due to drought, failed harvests and rocketing food prices.

Around ten million people are suffering as a result of the crisis that is mainly affecting parts of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia.

UNICEF is warning that two million children are malnourished as a result of the drought, and half a million could soon die or suffer long-lasting mental or physical damage.

The Kenyan government has declared a national disaster in the north of the country. Most people in this area rely on cattle and other livestock to make a living and Tearfunds partner, Community Christian Services of Mount Kenya East (CCSMKE), is transporting water by tankers to assist them, as well as carrying out new assessments of need to boost their response.

Over the last ten years, CCSMKE has been helping communities become better able to cope with drought conditions, for example by training people to build dams to store water. A recent Tearfund report said that for every £1 invested in these types of activities, communities saw a benefit equivalent to £24.

Last week, Tearfund launched an appeal for East Africa, which you can support by contributing to St Michael's collection or by making a one off donation through their website at:

www.tearfund.org

Francesca Stidston

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MULTICULTURAL MARRIAGE

The headmaster of my single-sex boarding school wanted to improve contact with a nearby girls' boarding school, but he may have felt that marrying the head girl was going too far! A boy from conservative rural Kent brought up white Anglo-Saxon Protestant in a tiny and conventional family, a girl Straits Chinese who grew up a Buddhist in a huge network-family in multi-ethnic Kuala Lumpur. It took three weddings on two continents – register office, church and tea-ceremony – to finish the job. Then followed much learning, like how to use a Chinese bath (tricky) or address aunties (impossible, the Almanac de Gotha is simpler), or that it's tea before six, whiskey after. We had little in common, and still don't: Kim likes music and gardening and cooking, I prefer theatre and bicycles and reading, so there is an endless process of giving and receiving.

Mixed relationships were less common in the early seventies, and attitudes were different then: we would have been arrested had we gone to South Africa (Chinese were coloured, Japanese were white, but it was the shade of their money which counted), and we attracted a few odd looks but no hostility from anyone who mattered. The Chinese and English are similar in that it takes a while to be accepted but once you are they are loyal.

Kim's parents moved to UK when they retired. Their decision was much more courageous than ours, to re-locate after one's working life and leave behind familiar culture is risky. 'Where are the grandchildren, then?' was



implicit, so two grandchildren were arranged, and our boys have grown up drawing on both cultures from which they come. We have never found that this causes any problem, and the interplay has all been on the plus side, although it has not been so easy for some other people.

We have no particular message to offer – after all, every marriage is a mixed marriage. Only this, that the things that seem to distinguish partners are not problems, they are a chance to share and learn and love. After nearly forty years we can not see any other way of looking at the world, though there is still room for surprises.

Jonathan Causer

St Michael & ALL ANGELS

SUMMER OF CRICKET

Cricket brought St Michael's and two local churches together. St Michael's retained the Ron Mal-lone Cricket Cup on 3rd July by defeating St Nicholas, Kidbrooke, but as the rain poured down on 17th July, All Saints, Blackheath, were the victors. Captain Richard King, takes it seriously and Ian Wilson's banter is our secret weapon, but these are social games and the tea break is always a highlight.

All ages get involved too. Best bowling figures against St Nicholas' were Barney Pitts, 15, with 3 wickets for 9 and he even broke a bat with his pace. Man Of The Match against All Saints was Matt Ridsdill-Smith, 15, with an outstanding debut with the gloves. The games are family affairs with five Ridsdill-Smiths playing in one game. Hugh R-5, bowling for the opposition, clean bowled his oldest son but failed to catch son Jonny, 12, who scored 22 not out.

With two more games this season it will be hard to beat Chris Longman's 27rtd off just 12 balls. However there will still be plenty of diving (or falling) catches like those taken by Roy Botley to keep the crowds entertained.

Sam Macaulay

