

THE MESSENGER

ST MICHAEL'S ON MISSION GREEN

In line with a general movement within the UK wide church, St Michael's has been making efforts over the last year to reduce its carbon footprint, encourage green initiatives among the congregation, and take care of the planet. It falls in line with our commitment as Christians that we look after God's creation.

With that in mind, St Michael's has appointed a green champion from among the congregation, Hannah Dunstan. The plan is that our approach to green issues within the church is two pronged - changing the habits and reducing the carbon footprint of the church organisation, and spreading the word about green issues and encouraging the congregation to take up the challenge. Monthly eco-tips have been published in the pew news sheet and emailed to the congregation. We organized a highly successful "Walk to Church" Sunday in March on a gloriously sunny Spring day with a 'spotters guide' to nature in Blackheath distributed for walkers to tick off on their way, and we also had a vegetarian Harvest Lunch in the Autumn, which was very well attended. At the lunch, children and adults made insect hotels to take home and put in their gardens in an effort to encourage wildlife in the gardens around Blackheath.

Moving forward, we are developing plans for furthering the green agenda at St Michael's. A recent meeting reviewed where we are at with our green commitments according to the church checklist published by Christian green charity Arocha, and there are plans to have regular check-ups and review progress on a quarterly basis. There are several charities that publish green guides and action plans for churches, and we intend to implement their recommendations over time.

St Michael's already recycles, composts its garden and flower waste, has a dry garden, energy saving light bulbs, and uses Fairtrade products. In addition the plan is that the new development of the PRISM project building works will further reduce our carbon footprint through encouraging energy efficiency. Heating and lighting will be more efficient, glass doors to the porch allow views and daylight into the church whilst keeping heat in. Ideas we plan to implement immedi-

ately include investigating water efficiency in the halls, researching the eco policy of our energy suppliers, encouraging wildlife into the garden, using green cleaning products and examining our paper use.

The principles behind the green tips and the overall plan for the church green mission is to stage it and make it seasonal. In respecting the seasons and the natural rhythm of the time of year, we hope that we'll be in tune with the congregation and their needs and intentions for going green. Equally, we have set review months in the church of January, April and September each year to implement plans along different themes such as energy consumption, reducing waste, celebrating nature in worship and prayer, educating children and young people, and so on. We intend to repeat the Vegetarian Harvest Lunch this year, and you are all warmly invited to attend, bringing a dish or not, and sample some delicious vegetarian fare after church in the hall on Sunday October 11th.

Looking after God's creation is a critical responsibility for us all as citizens, and is particularly pertinent to a Christian outlook on the planet. Climate change unfairly impacts our most vulnerable citizens in developing countries and is a heavy tariff on generations to come. Using our resources fairly and wisely is the way forward. We look forward to seeing you at Harvest Lunch. Hannah Dunstan



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50 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

(In a previous Messenger we started the story of Sheila Baughen who left St Michael's 50 years ago for Chile – she is still there and still engaged in God's service).

On arrival in Chile I knew this was going to be my home for my lifetime, though how this was going to work out I could not imagine. I had 13 years of happy service as Secretary to the Anglican Mission, first briefly in Temuco then on to Santiago to set up a mission office and carry out essential administration.

A new movement of God was beginning in Chile with a strong influence from Argentine Pastors, bringing a fresh insight into the meaning of the Kingdom of God and vibrant church growth through house groups and disciple-making. The Lord had prepared me by sending a missionary with Navigator training who lived a year with me and shared her disciplined and Spirit filled life with me. The experience of seeing two girls multiply into 12 women and young men in one year was life-changing for me.

Some time after my arrival in Chile I had I counselled a young girl called Rosa Coñoman who was converted during our Sunday meetings. Today Rosa is my faithful friend and companion in our house in Maipu Santiago. After much heart searching, and experiences with the Lord, I received a 2nd call, this time to be in Chile working as a fulltime secretary in secular work, and collaborate with a newly formed Christian community under Chilean leadership and with no support from the UK. This decision was not taken lightly and the Lord supplied for my return to Chile from England in 1978 and within a couple of weeks, I found a job and a place to live. I ended up in a Swiss company where I worked for 22 years until retiring in 2001 at 61 years. For me, being a "normal" church member was more effective than being a "foreign missionary", though there is room for both calls and styles of missionary work. I have been able to disciple many women who are now serving the Lord and making disciples. Most of them have needed much healing and teaching over a period of years.

Since "retirement", living in my own little bungalow on the western edge of Santiago, I have been mainly serving the elderly and handicapped people in and out-

side the church for several years. Rosa is still with me and we have invited another Christian woman with no home to live with us.

The adventure continues. The Lord is teaching us to love in a practical way and some very "strange" neighbors with problems are looking to us for spiritual and practical help all the time. We try to meet with some of these on Thursday evenings for Bible reading and prayer. Our life is very busy, with home meetings and visits to the sick and discouraged. A lively group of women of all ages, with whom I have been meeting and studying for about 5 years are now continuing to influence the lives of others, and we started a new group in the home of a terminally ill Christian woman. All the glory for the Lord who with His love touched my life in the early 60's in St. Michael's Blackheath!



Sheila (third from right) with friends

UNITED NATIONS' PRAYER

In the light of the turmoil and tragedy in our world today **The Prayer of the United Nations** is increasingly relevant for us all:

"Oh Lord, our planet Earth is only a small star in space. It is our duty to transform it into a planet whose creatures are no longer tormented by war, hunger and fear, by race, colour and ideology.

Give us courage and strength to begin this task today so that our children and children's children shall one day carry the name of "Mankind" with pride".

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PRISM

St Michael & ALL ANGELS

PRISM (Preserve, Restore and Improve St Michael's) is our appeal for essential repairs to the outer stone work including the tower and spire, and much needed improvements to the church itself, including new heating and lighting. We are seeking to raise about £720,000, and this is a short report on progress to date.

We already reported that we had raised over £400,000 with the benefit of gifts, legacies and pledges, mainly from members of the congregation. We have also been seeking gifts from other residents of the Cator Estate, alumni of St Michael's and grants.

As of the beginning of July we had received from the Estate residents 45 gifts, totalling with Gift Aid £8,280, and from the Alumni £2,270, again with Gift Aid. Thank you very much to everyone who has donated so far. This, with the other fundraising activities, took us to just over £421,000. This means we still have a long way to go before we can start the planned repairs and improvements.

Once we have received the final planning approvals we will be able to make further grant applications, including to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Unfortunately the two grant applications we have made so far have been unsuccessful.

Please consider how you might be able to support this vital project to ensure the future of this wonderful building at the centre of our community. All further offers of practical help or financial contributions, great or small, would be hugely appreciated.

Chris Ashworth

MIDSUMMER MADNESS

At the end of June we had a great party, Summer Madness with over 100 people enjoying a hot and sultry evening in fantastically decorated Church Gardens and Halls with a large thank you to all who worked on those decorations. We even had a large stone piece propping up the food and wine tent from one of the pinnacles to demonstrate the urgent need to commence the restoration work- we are hoping none of the rest of the building comes loose whilst we are running the Appeal!

With delicious food and cocktails from Ruby & Norm and fantastic music played by a versatile 7 man band called the Chillbillies, playing lots of old favourites through the evening and various senior members of St Michael's strutting and showing their moves on the dance floor it was an evening to remember.

PRISM – IT'S ALL HAPPENING

St Michael's took part in an architectural treasure hunt at the end of June raising money for PRISM through sales of delicious cakes and coffees/teas.

Great thanks to both Maggie Holland and Nancy Lowe who raised a magnificent £1,136 with their Open Gardens afternoon in June. The sun shone and well over 100 people happily wandered between the two gardens enjoying the wonderful displays of plants and flowers and rounding off a perfect afternoon with a welcome cup of tea and a selection of delectable home-made cakes.

Upcoming: We are not finished yet; indeed we have hardly started. Susan and Roger Taylor are opening their garden at 28 Morden Road for PRISM on Friday 21 August - 6-8pm. Please also book your tickets for the Indian Summer Quiz and Curry Night at 7pm in the Church Halls on Saturday 19 September 2015; £20 per ticket, teams of up to 8. Then for the piece d' resistance the grand, Black Tie Masquerade Ball on Saturday 24 October 2015 at Blackheath Junior School...a wonderful chance to dress up and enjoy a very special occasion.



Midsummer Madness - Dancing the light fantastic!

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WHAT'S ON IN ST. MICHAEL'S



CHURCH SERVICES

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 6.30 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 pm, a half hour service designed for small children and their families, which is followed by tea in the hall.

Special services

27th September: Back to Church Sunday.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Weddings:

23rd May - Michael Potts and Alexandra Harris

13th June - Sarah Benefield and Daniel Smith.

4th July - Hamish Reeves and Tamsin Ashworth

Funerals:

10th June - John Toogood

1st July - Mary Bettles

GREENWICH FOOD BANK

As many of our regular congregation already know there is a container at the back of the church for donations to the Greenwich Food Bank. Sadly the need for a food bank locally is still great and the organisers have asked that we highlight certain items as they never seem to have enough to meet demand. At Christmas and Easter the contributions flow in, but naturally people still need help throughout the whole year.

Toiletries are a case in point, there is soap, but toothbrushes and toothpaste are always in short supply. They have also asked for body lotion; so important now the sun is out. Also fruit juice, this of course this must be long life not fresh juice.

The organisers have asked me to stress how grateful they are for all contributions and to remind everyone that one extra item on your weekly shop makes a huge difference to people who would otherwise go without, sometimes even the basic necessities. If you are not at church you may wish to drop off contributions with Marion Lane at the church office – which is open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings.

DON'T FORGET OUR PAINTING AND PHOTO COMPETITIONS

If you are a talented artist or a camera wizard, then do enter these competitions, open to all ages with different categories. The full terms and conditions are available on the website but note that entries for the Photo competition close on 4th October 2015 and for the Painting Competition on 18 October 2015, which we have extended to encourage local schools to take part in the junior categories.

You never know your work may turn into a Christmas card as well as winning the grand prize!

In addition Claude Perrera, a well-known local artist, has done some fantastic colour prints of the Church Tower and Steeple. Framed prints, which are signed by the artist, are available for purchase in the church office and a wide range of colour examples are available. Claude is kindly donating all the money raised to the PRISM appeal.

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

Prayer at St Michael's

Why do we pray together? Because Jesus told us to. What do we expect when we pray together? Jesus says "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you". Because prayer works.

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

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