

# FAMILIES AT ST MICHAEL'S

St Michael and All Angels, Lower Church Road, Sandhurst, Berkshire, GU47 8HN



We aim to be a church where people of all ages and backgrounds can encounter God and grow in faith. We are well aware of the busyness and pressures of family life, and of the challenges that parents face in bringing up children in today's world. This booklet tells you about activities for families at our Church, and includes resources for helping you to share faith at home.

Our **Family Service**, **Kidz Church**, **Baby and Toddler Time** and **youth meetings** are regular activities that are geared to families and children of different ages. In addition, the *Start!* and *Moving On!* courses, **house groups** and **Sunday sermons** (most of which can be read or listened to on the monthly services page) help adults to explore the Christian faith, and grow closer to God.

We also encourage people to attend external events run by *Care for the Family*, *Spring Harvest*, *Big Church Day Out* and other organisations.

## Family Service 11:15am

1st & 3rd Sundays of the month, including school holidays

The Family Service is informal and child friendly, with action songs and an interactive talk, and is a place you really can come to with small children and not worry how they will behave!

Refreshments are served in the church from 11:00am; worship begins at 11:15am and lasts about 45 minutes.

Come and meet other families and make friends.



## Children & the Parish Communion Service 9:30am

**Kidz Church** provide age-related activities in the Pastoral Centre, for children aged three up to school Year 5, every week. There is something for the **Kidz Church** age group all year round.

**Kidz Church** sessions run in the Christmas and Easter holidays and also aim to have a short bible-based story on DVD on the Sundays which fall in the Summer break.

Children should come to the Pastoral Centre by 9:25am to be registered, except on the 2nd Sunday of the month, when we all meet in church to take part in the beginning of the service. The group leaders bring the children into the church for the last part of the service every week.

We don't currently have a crèche, but arrangements can be made at short notice to care for children under three years. Please ask one of the welcome team or a children's group leader.

The group leaders bring the children into the church for the last part of the service. For young children staying in the service there are play-bags for them to enjoy – please ask one of the welcome team.

## Church ?

I don't know what your expectations are of what Church might mean for you and your family. At St Michael's we aspire to be a friendly community that offers everyone a welcome, and where people of all ages and backgrounds have the chance to meet others, receive and give support and encouragement, and experience God in a meaningful way.

As a church we are totally committed to serving people of all ages, including babies, teenagers, couples and single adults. Our vision of church is that everyone has a part to play, and nearly all the work is done by volunteers. We recognise that none of us is perfect, and that God takes us as we are, helping us to grow and develop as people and as Christians.

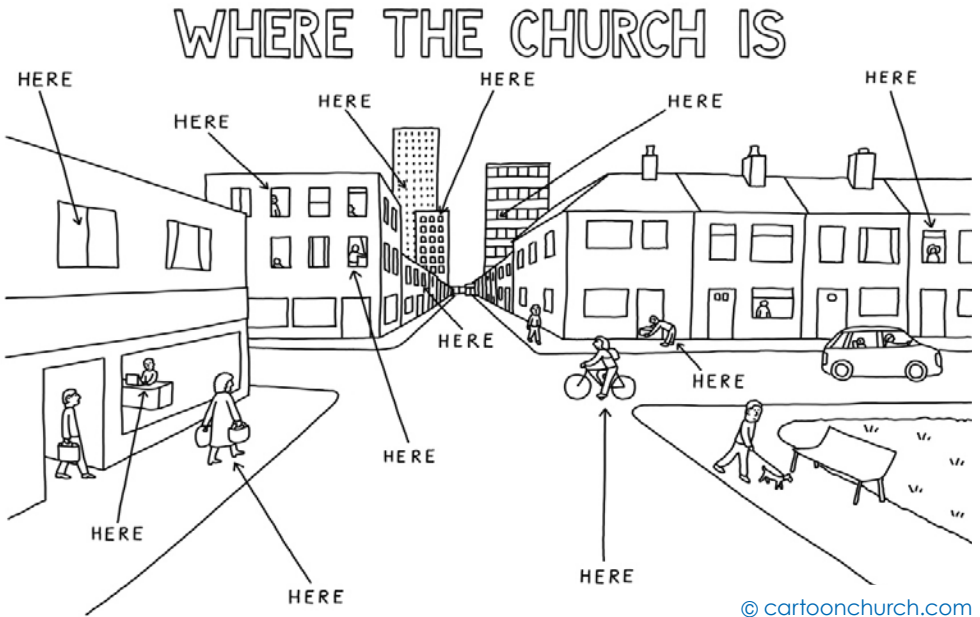
As a church, we have something unique to offer you and your family, and that is the opportunity to explore the spiritual side of life. Often life is so busy and full of demands that this gets neglected, but we hope that in the mix of activities we offer you will find somewhere to get started, or to continue, on your spiritual journey with the support of other fellow-travellers.

Christianity isn't just about Sundays, but about the whole of life. So please pluck up the courage to try something new and see what difference God could make to you and your family!

**Rev John Castle**

Tel: 01252 872168

Email: [rector@stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk](mailto:rector@stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk)



Please visit our website for more about our church and its community:  
[www.stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk](http://www.stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk)

## Who's who ?



### **Rector** **Rev John Castle**

John has led St Michael's since 2004. Coming from a background in public administration, he trained at Cranmer Hall, Durham and served as Curate in Southborough, Kent. He then served as Assistant Vicar at Namirembe Cathedral, Kampala, Uganda, where he was also involved in training ordinands, before coming to Sandhurst.



### **Associate Minister** **Rev John White**

John retired as a chartered mechanical engineer from the Department of Transport in 1997.

He has been a member of St Michael's church for over 40 years, and was ordained in 2001 by the bishop of Oxford. He has three daughters and four grandchildren. Sadly his wife Jill died in 2015.



### **Associate Minister** **Rev Jane Kraff**

Jane trained as a nurse at St Bartholomew's Hospital London in the 1960s and did her midwifery in Bristol before returning to Barts. She served as a Licensed Lay Minister for 8 years and after

her ordination continued to serve in the Diocese of London.

She was appointed Team Vicar in the Chipping Barnet Team (Diocese of St Albans) in 2007 and retired from full time ministry in 2015 when she moved to Owlsmoor.

Jane is a widow with two sons and three grandchildren.



### **Youth Worker** **Mike Gower**

Mike Gower has over 26 years experience as a youth worker. He has worked for the Salvation Army, YMCA, and Local authorities.

His experiences range from youth clubs, schools, youth offenders, street work, hostel work, and the homeless.

His passions are fishing, Chelsea Football club and the Greenbelt festival.



### **Churchwarden** **Catherine Wilkins**

Catherine has been active at St Michael's all her life, and as Church Warden she follows in the footsteps of her late father. She joined the PCC in her 20s, singing in the choir for over 30 years and marrying Ken here 12 years ago.

More recently, she and Emma Hodge have headed up the Heritage Team, whose brief has included

national Heritage Open Days, school visits and the 800th anniversary celebrations.

She runs two small businesses, and is involved with the Cecilia Singers, Opera@Bearwood and the Sandhurst Crafters.



### **Churchwarden** **Emma Hodge**

Emma has lived in Sandhurst all her life and has been a member of St Michael's for over 20 years.

Emma works full time in the Clinical Research industry where she spends her day negotiating site contracts and budgets.

Her interests include history, heritage and embroidery.



### **Family Worker** **Sarah Bishop**

The main task of our Family Worker is to offer confidential support to parents, including those on the fringe of our church life, especially in helping them to develop faith in the family amidst the pressures and strains of our busy modern lifestyles.

Sarah is a long-term member of our church, and brings to the role her own experience as a parent and as a Teaching Assistant in St Michael's School, as well as her friendly, chatty personality.

## Who is God? Who made God?

Has your child ever asked you a question like these? How would you answer them?

There are lots of questions children ask about the world which we feel confident to answer, but when it comes to 'spiritual' or 'religious' questions we may feel out of our depth.

If you're reading this, it's because you agree that these questions are important. You believe in God, and think that the Christian faith has something important to offer. You may have had your child christened, and you may have attended a Christmas service at church, or come along on Sundays. But, you may not be sure of the answers yourself, let alone be confident explaining them to children.

### The Church is here to help

Here are a few simple tips that could get you started:

1. Perhaps the most obvious thing to do is to **bring your child to church**, where they will hear about God, and experience people praying and worshipping. You can find what would work for you on page 1.

2. There are also easy things you can do at home, such as using **Bible story books** and videos on DVD or the internet. These retell stories from

the Bible in language appropriate for different ages, with pictures. Why not read your child a bedtime story from the Bible? Resources are available from good booksellers and online. We'd particularly recommend the *Triangle* bookshop and café in Farnborough, which is well stocked.

3. **Teaching your child** to pray really isn't difficult. There are prayers on page 5 to get you started. Why not make a point of saying a prayer at bedtime and before eating together? You can use your own words, and/or invite your child to say their own prayer.

4. We also run, from time to time, a really practical course called *Parenting for Faith*, which runs for 8 weeks via *Zoom*, enabling you to join in without needing a babysitter! This uses videos and sharing of ideas with other parents, and has lots of very practical and child-oriented advice.

5. Finally, why not get up to speed on the basics of the Christian faith by trying one of our **courses for adults**, such as *Start* or *Moving On* (see page 8). People who've done these have found them illuminating and inspiring. You'll not only be more confident talking to your children about faith, but you'll have a new sense of God's presence in your day-to-day life!

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## Helpful resources to use at home



**Roots on the Web** is a teaching material designed for a Sunday School group that can be used at home. Visit: [rootsontheweb.com](http://rootsontheweb.com)



**Kitchen Table Project** gives advice on sharing faith at home. This is part of *Care for the Family*, which has advice, runs courses and provides resources for families. Visit: [kitchentable.org.uk](http://kitchentable.org.uk)



Got kids aged 8-11 who like computer games? Why not try **Guardians of Ancora**, a free game provided by *Scripture Union*. Visit: [scriptureunion.org/guardians-of-ancora](http://scriptureunion.org/guardians-of-ancora)



**Twinkl** have activities and games, downloads and daily child-friendly news reports. Visit: [twinkl.co.uk/resources/religion/christianity-religion/bible-stories](http://twinkl.co.uk/resources/religion/christianity-religion/bible-stories)



**Diddy Disciples** has worship and storytelling resources for babies, toddlers and young children. Free audio to lead you in short simple sustainable times of prayer. Visit: [diddydisciples.org](http://diddydisciples.org)



**Illustrated Ministry** create some wonderful resources for families to use at home. Visit: [illustratedministry.com/flattenthecurve](http://illustratedministry.com/flattenthecurve)



## A family that prays together, stays together

Introducing prayer into your normal family life may seem like a challenge, but once you try it you'll find that children take to it very easily. Natural times to say a prayer are before a meal, at bedtime and at the start of the day. Here are some child-friendly prayers to get you started:

### Bedtime Prayers

† Lord, keep us safe this night,  
secure from all our fears.  
May angels guard us while  
we sleep, till morning  
light appears.  
*Amen.*

† Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to  
keep: May God guard me  
through the night  
And wake me with the  
morning light.  
*Amen.*

### Prayers at mealtimes

† Dear God, thank you for  
our food and for each other.  
*Amen.*

† God is great!  
God is good!  
Let us thank God  
for our food.  
*Amen.*

† We thank you, Lord,  
for happy hearts,  
For rain and sunny weather.  
We thank you, Lord,  
for this our food,  
And that we are together,  
*Amen.*

### Prayer for the beginning of the day

† God in heaven,  
hear my prayer, keep me  
in your loving care.  
Be my guide in all I do,  
Bless all those who love  
me too.  
*Amen.*

† Thank you, Lord,  
for this new day.  
Help me, in all I do and say  
to know you're with me  
everywhere, and show to all  
your love and care.  
*Amen.*

### For friends

† Lord Jesus, thank you for  
my friends, and for the games  
and fun that we share.  
Please help me to be a good  
friend to them.  
*Amen.*

### For family members

† Father God, thank you for  
my family, not only for those  
I live with, but grandparents,  
uncles, aunts and cousins,  
especially (...)  
Please look after them today.  
*Amen.*

### A prayer for a situation in the news

(war, famine, refugees, etc –  
adapt this prayer with your own  
words to suit the situation)

† Dear God, we pray for the  
people who are suffering in  
(...) because of (...)  
Please bring them the help  
they need, especially (...)  
Please help those who are  
trying to provide food,  
protection and other things  
that they need.  
Help us to see how we can  
help, by praying for them or  
giving money or other gifts.  
*Amen.*

### For people around us

† Lord, help me to notice  
people who need my help:  
children who are alone without  
friends, my parents or teachers,  
when they need a hand.  
*Amen.*

### For other children

† Lord Jesus, I know that  
I am your special child,  
and that you love me.  
Other children don't know  
you. Please may they come  
to know your love.  
I particularly pray for (...)  
and (...).  
*Amen.*

### Prayers for other occasions

† Dear God, we are sorry for  
doing wrong things.  
Please forgive us and help us  
to do good things instead.  
Help us also to forgive those  
who are unkind to us.  
*Amen.*

† Dear Jesus,  
Please help me at school.  
Sometimes I find it hard,  
and it's at those times I  
specially need your help.  
Help me especially with (...)  
I know you are with us always.  
*Amen.*

† God, you are great.  
You made the world and it's  
good. Thank you for making  
it so beautiful, and we are  
sorry that we have spoiled it.  
Show us how we can take  
better care of it.  
*Amen.*

## St Michael's choir

At our 9:30am services our all-age choir leads the singing. The junior members (aged 6-16 years old) play an active part in services, and enjoy singing a wide range of music in a variety of styles from the last 500 years.

On most Sundays, the juniors start at *Kidz Church* and then come up before communion, to take their places in the choir stalls.

Practices for juniors are on a Thursday evening from 7:00pm to 8:00pm during which time they spend 30 minutes rehearsing not just church music, but popular pieces from musicals, movies and pop, before the adults arrive and then

the whole choir rehearses together.

Although not a requirement, we have several families involved in the choir, including some 3 generation families of parents, children and grandparents.

It is a great environment for adults and children to learn, sing, and worship together.

There are social events organised for juniors and adults and, of course, the choir loves to sing at weddings.

We are always happy to welcome new singers. Please contact the Parish Office, in the first instance, to be put in touch with our Choir Director, Karen Phillips.



## Young people

St Michael's welcomes young people of Year 6 and above to attend socials, discussion groups and events to discover new friends and faith. Through these activities the young people are encouraged to actively participate in church life through getting involved in the 9:30am service and the family service on Sundays and in leading activities within other sessions.



**Bible Bites** is for children in Years 5 and 6 on Monday afternoons after school, under the leadership of Sarah Bishop. Please contact her for more information at: [familyworker@stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk](mailto:familyworker@stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk).

**Reach** (Year 6 and up) is held in the Pastoral Centre during the 9:30am service. More information is available from Liz Percival on: 07950 690729 and Mike Gower on: 07591 240161, via email or the church *Facebook* page.

**Dream Big Youth Club** is held on Sunday evenings in Seeby Hall from 6:00pm to 8:00pm during term-time, with pool, table tennis, Xbox and much more. All young people 11-18 years old are welcome. Entrance 50p and tuck shop available. More information is available from Liz Percival on: 07950 690729 and Mike Gower on: 07591 240161 or the church *Facebook* page.



## [Sandhurst Youth – community and church youth work](#)

*Sandhurst Youth* became an independent charity on 1 January 2019 with the objective of serving young people both in the community and in the churches in Sandhurst. Currently there are six trustees, three nominated by the PCC and three nominated by the council. In the long term there will be a seventh trustee nominated by the young people of Sandhurst themselves.

We have also launched a mentoring scheme for Sandhurst based on the nationally recognised XLM programme; four volunteers have been trained and cleared for safeguarding, and one mentee (from church) is now receiving regular support. This is aimed at older young people (15+) and we supplement this with one-to-one support in the Christian journey for the young people leaving home. None of the work would be possible without the enthusiastic support of the volunteers, and of course we always welcome more. Young people are a lot less scary, and a lot more fun, than you might imagine!

### **Come And Talk To Us**

For more information please see our website: [sandhurstyouth.org.uk](http://sandhurstyouth.org.uk) or talk to:

David Percival – Project Leader for Sandhurst Youth

Mike Gower – our Youth Worker

Liz Percival – who leads the volunteer team in the church.

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## [Additional youth support services](#)

XLM Mentoring is a free mentoring support, for young people in the Sandhurst area needing someone to talk and chat with. Contact Mike Gower for more information on 07591 240161.

Youth line counselling service is available by phone, on: 01344 311 200 or via email at:

[ask@youthlineuk.com](mailto:ask@youthlineuk.com)

Youngminds has a crisis messenger text service. For text support, text YM to 85258.

Kooth.com is a youth online support service.

## Exploring faith

St Michael's welcomes all who are interested in exploring the Christian faith for themselves and their families. Whether you consider yourself a beginner, or you've been away from church for a while, or you're a 'regular' who would like to think more deeply about God and faith, we have something for you.

To find out more about the courses listed below and when we're running them, please contact the Parish Office on 01252 873030 or via email at [office@stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk](mailto:office@stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk)

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### **Start! course**

This is a short 6-week introduction to the Christian faith which is run in a small group. No previous knowledge or belief is expected. Feel free to ask questions, share your own thoughts and discover what it means to be a Christian.

People who have benefitted from the course have included both regular churchgoers and newcomers. Suitable for those who have had a child baptised and couples getting married in church.

**Start!**

For more information and a registration form, visit:  
[www.stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk/exploring-faith](http://www.stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk/exploring-faith)

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### **Moving On! course**

If you want to:

- ▶ grow in your Christian faith;
- ▶ discover more about following Jesus;
- ▶ find out more about being a committed member of the church.

Then it's time for *Moving On!*

This down-to-earth course explores Christian discipleship in a small-group setting, where we watch a DVD programme followed by time to talk, listen and ask questions. Sessions last roughly 90 minutes.

**Moving On!** *Moving On!* Is a good follow-up to the *Start* course which explores basic Christian beliefs in 6 sessions.

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### **Youth Emmaus course**

*Youth Emmaus* is a discussion-based course in 13 units that enables young people of secondary school age to get to grips with what it means to be a Christian. For some, the journey may include Confirmation.

### **Welcome to the Lords Table course** (for children)

*Welcome to the Lord's Table* is a course for children of primary school age to prepare them for receiving Holy Communion (NB this is NOT a preparation for Confirmation).





## Confirmation

In the Church of England, Confirmation follows on from Baptism when the person baptised has come to an age of being able to make the baptism promises for him/herself.

We run regular confirmation classes for both adults and teenagers. Please make an appointment through the Parish Office to discuss this with a member of the clergy.

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## Preparing children to receive Holy Communion

We are happy to welcome children to receive bread and wine at Holy Communion after suitable preparation. If you think your child is ready for this, please speak to the Rector or one of the children's leaders in the first instance. We run a short course from time to time to help children understand more about being a Christian and the meaning of Holy Communion.

Any child who has already been admitted to Holy Communion in another church is automatically allowed to receive with us.

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## House Groups

Our House Groups provide an opportunity to meet with other people from the church in the informal setting of someone's home, and explore together what the Christian faith means in our daily lives. Meetings include chat, Bible study and prayer. Different groups meet on Tuesday mornings, Monday evenings or Tuesday evenings during school term time. The groups are always keen to welcome new members.

For more information, please contact our Parish Office.

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baby & toddler  
TIME



## Baby and Toddler Time

A friendly group for babies, toddlers and their parents/carers, held in the Pastoral Centre on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month during school term time, from 9:00am to 11:00am.

For the first hour and half we have lots of toys for children to play with, toast and fruit (with coffee/tea for adults) and a craft activity. Breastfeeding support is also available (please ask at the welcome desk). In the last half-hour we have a Bible story and lots of singing of nursery rhymes etc.

Booking is not necessary.

## Baptism at St. Michael's

Having a child is a big responsibility, and you may be thinking about how you are going to bring your child up. What values and beliefs do you want him or her to grow up with? Many parents feel that having their child christened (baptised) is a good way of starting their child off in life.

Baptism, otherwise known as Christening, is the ceremony in which a person becomes a member of the Church and makes a public commitment to follow Jesus Christ. It can happen at any age. In the Church of England infants and young children who are too young to make this decision for themselves are baptised on the understanding that they will be brought up in the Christian faith within the fellowship of the church. In the service, parents and godparents undertake to train children in the habit of private prayer and public worship, and to follow Christ, both by teaching and by example.

Major life events, such as marriage or having a baby, often give us the opportunity to explore some of the deeper questions of life. The church is there to help you to do this. The baptism of your child could be the opportunity you need to start becoming more involved with the church.

If you are sufficiently serious about the Christian faith to have your child baptised, it makes sense to plan to come along to church regularly. The other pages of this booklet will help you find the service that will work best for you and your family. So not having been a regular churchgoer up to now doesn't prevent your child being baptised, but you should realise that the promises in the baptism service are about bringing your child along to church in the future.

Another alternative is to have a service of Thanksgiving and Blessing for your child. This would be suitable for you if you would

like to celebrate the gift of your child but are not ready at this time to make the promises of baptism.

You can still have a baptism later when you feel ready. It is also sometimes chosen by those who would like the child to have the choice later in life as to whether he or she should be baptised.

### **What about teenagers and adults?**

A person can be baptised at any age if they have come to the point of deciding that they want to be a follower of Jesus Christ. In the Church of England, a teenager or adult who gets baptised is usually confirmed, either shortly after baptism or in the same service. Confirmation is usually presided over by a Bishop. We run regular confirmation classes for both adults and teenagers. Please make an appointment through the Parish Office to discuss this with a member of the clergy.

### **What do I do next?**

The clergy at St Michael's are happy to discuss these different options with you to help you find what is best for you at this time.

If you would like to explore this, please contact the Parish Office first to discuss a provisional date for the baptism or Thanksgiving. A member of the clergy will then visit you in your home, and if you choose baptism you will be invited to a Baptism Preparation meeting, usually on a weekday evening in the Pastoral Centre, together with other parents and godparents.

For more information, please visit:

[www.stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk/baptism](http://www.stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk/baptism)

## Talking to your child about online safety

Like it or not, we live in a digital age, and today's children and teens have never known a world without smartphones, tablets, online gaming and social media.

Children and young people are naturally inquisitive, learn quickly and are easily distracted by content that is designed to keep their attention. They are also inclined to be trusting, lack enough knowledge to distinguish truth from deception, and are willing to ignore potential risks.

It can be difficult to know how to start

talking to your child about what they're actually doing online or who they might be speaking to. But talking regularly, like you would usually about their day at school, will help your child feel relaxed and mean that when they do have any worries, they're more likely to come and speak to you.

*Care for the Family* have lots of great practical advice and Katharine Hill has a book '*Left To Their Own Devices?*' which would help you with confident parenting in a world of screens. There is a copy available to borrow at the back of the church.

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## Thanks – Giving!

God is AMAZING! And God is generous – look at what He has given us – fresh air, a fantastic planet, hope, salvation, life itself. Let us all give thanks to Him for His bounteous provision to each of us! And with thankful hearts for who God is and what He has given us, let us reflect His generosity in our lives!

You can now sign up to give regularly through the *Parish Giving Scheme* online. Alternatively, you can make one-off gifts to the work of St Michael's via CAF online.

Just visit [www.stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk/donations](http://www.stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk/donations) or scan the code with your phone to do so. And as you give, praise God with cheerful hearts for '*God loves a cheerful giver!*' (2 Corinthians 9:7).





## A Church Wedding – Why not You?

Is it time for you to set the seal on your relationship by committing yourselves to each other in marriage?

**St Michael's Church** would love to hear from you.

- You don't have to be baptised/christened to get married in church, or be regular churchgoers.
- You don't have to spend thousands of pounds on your wedding.
- A wedding in church enables you to make your vows before God and seek his blessing for the future.

We aim to give every couple a personal welcome. We will help you plan your wedding and prepare for your future together. You can find out more at: [www.stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk/marriage](http://www.stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk/marriage), or by contacting our Parish Office on **01252 873030** or [office@stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk](mailto:office@stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk)

*“Thank you all so much for making our wedding day so special... we couldn't have picked a better place. We had such a wonderful day.”*

# We need you!

Every time you shop online you can raise **FREE donations** for us!



• You **shop**

• 4,400+ Retailers **Donate**

• For **Free**

**Register on easyfundraising**

St Michael's Church Sandhurst is now registered with *easyfundraising*, which means you can raise FREE donations for our *Wingspire* funds every time you shop online. Over 4,000 shops and sites will donate to us when you use *easyfundraising* to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself!

These donations really mount up and will make a BIG difference to us, so please take a minute to sign up and support us. It's completely FREE and only takes a moment. You can find our *easyfundraising* page at: [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmichaelschurchsandhurst](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmichaelschurchsandhurst)

Thank you so much. Catherine Wilkins, Churchwarden



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