

St Michael's News November 2011

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Encourage by example

So often we hear about how church attendance is falling, and many reasons for it are given. We are told that it is because church is no longer relevant in the lives of twenty-first century people, or because parents and children now play football or go swimming on Sundays, or because the shops are open on Sundays and either people have to work on Sundays or it's the only time they have to go shopping, but these are of course only the excuses for not attending church, the truth is that church is not a high priority in their lives.

Just recently I have had to read St Paul's letter to the Philippians, particularly chapter 4, where St Paul wrote, 'Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, whatever is praise worthy, think about these things'.

St Paul is saying that if we think about these things then it will be these things that we will become, and when we become all those things that St Paul lists then we may well see church attendance improving. Because while we may not have the answers to declining church attendance, we can at least encourage people to come by our good example.

John White



Prayer Requests: Edith, Denis, Bill, Ken, Rosalind, Dorothy Crow, and those on the prayer board. Also, for those being baptised here this month.

Church Activities

November Coffee Rota Reminder

6th November	Dorothy Hill	Betty Wilson
13th November	John Albinson	Stephanie Martin
20th November	Alan Bunton	Marion Blacmore
27th November	Ann & Peter Clough	

The new coffee rota for November–March is available to collect from the back of church. Please ensure you swap if you are unable to do the date allocated, as there are now only two volunteers making coffee each Sunday, and it is difficult for just one person to manage.

Prayer Meetings are on the 3rd Saturday of the month (19 Nov) at 9.30–10.15am in the church and the 4th Wednesday (23 Nov) at 8.00–8.45 pm.

House Groups meet each week at these homes:

Monday	8.00pm	11 Sylvan Ridge (Rupert & Sheridan)
Tuesday	10.15 am	6 Crowthorne Rd (Doris Saunders)
Tuesday	8.00 pm	28 Wiltshire Avenue, Crowthorne (Elizabeth Ritchie)
Tuesday	8.00 pm	2 School Hill (John & Sue Campbell)
Tuesday	8.00 pm	34 Albion Road (Linda Lemmon)
Tuesday	8.00 pm	25 Templar Close (John & Stephanie Martin)

If anyone would like to join a group, please speak to John White (01344 774349) for more details.

Young Church is part of the 9.30 Parish Communion Service every Sunday, except the first Sunday of the month, for children aged 3–10. Please register your children at 9.20 in the Pastoral Centre. The children join the adults towards the end of the church service. Parents interested in their children receiving Holy Communion are asked to speak to Rev. John Castle.

REACH runs parallel to the Parish Communion Service, at 9:30–10:45 am.

Toddler Time is on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at 9.30–11 am.

Stamps We still value *your* used stamps which *do* raise money for good causes! Keep them coming – Thank you.

Memorial daffodil planting.

On Sunday 6th November, after the parish communion and family services, the bank next to the Pastoral Centre car park, which is presently looking a little unloved, will be replanted with daffodils as a memorial garden. Bulbs will be provided. Please bring a trowel and any bulbs you wish to contribute. Thank you, Catherine Wilkins



Redefining Marriage *by Rev. John Castle*

When is a marriage not a marriage? – an interesting question in the light of David Cameron's recent speech to the Conservative Party Conference. Mr Cameron's clearly stated intention to legitimise same-sex marriage will provoke a variety of responses, from those who support it in the interests of justice and equality to those who won't be voting Tory again. Others will simply say, 'Why not just live and let live'?

How can Christians make sense of this issue? Two possible Christian responses could be, on the one hand, to sympathise with those who experience same-sex attraction and currently feel deprived of the happiness marriage could bring; and, on the other, to question whether anyone has a right to change the biblical model of marriage being between a man and a woman.

What we have perhaps been slow to grasp, though, is that you can't redefine marriage without redefining family. Christians down the ages have seen marriage between a man and a woman as the cornerstone of family life. Marriage is a publicly acknowledged relationship of mutual lifelong commitment that is expressed in an exclusive sexual intimacy which in turn normally and naturally results in the procreation of children. The relationship between husband and wife should provide many things that their children need for their emotional and social development – love, security and stability, a same-sex role model and a loving relationship with a parent of the opposite sex that should help a child later on to form healthy relationships with the opposite sex and an eventual mate. Mothers and fathers bring different qualities to parenting, and neither is dispensable. Grandparents and other relatives have important roles to play too.

We all know, of course, that children often do not experience such an 'ideal' family – due to death, divorce or other human circumstances. Many lone parents achieve marvels bringing up children on their own, and grandparents often do a splendid job as substitute parents. But is that an argument for saying that we are free to redefine what a 'normal' family is? Can we categorically state that two mummies or two daddies are just as good as a mummy and a daddy? Just because medical technology and surrogate motherhood make it possible to bypass the natural method of conception, and the law now says that a partner who is not the biological parent can be named on a birth certificate, does that mean that any alternative family should be considered normal and healthy?

'Redefining Marriage' continued

How we decide on this matter (and the Government is preparing a consultation on gay marriage in the New Year) may depend on what our primary principle is. For many, it's about individual human rights – homosexual people should be able to do exactly the same as a traditional married couple. I would suggest, however, that a biblical view will always look beyond individual rights to the effects on others – the children born and brought up in these artificially constructed families, and the wider society. Equality legislation will inevitably mean that schools will have to teach gay marriage as being as equally valid and normal as heterosexual marriage. And unless significant exemptions are made for religious conscience, many Christians (and those of other faiths) will find themselves on the wrong side of the law if they dare to voice publicly a dissenting view. Recent equality legislation does not give much ground to hope that traditional views will be respected – see what happened to Catholic adoption agencies.

This is a difficult matter, and we may have to grapple with conflicting arguments in order to decide which side we're on. But I would plead with all of us not to think it is a matter we can ignore. Once you change the legal definition of marriage, there will be no going back.

Tanas Alqassis from CMS will be visiting us on 20th November, and speaking at the Parish Communion

Tanas Alqassis is regional manager for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa at the Church Mission Society. A Palestinian, Tanas was born in Beit Sahouron, in the West Bank. He has worked with World Vision in Jerusalem and in Romania. He and his Danish wife, Anne, then returned home to Palestine and Tanas soon became operations director for [Musalaha](#), a reconciliation ministry that works on bringing Messianic Jews and Palestinian Christians together and talks about reconciliation based on the Biblical principles.

Tanas says, 'My vision is to change the way the West views the Middle East and the way the Middle East views the West. I have a passion for education and media and I believe the only solution for the Middle East is Jesus – and we are his instruments.'

The Triangle. It's our 10th Birthday in Kingsmead on 7th November! Please join us on Monday 7th throughout the day and get a **free** slice of birthday



Photo:
Jonathan Self/CMS

cake with every drink bought! We are also planning a **family fun day** at the Triangle on Saturday 12th – lots of games, craft, Treasure Hunt, balloon modelling, face painting and more planned! Please come and support us!

It seems ages away but Christmas will soon be here! We have a variety of Christmas cards, Advent candles and calendars, Christmas gifts and much more now in store at the Triangle. Please come along and have a browse and get organised early!

Wanted: Foundation Governor for St Michael's School

We are seeking to appoint a foundation governor to replace Ivan Myles, who has recently stood down from the governing body (GB) after seven years because of other commitments. Ivan has done an enormous amount for the school, particularly in matters related to the school premises, and we are very grateful.

Foundation governors are nominated locally but appointed by the Diocese of Oxford. They serve for an initial term of four years and can stand for re-appointment if they wish – and most do. So, our governors bring a real sense of commitment and continuity to our school in addition to their individual skills and experience. But the most important requirement is that they have an interest in the school and the children, and a fair amount of spare time! Foundation governors do not have to be members of this or any other church, but they must promise to support the distinctive ethos and values of our Church of England school

The governing body is often described as the school's 'critical friend', and this is a fair description of the role. Governors work closely with the head teacher and staff, and the governing body, as a whole, has legal responsibilities covering a range of areas including admissions, finance, premises and personnel.

The GB has appointed a small team to deal with the nomination process, and we would like to hear from anyone who thinks they might like to support the school as a governor, whatever their skills may be. But if you have the knowledge and interest to get involved in premises matters, so much the better!

If you would like to know more, please speak to either Rev. John Castle, Mrs Mel Turner (01252-877671) or to me (01252-871881). We will need to hear from you by December 1st, though the actual appointment will probably not be made until February.

Chris Harris, Chair of Governors

Remember Christian Fairtrade Easter Eggs? We now have Chocolate Fair Trade Tree Decorations, price £3.95. These milk chocolate Christmas tree decorations celebrate the real Christmas story. Exclusively stocked by Traidcraft, this box of six foil-wrapped fair-trade chocolate decorations is complete with interactive story of Christmas. Six stickers are provided to be stuck on the foil-wrapped chocolates supplied in the box, with story card outlining the real story of Christmas. Once stickers are applied, chocolates should be hung on a Christmas tree. For every box sold a donation of 15p will be made to Traidcraft Exchange. The decorations are on display on the Traidcraft stall after the 9.30 service. If you want to order some, ring me (01344 774349). Jill White



2nd Saturday Club. Please can you spare some time to join us: 9:30–12:00 on the second Saturday of the month for maintenance of the church and Pastoral Centre? The next meetings are 12th November and 10th December. Contact myself, John Campbell (01344 776655) or Rupert (01344 777137).

Waitrose supports Sandhurst Counselling Service

If you ever shop at Waitrose, you'll have been given a green plastic counter, which you can use to vote for a local charity that will be supported by Waitrose. This month (November), our Counselling Service is one of the local charities that is being supported by the College Town store. Please consider whether you could support us in this way.

Blue Envelopes. Please use the gift-aid envelopes for even small amounts of cash if you are a tax payer and have paid enough tax to do so. This is free money from the government and worth doing because it all adds up!

Fairtrade Christmas Market. We are having a 'Taste of Christmas' on November 11th, in the evening, with lots of Fairtrade stalls. The stalls will be selling gifts for all ages: clothes, wooden toys, jewellery, and even some new ready-made meals which use Fairtrade products. Sam Hunt, deputy head of Sandhurst School, is bringing a stall of goods from Malawi, which the school supports. We will also have information on Fairtrade Gold. The RISC shop in Reading is having a stall. There will be chocolate and wine tasting. Too good to miss! Home-made mincemeat will be on sale and miniature Christmas Cakes. Entrance: just £1. Time: 7.30–9.30 Refreshments will be available.

100 Club Draw. The winners of the 23 October draw were:

- 1st Prize: Miss J White No 36 £20,
- 2nd Prize: Mrs S Campbell No 121 £10
- 3rd Prize: Mrs J Alexander No 92 £5
- £34 has been passed to church funds.

If you want to join this draw, please contact Rosemary Dobson.

Sonning Deanery

St. Michael's is part of the Church of England. The Church of England is split into different dioceses and each diocese is then split down into different deaneries. We are in Oxford Diocese and are in Sonning Deanery.

Through the deanery synod we interact with other local churches and the wider Church of England. We should have five lay people representing our church, but currently we only have three.

What do we do?

We meet five or six times a year at churches around the deanery – so this is a good chance to look at other churches and church halls!

We are asked for opinions. This year we have discussed:

- Should Ranelagh become an academy? (Yes)
- Do we support Women Bishops? (Yes)
- What are our views on parish share (which is 53% of the expenditure of St Michael's). The debate is to be continued at our next meeting. The PCCs of the deanery are discussing this at the moment. St Michael's discussed it at our October PCC meeting.

We also hear about how the Lord is working in other parishes, as well as hearing about other areas of shared interest. A recent example was a talk from a Canon at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.

The deanery synod representatives are also members of the PCC. After each synod meeting we produce a report for the next PCC meeting and sometimes there are follow-up points, such as requesting that the social committee arrange a visit to Christ Church Cathedral.

If anyone wants to know more about being on the deanery synod please speak to Emma Hodge, Kathryn Barton or Jan Herd.

Prayer Points



Please pray for:

- Our deanery synod members (Emma Hodge, Kathryn Barton and Jan Herd).
- People who may fill the vacancies to represent our church on the deanery synod.
- The deanery synod meeting on the 22nd November.

Emma Hodge

The Anglican Covenant

Oxford Diocesan Synod will be voting in 2012 whether the Church of England should sign up to the proposed Anglican Covenant – a document intended to bring the different churches of the Anglican Communion throughout the world into a formal relationship of mutual accountability and fellowship. The Covenant was proposed as a way of tackling disagreement between Anglicans in different parts of the world, and was a response to the row over the decision of the Episcopal Church of the USA to consecrate as bishop a practising homosexual, Gene Robinson, and the decision of the Anglican Church in Canada to approve liturgy for blessings of same-sex relationships. However, it is intended to provide a framework for dealing with any kind of disagreement.

The matter will be discussed at the Deanery Synod on 22 November. If you would like to know more, visit <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/final/text.cfm>

Your Deanery Synod reps, Emma Hodge, Kathryn Barton and Jan Herd, will be pleased to know your views!

Church Flowers. Please ring Jennie 01344 775881 for information if you wish to help arranging the Church flowers. Thank you.

Children's 'Happy Bags'

A big thank you to Lara Pesce for all her hard work in replenishing the children's 'Happy Bags' at the back of the church. These are available for use during any service. Please help yourself, or ask a sidesperson on arrival. The bags have various items inside to keep the children occupied and happy. We also have a small selection of children's religious books and would like to expand this if anyone has any they would care to donate. This would be much appreciated.

Christmas Tree Festival

Sat 3rd (11.00 am – 6.00 pm), Sunday 4th (12.00 – 6.00 pm),
Mon 5th & Tues 6th (11.00 am – 4.00 pm) December

This winter variation on a flower festival invites local groups, charities, schools and churches to decorate a tree to illustrate their role in Sandhurst. At the moment we have 30 decorated trees promised. There will be a Christmas Bazaar in the Pastoral Centre, 11.00 am–4.30 pm on the Saturday and Sunday.

Can you help? We need Stewards for the Festival. (Please sign the rota at the back of church or ring Jennie on 01344 775881). Also help and donations of cakes etc. for the Christmas Bazaar. Please contact Janet Pilbeam 01252 871386.

The Social Committee

The social committee consists of John Martin, David Hunt, Jan King and Jill and John White. We attend either the 8 am or the 9.30 am service and because of that the main social events tend to be organised around them. We desperately need to cater for the younger age group, those who attend the family service for example. We are by definition a very social bunch of people and would be pleased to welcome new younger members to our team. We meet about six to seven times a year, usually over a cup of coffee, starting at 8 pm and invariably home by ten. If you would like to join us please make yourself known to one of the committee.

BFVA Befriending Scheme

Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action (BFVA) is an organisation that supports voluntary and community organisations in the borough. John Child shares his experience as a volunteer with us.

I joined this scheme as a volunteer almost a year ago and I thoroughly enjoy it. I visit two seniors, Leslie and Graham, that the organisation supports.

Leslie is 91 years old, cannot walk and has very poor sight. He is therefore housebound. Initially, we had long chats over cups of tea. He is an intelligent man and loves telling me about the past. He was involved in the D-Day landings of 1944, for example. I asked him if he had ever tried a wheelchair. He was horrified at this. I therefore contacted his daughter, who lives near Cambridge and we bought him one through eBay. It stood in the hall for a while until I said we ought to give it a go. Now when I turn up he is in the hall with his hat and coat on and off we go on a variety of walks through local parks and have tea at cafes and garden centres.

Graham is in his fifties. He has been through a difficult divorce, through which he lost his house and his beloved garden. He now lives in a one-bedroomed upstairs flat. Graham has several health problems. My job is to cheer him up and restore his confidence so that he can enjoy life and look to the future. I am slowly making progress. He has taken up fishing and attends some social events with the University of the Third Age (U3A), which I have also joined.

From time to time the three of us have lunch together. We also attend BFVA get-together with Gemma Frewin and her team at the Look-In, in Bracknell. Gemma's telephone number is 01344 304404 and she would love to hear from you. I see my chaps about four hours a week, but even a couple of hours can be valuable help for someone who is disabled, isolated or just vulnerable, please consider volunteering to help them.

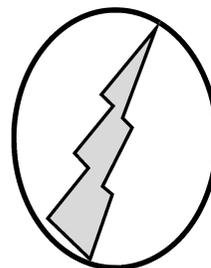
John Child (01252 890853)

Newsletter Deadlines. Please send your items for the December Newsletter to me at the church office (Admin_Support@StMichaels-Sandhurst.org.uk) by 14th November. Thank you. Betty.

Newsletter by email

Did you know that you can receive future editions of this newsletter by email? These are in colour and are normally sent out a few days before the paper copy is available. To opt in to this scheme please contact PCC member David Hunt, david.hunt@bcs.org.uk

St Michael's Youth...



Activities

NEW

YOUTH WORSHIP
5-7pm Fridays
Year 10+

Worship, learning and food

REACH

9:30am Sundays
Year 6+

Explore our faith in Jesus Christ

FORGE

7-9pm Sundays
Year 10+

Fun and fellowship



Events

GIRLS' GROUP

11th November 7-9pm
Traidcraft Night
Pastoral Centre

PURE SPORT

26th November 7:30-10pm
The Camberley Arena
Tickets £4

GIRLS' GROUP

2nd December 7-9pm
Christmas Tree Festival
Pastoral Centre

Please see Kylie for more details!



Prayers

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Current programmes, staff and youth

Youth Worship is a new programme starting 4th November. The young people will be worshipping God, studying the bible, and learning how to apply it to their lives today

'Guys' Group' which is in the initial planning and prayer stage

Youth Worker: Kylie Garrill 07586 252620 kraziekylie@hotmail.com

Regular Activities at the Pastoral Centre

Little Sandhurst Nursery. Daily! Phone Marion for details 01344 7745309

Line Dancing takes place each Monday evening in the hall from 7.00 pm. £5 includes raffle. Just come along and have fun. Tea and coffee available or bring your own drinks. Ring Sue or Arron on 01344 485097 for information.

Rainbows meet on Tuesdays: 5.00–6.00 pm (5–7 year olds).



Guides meet on Tuesdays: 6.30–8.30 pm (10–14 year olds).

Pilates takes place in the large upper room most days and evenings. Ring Carl on 01344 762712 for more information.

Zumba with Tiffany. Wednesdays, 6.00–7.00 pm, Seeby Hall, £5 per class. No need to book, just come along and join the party!

Zumbatomic after-school classes, 4.00 pm on Thursdays – the crazy-cool dance fitness workout for kids aged 4–12 years.

Zumba with Beth. 6.30 pm on Thursdays, £5 a class! Contact Beth for more information on 07976231896 or go to www.zumbawithbeth.co.uk

Karate Club for Children. 5.45–6.45 pm. Phone Neil on 07816163845.

Church Calendar

Date & Time	Venue	Event	Contact
Sun 6 Nov 10.40 am	Churchyard	Memorial daffodil planting.	Catherine Wilkins
Fri 11 Nov 7.30–9.30 pm	Pastoral Centre	A taste of Christmas (a Fairtrade market)	Fairtrade Committee
Sun 20 Nov	Bird In Hand	Sunday Lunch	Jan King
Sat 3 & Sun 4 Dec	Pastoral centre	Christmas Fayre & refreshments	Soc com+ Jenny Thorne + Janet P.
Sat 3 – Tue 6 Dec	Church	Christmas Tree Festival	Jennie Hulbert
Mon 19 Dec Time tba	Sandhurst	Carol singing	Choir

If you would like to organise a fundraising event for the church or make a suggestion, please contact John White (01344 774349) or Jan King (01344 750285).

November Church Services

Sunday 6th November – 3rd Before Advent – Topic: The Wise and foolish girls

Readings: Amos 5:18–24 (p920), 1 Thessalonians 4:13–28 (p1187), Matthew 25:1–13 (p994).

- 8.00 am Holy Communion
- 9.30 am Parish Communion
- 11.15 am Family Service – Topic: All Saints
- 6.30 pm Contemplative Evening Prayer



Sunday 13th November – 2nd Before Advent – Topic: The parable of the talents

Readings: Zephaniah 1:7, 12–end (p944), 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 (p1188), Matthew 25:14–30 (p994)

- 8.00 am Holy Communion
- 9.30 am Parish Communion
- 10.55 am Remembrance Parade (in front of Sandhurst Community Centre)
- 6.30 pm Ecumenical Service



Sunday 20th November – Christ the King Topic: The Sheep and the Goats

Readings: Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24 (p865), Ephesians 1:15–end (p1173), Matthew 25:31–46 (p995)

- 8.00 am Holy Communion
- 9.30 am Parish Communion
- 11.15 am Family Service & Baptism of Kieran McNamara
- 6.30 pm No Service



Sunday 27th November – Advent Sunday – Topic: Be prepared!

Readings: Isaiah 64:11–16, 20–24 (p751), 1 Corinthians 1:3–9 (p1144). Mark 13:24–37 (p1019)

- 8.00 am Holy Communion
- 9.30 am Parish Communion
- 11.30 am Baptism of Sean & Lacey Cameron and Mason Tottle
- 6.30 pm Advent Celebration

Each Wednesday there is Communion at the Day Centre at 11.30 am.

Early morning services – You may find it useful to come to this service, if you are going out for the rest of the day!

Christmas tree festival 3–6th December. Staging on 2nd Dec

