
*Let the children come
to me; do not stop
them, for the Kingdom
of Heaven belongs to
such as these. Matthew
19:14*

Merry Christmas to all our Friends and supporters of St Michael's! We very much enjoyed welcoming all who could join us in October for the Friends Reception, and hope you will be able to join us again in October 2022 to see what we have been doing in person.

Welcome to our latest newsletter. This edition will focus on our children's ministry, as well as giving an update on the latest news from St Michael's.

Focus on Children

One of the goals in our Church Development Plan is to **Grow Younger**. This means lowering the average age of our congregation by welcoming and nurturing young families. In fact, we have had some great success with this over the past five years. Several families started coming regularly; we enjoyed baptisms, and a women's Alpha course took place. Unfortunately for us, the Sheerwater Regeneration meant that most of these families have been moved out of Sheerwater, in some cases several miles away, making it difficult for them to join us on a Sunday. Of course we have encouraged them to find new churches, but have also stayed in contact.

This does mean, though, that we need to **start afresh**. Now that the Regeneration is underway, new residents are starting to move in. We want to reach out to them, and show that we are warm, welcoming and able to support and nurture all ages. There are several ways we can do this, some already underway, and some needing a new impetus. But to start with, let's celebrate one of our great successes.

Pop-up Café

We welcome up to thirty primary age children and their parents or carers to our hall for healthy snacks, games and a Bible story each Tuesday during term time. A great highlight this term was the visit of the Dr Julie Llewellyn, the High Sheriff of Surrey to pop-up café. The children loved her chain of office and wonderful hat, and most of them were keen to pose for a photo with her. She chatted to children and helpers, and later wrote Gillaine a letter saying, 'You are all enormously hard working and totally inspirational.' She also visited Mascot, the community charity we established with St Paul's Church and presented awards to the team.

Please keep praying for our pop-up café, for the safety and wellbeing of the children, and for enough volunteers to staff it. If **you can spare the time to help occasionally** on a Tuesday afternoon from about 3 to 4.30, please contact Tracey at St Michael's office.

Baby and Toddler group

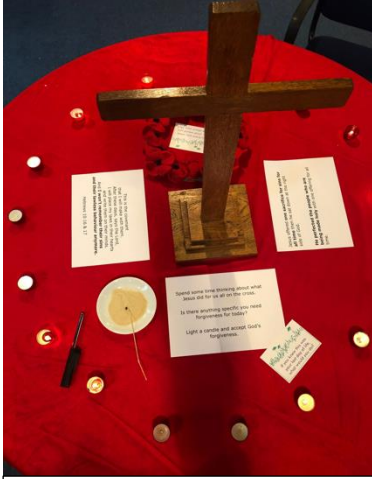
Because of the close contact we have with a number of families who have moved out of Sheerwater to other parts of Woking, we feel we may have the basis for starting a regular baby and toddler group. This needs planning and resourcing. It will also need helpers, including some of more senior years, to offer a grandmotherly or grandfatherly presence.



Remembrance Wreath
made by the children at
Pop-up Café



The High Sheriff visits Pop-
up Café



Prayer station from
Remembrance Sunday
service



The High Sheriff presents
community awards to the
Mascot team

Christmas at St Michael's:

- Christmas Eve, 11am:
pop-up Carols in Asda,
Forsyth Road,
Sheerwater
- Christmas Eve, 11pm:
Midnight Communion
- Christmas Day,
10.30am: Christmas
Service

How you can help:

- Please **pray for us** as we move forward in planning this
- Perhaps you can **help with the planning and resourcing** of the group. If so, please contact the office – details at the end of this newsletter.
- Can you spare any time, perhaps once a month, to **come along and be a friendly face**? If so, please let us know.

Children's Church

At the moment we are not able to offer a Sunday School or children's church. We have activities for any small children to do when they come, and members of the congregation able to sit with them and help them, but we would like to do more. **Please pray for us** to see clearly the way forward on this.

Schools outreach

We have good relations with Broadmere Primary Academy and Bishop David Brown School. Gillaine and others go into Broadmere for assemblies, and in the past we provided a listening voice at BDB. We would like to develop these links further. **Please pray for us** to be given more opportunities to visit, not just for assemblies, but to provide other support, such as listening or befriending ministries.

Children and youth development worker

For some time now we have wanted to appoint someone to help develop our work with children and young people, especially during the week. Outreach to schools and perhaps running midweek groups might be part of their job description. At the moment we do not have the money to support this, so we are considering whether we should look to fund raise or seek sources of grants.

Children's wellbeing

The Pandemic has hit many children hard. Research shows this is particularly true of the poorest 15% of the population, which includes many of the families in Sheerwater. As a church at the heart of the community, we want to do all we can to foster mental wellbeing, and support those hit hardest by the events of the past two years. All the initiatives above will help with this, so **please pray for us**, and **let us know if you can help** in any way.

Pop-up Café

Other News

We have now welcomed George Quarm as our new Methodist Minister, and look forward to getting to know him and his wife, Ama, more over the months to come.

Prayer walks continue regularly, thanks to Jonathan and Margot, and we hope in future to have some special prayer walks where we can invite friends to join us – watch this space!

email: office@stmichaelssheerwater.org.uk,

website: <https://stmichaelssheerwater.org.uk/>

Facebook: search for St Michael's Shared Church, Sheerwater.