

ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS — Parish Church of Amersham on the Hill

NEWSLETTER JUNE '25

Who's Who at St. Michael & All Angels

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"Well, no, I'm not dressing like this to create common ground with today's youth culture – I've always worn a hoody."

LENT AND HARVEST APPEALS 2025

We are pleased to say that the Lent Appeal at St Michael's this year raised £1,826, including gift aid, for the "Friends of St. Anne's Hospital" in Liuli, Tanzania, .

Our next Appeal will be at Harvest time when we will be supporting the "Karibuni Children", an educational charity in Kenya, which is run locally to St. Michael's.

St. Michael's Vision Statement

As a Christian community, we seek to engage with the world around us and to be a place of welcome and acceptance for all on a journey to God – believers, doubters and those who are seeking.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Vicar, PCC or the official policy of St. Michael's Church.

The Newsletter is published monthly

(with the exception of January and August).

Please email material for inclusion in the next issue to communications@stmichaelsamersham.org.uk, for the attention of Rebecca.

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From the Editor...

This June the church celebrates Pentecost, with the different fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit and encounters with the Holy Spirit, once more in focus, then the following week, Trinity Sunday.

During Messy Church in May the children explored *encounters with God* through very messy creative activities. They created mountains, such as the ones Moses and Jesus climbed to speak with God, and animals that might live on those mountains. After the activities they were asked how quiet they could be (for anyone wondering, the answer was VERY quiet), and it was suggested that when we ask questions and are quiet and listen for answers that we too might have special encounters with God.

Sometimes special places help our encounters with God. Kenneth discusses this on pg. 3.



Enjoy Ken's article and much more in this edition of the St. Michael's Newsletter.

- Rebecca



Trinity Sunday By Barbara Gibson

Trinity Sunday, commemorates and honours not an event but a reality, 'The Holy Trinity.'

Trinity Sunday always falls on the Sunday after Pentecost. This year it falls on Sunday, 15 June. The Trinity comprises the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Ghost.

The Church has been celebrating the Trinity in its life and worship since its earliest days.

Originally there was no general feast of the Trinity in the early Church but over time, dioceses and churches began

celebrating feasts of the Trinity locally. Early dates of the localised feasts included the first Sunday before Advent, but the first Sunday after Pentecost became the standard in AD 1334 when Pope John XXII established the feast day for universal observance in the Western Church.

The pre-advent date, no longer observed, began the Church year with the celebration of the Trinity, the source of all creation. The post-Pentecost date celebrates the Trinity as the culmination of the events of Christ's resurrection, ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Both show the importance of the

Trinity as the foundation, beginning and end of Christian belief and experience.

Trinity Sunday has been especially popular in England, perhaps because Thomas Becket was consecrated on Trinity Sunday, AD 1162.



<https://diocesan.com/>

Dialogue

The Gods that are Three-in-One said
to the God that is One-in-Three
*We must be parted for a time,
me from me from me;*

but one of the One-in-Three said
to the Gods that are Three-in-One
*What is to become of us
when all of this is done?*

*For a God that is man will know of things
that a God should never know
and will eat of the tree of knowledge
where the fruit of despair will grow.*

Then the God that is the Father said
to the God that is the Son
*You know I am with you always
for you and I are One*

*but the God that is man must somehow know
that the God that is God may not be,
so I must hide myself enough
to disbelieve in me;*

and the God that was now a dying man
cried out all-knowingly
*my God my God my God
why have I forsaken me?*

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Three sacred places By Kenneth Prideaux-Brune

There are a few sacred places that seem to have an extra dimension, places where the barrier between this world and the world of the spirit seems wafer thin. For me, there are three such places.

The first, as some of you will know, is the Upper Room chapel in Talbot House, the haven from the hell of the First World War, behind the lines of the Ypres Salient.

When Tubby Clayton, the 'Innkeeper' of Talbot House, saw the loft he said: "The Disciples first met the Risen Christ in an upper room. This Upper Room will be our chapel." You clamber up the steep stairs (more like a ladder than a staircase) and there in front of you is the old, scarred Carpenter's Bench at which Jesus the Carpenter is worshipped. Many received their first Communion from that altar and very many more received their last. The chapel, is indeed, in the words of historian Richard Holmes, "heavy with the presence of those who knelt here to pray that their cup might pass." I certainly feel that presence strongly in that very special place.



Above: The Upper Room at Talbot House

The second is the island of Iona, off the west coast of Scotland. It's the island where St Columba based himself and from which he set out to convert the Scottish kingdoms. But it's not so much the abbey church as the extraordinary natural beauty of the island itself and the remarkable, ever-changing colours of the sea - blue and green and pink and purple - glistening vividly in the occasional sunshine. It is indeed a 'thin' place, as George MacLeod, the founder of the Iona Community, declared.



Above: Iona Abbey

But it's not only Christian sacred places that have this special atmosphere. I have felt the same at Delphi, the place where the ancient Greeks went to consult the oracle. Political leaders went to consult the oracle about the important decisions facing them; others went to consult the oracle about problems in their daily lives. And the oracle's replies, spoken by the priest, were frequently ambiguous, as the priest hedged his bets. Partly, again, it's the natural beauty of the place; and partly it's the fact that the place has, for thousands of years, been regarded by many as holy.

Three very different places but each of them a place where one seems to be in touch with something profound and other-worldly.

Below: The Temple of Apollo at Delphi



My first APCM by Rebecca Olsen

I attended my first ever APCM this year. If I'm honest, I was expecting it to be very boring, but I'm happy to report that it was not at all sleep inducing!

Chat GPT (a chatbot developed by OpenAI that uses artificial intelligence to generate human-like conversational responses) informs me that 'an Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) can be deeply inspiring when seen through the lens of its potential to unite a congregation around shared values, vision, and purpose'.

It's a moment in the church year when we all have an official opportunity, regardless of our age or background, to step into roles of responsibility, so we can actively shape the direction of our church, through ownership and involvement in St Michael's mission.

ChatGPT goes on to tell me that, 'the APCM is a reminder that the church isn't just a building or a service—it's a living, breathing community, powered by the collective commitment of its members. It's an opportunity for everyone to pause, reflect, and be inspired to take part in something that's bigger than themselves—building a community of faith that can make a real difference in the lives of individuals and the wider world'.

On reflection, it has made me consider how each of us, regardless of age, have skills that already are, or could be, of service to the Church and in turn to God. It's exciting to think that there are within our church community people with gifts, just waiting to be revealed or offered so that we can collectively, 'make a real difference in the lives of individuals and the wider world'.

A friend's mother once said to me that her gift was chat over a cup of tea over the stable door to her house, a simple gift, reflective of the simple way Jesus entered the world and can work through our lives if we let Him.

St. Michael's APCM by Hazel Miller, PCC Secretary

Church of England rules stipulate that all parishes should hold meetings each year for which there are stipulated agenda items relating to the appointment of lay representatives to assist the incumbent in the running of the parish, and for those present to receive reports on, amongst other things, numbers on the electoral roll; finance and buildings. The inclusion of the laity in church governance goes back just over 100 years when PCCs received legal status under the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919. Prior to that, the legal responsibility for administering the parish was solely in the hands of the incumbent and churchwardens.

What we refer to as the APCM (Annual Parish Church Meeting) is in fact two separate meetings, which are usually held back-to-back. The first of these is the Vestry Meeting, at which the only item on the agenda is the election of wardens for the following year. Anyone resident in the parish, whether or not their name is on the electoral roll is entitled to attend and vote at this meeting, but only those on the electoral roll can be present at the second meeting, the APCM.

Preparations for the meeting start some time in advance, with the revision of the electoral roll to ensure that all those meeting the criteria for inclusion on it are in a position to attend and vote at the APCM. The roll is closed for revision a month before the meeting and a list of current members published two weeks in advance of it. Notice of both meetings, including invitations for nominations for the various positions to be filled – churchwardens, vacancies on the PCC, and every three years, parish representatives to Deanery Synod - is given

at the same time.

This year, at the Vestry meeting, following Roland Gillott's decision not to stand again for election after eight years in post, Roger Leslie, entering his eighth consecutive year, and Claire O'Beirne, who has served previously served in this role were elected as churchwardens for the next 12 months. This concluded the business of the Vestry meeting.

At the APCM which followed, reports were given by Chris Leslie, the electoral roll officer, who informed the meeting that the number on the roll is steady after this year's full revision, and Rachel Wilcox who expanded on the financial information included in the Annual Report and Accounts which had been circulated to everyone on the roll before the meeting. She recommended that anyone who has not read the Report should do so as it contains a lot of information about what was happening in the church in 2024. (If you have not seen a copy, and would like one, please contact the Church Office). Next on the agenda was PCC membership for 2025-26. PCC members normally serve a term of three years, but are eligible to stand for re-election. Some people are members of PCC by virtue of their office with the number of elected representatives dependent on the number on the electoral roll. At St. Michael's that number is currently 9. The PCC item was followed by further reports on safeguarding and church buildings, before the final item on the agenda, a review of the year from the vicar, Rev. Debbie.

All that remains is to inform the Diocese of post holders and for the churchwardens to be formally admitted to office for the following 12 months at a Visitation Service during which they make a declaration to 'faithfully and diligently perform the duties of their office'.

Towards Unity Through Christ

By Rebecca Olsen

After the new Pope (Pope Leo XIV) was appointed as head of the Roman Catholic Church, I asked an Italian Roman Catholic friend what she thought of him. Her reply was, *‘in my opinion he was the best choice, the one whose feelings align most closely with my own... finally a Pope who speaks of Jesus Christ and not only about immigrants and social doctrine’*. She went on to say, *‘Social doctrine must come from a heart that is full of Christ and from a desire to follow his example...’*

A discussion on You Tube about the appointment of the Pope pointed out that the Roman Catholic Church appointed a new leader within days of the former Pope’s death but that the Church of England is still awaiting the appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury.

The ways a Pope and an Archbishop are appointed are very different from each other. A new Pope is selected in private by the cardinals, following a process that is top secret. However, Pope Leo XIV has suggested recently that the Holy Spirit is very much a part of that process.

The process to select and appoint a new Archbishop falls to the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC), which is made up of 17 voting and up to three non-voting representatives from the Church of England and the Anglican Communion. They follow a *Statement of Needs* which outlines the qualities and skills desired in the new archbishop. The members of the CNC meet to pray, reflect and nominate a candidate. At least two thirds of the CNC votes must be gained for a candidate to become the nominee, and then their name is submitted to the Prime Minister, who in turn presents the name to His Majesty The King for approval. Following this process the College of Canons at Canterbury Cathedral formally elects the Archbishop; a legal ceremony is held and at a later date an installation service is held at Canterbury Cathedral.

Pope Leo XIV is an Augustinian, from the Order of St. Augustine, and is the first Augustinian friar to be elected as Pope. The Order of St. Augustine was founded in the 13th century and bases its teachings on harmony and unity.

The position of Archbishop of Canterbury was established in England in the late 6th century when St. Augustine was appointed as the first Archbishop of Canterbury. This is a different St. Augustine to St. Augustine of Hippo, whose doctrine the Order of St. Augustine follow.

St. Augustine of Hippo was a prominent Christian theologian and philosopher who felt a major purpose of his life was to interpret the Bible. The idea that humans are inherently sinful – something which has been passed on to us ever since Adam and Eve ate the apple in the Garden of Eden – was something largely formulated by St. Augustine. He also envisioned the hierarchical structure of the universe, which was later painted in Pietro di Puccio’s fresco, *Theological Cosmography*, which can be found on the wall in the Camposanto in the Piazza dei Miracoli, Pisa.

Like St. Augustine, Pope Leo XIV is also a deep thinker, with a strong academic and intellectual record, but most importantly, he seems keen to put Jesus Christ back on centre stage and holds strongly to a vision of unity.

Of course, some people’s vision of how a Pope or Archbishop should think, or what they believe, may not align with those who are actually chosen. However, ultimately as Christians we are called to put our trust and faith in God, the Holy Trinity, even in this and not be bound to our earthly opinions, even if that means accepting leaders we may not personally be entirely happy with, because a bigger picture is at play. Different aspects of the *Theological Cosmography*, whether or not it looks like the picture below, are playing out on levels we don’t have access to.

In the meantime we must remember to keep our hearts full of Christ and our desire to follow his example burning and shining brightly.



Pietro di Puccio’s fresco, *Theological Cosmography*, undergoing renovations in 2022.

Photo by Rebecca Olsen

Eucharists:

Sundays 8.30am and 10am
(Gathered Round on the second Sunday of each month is especially designed for families)

Tuesdays 10.30am - There will be no Tuesday Eucharist on 17 June, instead, Corpus Christi will be celebrated at 10.30a.m., 19 June.

Morning Prayer:

Tuesdays 9am in the Lady Chapel. (Except 10 June)

Messy Church: 21 June '25 (The third Saturday each month
11.30am—1pm, EXCEPT AUGUST)

St. Michael's is usually open to ALL for private prayer from 10am—4pm Mon– Fri.

<https://www.youtube.com/@stmichaelandallangels/streams>, will access live-streamed services.

WORSHIP

WARDENS

1 June Alan Bacon
8 June Roland Gillott
15 June Claire O'Beirne
22 June Roger Leslie
29 June Andy Connor

Please see:

stmichaelsamersham.org.uk

for more details

ACTIVITIES AT ST. MICHAEL'S & BEYOND

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP 5 June & 3 July — 10am-12 noon—St. Michael's, Wheeler Room
Tea, Coffee and Chat

POP IN & PAINT— 6 June (CANCELLED) & 4 July —10.30am-12.15pm, St. Michael's, Main Church
Join Jenny Thompson and Liz Grammenos from Simpatico. No experience needed. Materials provided.

A CRAFTY CUPPA—11 & 25 July — 10.30am-12 noon—St. Michael's, Wheeler Room
A drop-in session for everyone who wants a cuppa and some company. Feel free to bring a craft with you.

LUNCHBREAK – Amersham Free Church Every Tuesday – 12noon-2pm
Tea, coffee and soup available 1.10pm-1.30pm Music, a talk, or a short service.

FRIDAY LUNCH FORUM – Friday, 20 June – from 12.15p.m. – Amersham Free Church. Bring a packed lunch.
A talk starts at 1p.m. Tea/coffee/water provided. Suggested donation £3-£5 to cover the cost of speakers.

Mondays **Tiny Talk** 10.30am-12 noon (Tel: 07809 157 428)
Mature Movers 1.45pm-2.45pm
Stay Steady, Stay Strong 3pm-4pm (Tel: 07951 294178)
Amersham Dance Studio Children from 3+. 4pm-10pm
(email: emma@amershamdancestudio.co.uk)

Tuesdays **Tuffney Performing Arts Academy** 5pm-6pm
(Email: office@tuffney.com)
Yoga with Shiv 5pm—7pm (Glover Rm) (Science based approach, open to all. Tel: 07815132157)
Amersham A Capella 7pm-11pm (<https://www.amershamacappella.com/>)

Wednesdays **Karate Club** 6.30pm-8pm (Tel: 07951 024 397)
Badminton Club 8.15pm-10.15 pm (Tel: 01923 264791)
Tuffney Performing Arts Academy 4.45pm-5.45pm

Thursdays **Badminton** 1.30pm-3.30pm
Amersham Dance Studio Children from 3+. 4pm-7pm
(email: emma@amershamdancestudio.co.uk)

Fridays **Stay Steady, Stay Strong** 1.30pm-3.45pm (Tel: 07951 294178)

Saturdays **Popstars Academy** 9.30am-12pm (email: hazel@popstarsacademy.com)

Please see stmichaelsamersham.org.uk if you would like to book the hall.

For information about **Little Learners Nursery** please see <https://littlelearnersamersham.co.uk>

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES IN THE HALL

Saturday, 21 June, Messy Church

will be on in St. Michael's from 11.30am to 1pm. Fun activities followed by a short interactive session about the story behind the activities, and lunch, which is provided for all. No need to book, just turn up. All welcome. This activity is free but donations are welcome to cover costs.



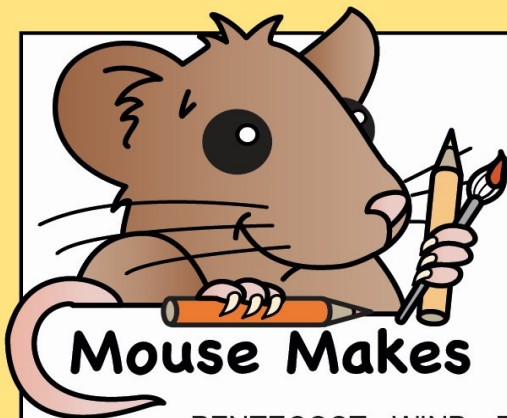
BUCKS ART WEEKS 7-22 June @ St. Michael's

Jenny Thompson, Liz Grammenos, Madeleine Fletcher & Barbara Spruytenburg, of Simpatico, invite you to come along and enjoy their joyous exhibition.

Monday-Friday 10a.m.-5p.m.

Saturday 10a.m.-6p.m. & Sunday 12 noon-6p.m.
(Saturday, 14 & 21 June 1.30p.m-6p.m.)

DIARY JUNE '25



PENTECOST • WIND • FIRE
 HOLY • SPIRIT • TONGUES • RESTED
 JERUSALEM • JEWS • GALILEANS
 HEAR • LANGUAGE • ARAMAIC • GREEK
 HEBREW • PARTHIANS • MEDES
 ELAMITES • MESOPOTAMIA
 JUDEA • CAPPADOCIA • PONTUS
 ASIA • PHRYGIA • PAMPHYLIA
 EGYPT • LIBYA • CYRENE
 ROME • CRETANS
 ARABIANS • GOD



READ
 Acts
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It was fifty days since **Passover**, and Jews from many countries had come to **Jerusalem** to celebrate Passover. As the **Apostles** were gathered together the **Holy Spirit** came upon them and they began to speak in other **languages** as the Spirit enabled them.

The crowd that were listening were amazed as they heard about God in their own language.

How many people heard, believed and were baptised that day?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Bible or parts of the Bible have now been translated into over 3,000 different languages since it was first written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.