

ST  
MICHAEL'S  
BATH



DIOCESE OF  
**Bath & Wells**

Living the story. Telling the story.

FAMILY.  
JESUS. HEART.  
COMMUNITY.  
ENCOURAGE.  
OPEN. FOLLOW.  
WELCOME. PRAYER.  
WORSHIP. JUSTICE.





## VISION:

# ‘Following the WAY of Jesus in the City’



St Michaels Without was originally just outside the city walls of Bath at the Northgate, hence our historical title of being outside or ‘without’ the wall.

On the junction of Broad Street and Walcot Street, right by the central Waitrose Store (giving rise to our nickname St Michaels ‘Waitrose’!) the church is now in the heart

of the city’s commercial centre. It is surrounded by shops and businesses and has a resident population of a few thousand people as well as increasing numbers of resident students from Bath Spa and Bath Universities

There are some significant contrasts from the very expensive townhouses and apartments around Walcot Street and Queens Square to the social housing in Kingsmead which has the highest number of single parent families in the Diocese.

The church, which is open 7 days a week is a busy place welcoming all sorts of people from the highly paid to the homeless. With the Christian community at the heart of everything we do we have a thriving cafe and the church plays hosts to many cultural events and meetings during the year. The crypt hosts Focus Counselling who offers its services and in conjunction with Genesis, a christian based charity engaged in social action, providing regular meals for the homeless and others in need.





St Michaels is in the same local context as Bath Abbey in the centre of Bath, characterised by tourism, shopping, the arts and Bath Rugby and Cricket Clubs. Many of the retailers are small independent traders and there is a high turn over of staff in many of the shops. In the past year with an increase in business rates, rents and higher staffing costs it has been noticeable that many smaller businesses are struggling with a number of prominent closures. Property prices are very high in the city and many people, particularly first time buyers, find it very hard to become home owners. Currently a third of residential sales are being bought by Londoners.

In anticipation of the Abbey Footprint Project, causing disruption to the pavement areas around the Abbey it is anticipated that part of the Christmas Market infrastructure will be relocated in the Millsom Street area around St Michaels.

A church has been located on the St Michaels site since medieval times. The current church is the fourth to be built on the site, replacing a Georgian one. It was designed by George Phillips Manners and completed in 1837. The church sits on a tight urban site necessitating its anti-mural orientation (facing north-south). It is Grade 2\* listed and possesses a fine example of a Sweetland Organ.

The spire is a major local landmark on the Bath skyline along with the Abbey, we are probably the most photographed church in the city. A million pound refurbishment of the church was completed in 2007 with further work on the spire in 2012. This development was central to our vision of the church reconnecting with the community in the middle of Bath.

The church sits with in an open evangelical tradition with strong influences in the current ministry team from the charismatic movement having connections to New Wine. Our Parish Patron is CPAS. The relationship with the Abbey goes back centuries. We have been in the current group ministry with Bath Abbey for a number of years and following the development of the Deanery Mission Plan, with the Deanery vision of 'Everyone a disciple, everyone a disciple-maker', we are keen to deepen and develop further the relationships and desire for greater interdependence with all the city centre churches in mission and ministry. Daily prayer in church creates the weekly rhythm and backbone of activity.

As the last significant building project on the spire of St Michaels came to an end in 2015 the previous Rector moved on to become the Archdeacon of Brighton. Our current Rector, Roger Driver came to the Parish in 2016. We are now able to build on and benefit from the rich resource and fruits of over a decade of hard work on the building. The PCC has taken the opportunity to refresh and redefine its vision for its mission and ministry.

With a specific focus on people, seven key priorities areas were identified as we focused on encouraging discipleship under the vision of '**Following the WAY of Jesus in the City**'. Following a well attended Parish Weekend in Devon last year on February 11th this year we held 'Vision Sunday' when we presented to the wider church the outline of those priorities.



We are turning those new plans into actions, and working on the challenge of being sustainable. Of the priorities we have identified, some reinforce the work we are currently doing and have financial or practical resources in place. Some of the new ideas need to attract resourcing, including both new volunteer leadership and extra finances. We are refreshing the visual identity of the church, introducing a new logo and signage. We have also been working on our social media strategy to both help visitors to find us and also to promote all that we do.

We have worked hard to forge key relationships into the local residential, commercial and civic communities. Although not as extensive as the

Abbey we regularly host the Civic Harvest Festival and the main City War Memorial is in the Parish at the entrance to Victoria Park. The latter will be significant this year as the country commemorates the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1 in November. The Rector who is a member of the Bath City Forum was invited this year to join The Abbey Residents Association committee. The latter representing the largest number of residents in the city centre and having as its concerns the quality and development of the City Centre, many of its members being patrons to the local cultural and arts scene.

We have worked hard to increase the number of cultural and community events that we host, which has significantly amplified our position as a community hub in the city as well as helping provide sustainable income. We are hosting over 20 events as part of the Bath City Festival this year, and later in the year we host Card for Good causes which raises a significant amount of money for many local and nation charities.

At our core is the Christian Community. The regular congregation which has a rich international flavour, numbers around just over 100. Similar to the Abbey, we welcome and are joined by many visitors from all over the world each week. We have a network of small 'Connect Groups' that meet regularly across the city, and organise a number of gathering events during the year which have the aim of deepening the relationships with our



CARDS FOR GOOD CAUSES





community. Food is the common denominator at the centre of those gatherings. The pattern and rhythm of prayer during the week is a key part of our DNA and from May we look forward to joining with the Abbey in Morning Prayer in our Chapel in the weekdays whilst the Abbey building works are progressed. Volunteers from both St Michaels and the Abbey congregations come together on a rota, to help serve in Lunchbox providing lunches for the homeless. The Baby Cafe on Tuesday's is our joint baby and toddler group held in our church space and led by Abbey volunteers. This group is growing and we want to help it grow further as perhaps a connection into the Kingsmead Community.

## Staffing

Rector: Roger Driver

Curate: Caroline Deakin (from July 2018)

Associate Clergy: Ken Madden, Pat Betts

Readers: Marian Marlow, Sheila Watters

Church Administrator: Lisa Ware

Musical Director &  
Worship Leader: Susanna Downes

Plus 14 other part-time and occasional paid staff who work in the Cafe, events, bookkeeping and building upkeep.

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