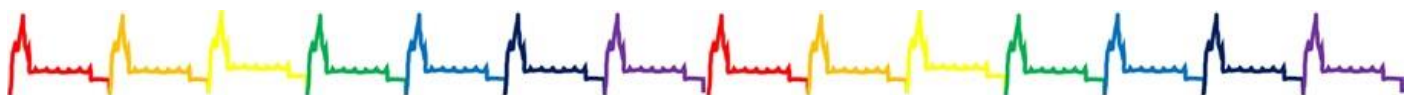




# ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, KIRKHAM Parish Profile



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# St Michael's Church

A summary of who we are, and what we want to be.

## INCLUSIVE CHURCH

Member of the Inclusive Church Network



At St Michael's, you are welcome just as you are.

## HISTORY

A parish church of ancient significance



Site of Christian worship since at least 680 AD.

## TRADITION

A proud history of choral liturgy



Worship that complements modern life with ancient signs and symbols.

## FACILITIES

Redeveloped, high class function suites



To help with community outreach and financial sustainability.

## SOCIAL ACTION

Keen to further develop our outreach



Practical action that preaches the gospel through deeds.

## SCHOOL

A primary school of 192 pupils



With a leadership enthusiastic for interaction with Church.

## CLUB DAY

An ecumenical walk of witness



Still a centrepiece of Kirkham's civic and social year.

## TOWN

A Lancashire market town with 7400 inhabitants



A semi-urban, semi-rural parish.

## COMMUNITY

Seeking ever closer community engagement

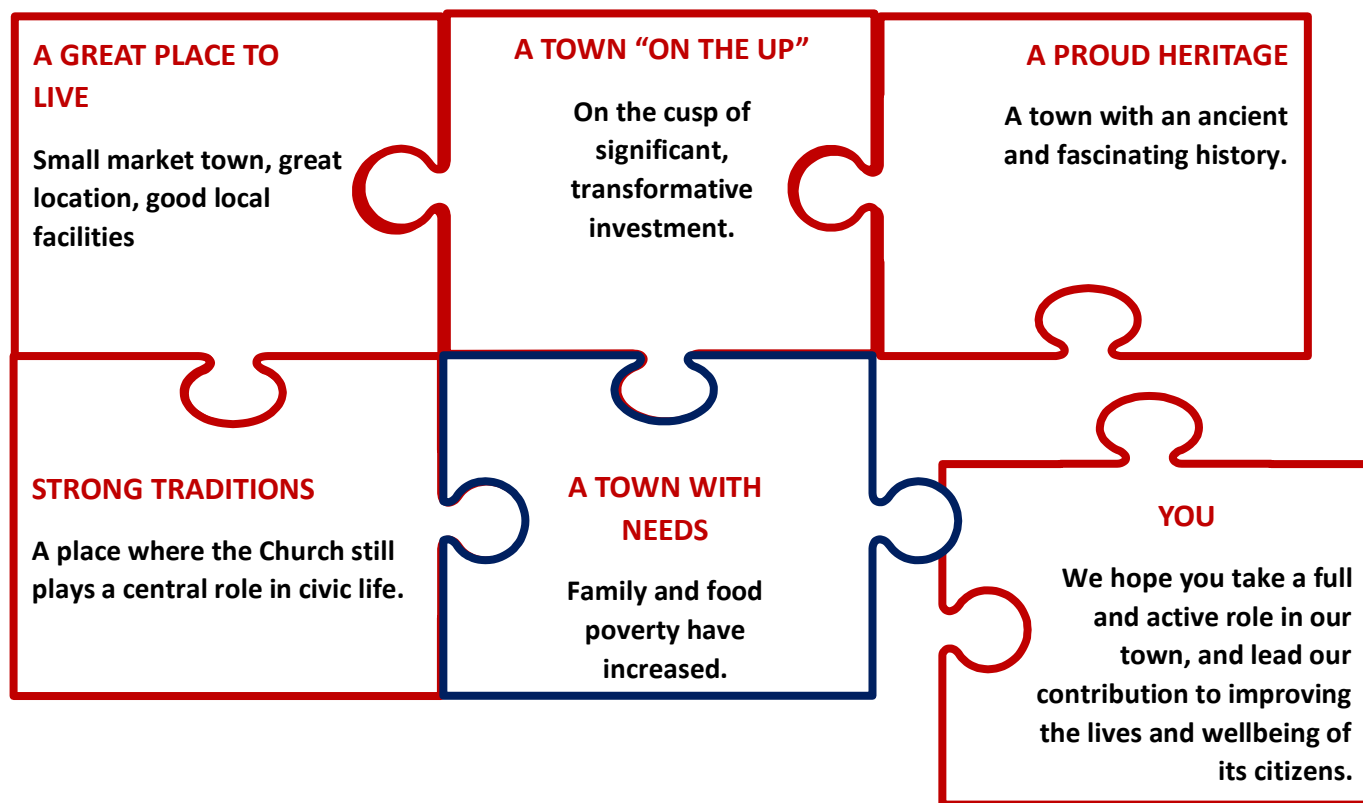


A church for everybody, expressing love without question or condition.

**Our Parish Prayer:** *Living God, you call us to serve our parish with gentleness and humility in Christ's name. Grant us the imagination and courage to be a people who listen, pray and act for the sake of the Good News. Amen*



## The Parish and Wider Community



## Location, Population and Demography



Kirkham is a market town within the Fylde, roughly midway between Preston and Blackpool, population around 7400. The Lake District and the West Pennine Moors are nearby. The Fylde Coast resorts of Blackpool and Lytham St Annes are only eight miles away.

Transport links are good: by car the M55 is less than 5 minutes away; Manchester and Manchester Airport are directly accessible from Kirkham & Wesham Station and recent electrification of the line from Blackpool has brought a direct service to London. A bus service connects Kirkham with Preston, Lytham St. Annes and Blackpool.

BAe Systems at Warton and Westinghouse Springfields have traditionally been large employers locally. Fox's Biscuits and Kepak (meat processing) have large plants in Wesham and Kirkham respectively.

Progress Business Park and Crossroads are the home to many independent businesses – from energy consultants, technical translation services, software writers to light engineering, garages and caravan repairs. HMP Kirkham (Cat. D) is another significant employer. It is an Open Prison. Many prisoners do valuable work in the community and the church supports this.

There are many self-employed tradespeople in the Parish covering all the major trades.



Weeton Barracks, a few miles outside Kirkham, is home to several units of the British Army. St Michael's has a history of holding services for the troops.

Kirkham has a flourishing three-way twinning relationship with Ancenis in France and Bad Brückenau in Germany. Perhaps the best thing about Kirkham's twinning is that on all three sides, it is used by ordinary townsfolk, who in the main have no linguistic expertise, but who just enjoy meeting others in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. They meet every year in one of the towns, on a three-year cycle. St Michael's is heavily involved, provides many "hosts" for our French and German guests, and traditionally holds a popular multi-lingual service in honour of the visits.



With significant housing growth, coupled with good transport links, Kirkham is also a commuter town for businesses in the corridor to Greater Manchester and surrounding towns.

Kirkham has a diverse housing stock: traditional terraced houses; 1960's/70's bungalows and dormer houses; social housing; sheltered housing run by an agency on behalf of the local authority; and developments of new detached and semi-detached homes that are increasing the number of households within the parish boundary.

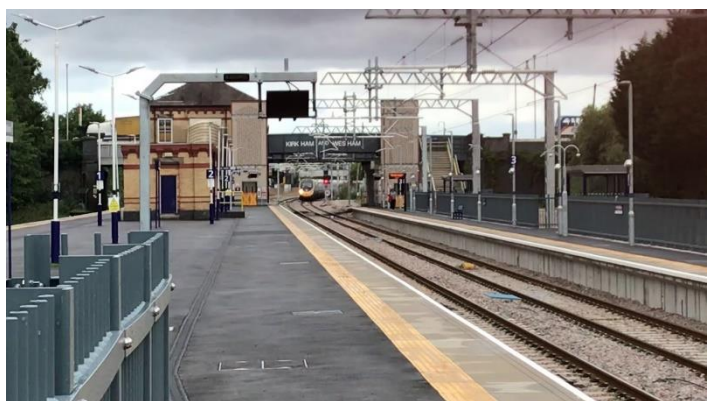
St Michael's Primary School is opposite the church: other primary schools in the Parish are Kirkham and Wesham County Primary, Willows Catholic and Kirkham Grammar Junior School.

Kirkham is also home to Pear Tree School, a special school for children and young people aged 2-19 with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Secondary education in the town is provided by Carr Hill High School, a comprehensive school for 11-16 year olds and Kirkham Grammar School, an independent co-ed day and boarding school with a tradition going back to its foundation in 1549.

For leisure and sport Kirkham is well served with: a YMCA pool and gym; park areas and football pitches; all weather pitches at Kirkham Grammar School; Kirkham Juniors Football; hockey and football at AFC Fylde; and cricket at Kirkham Cricket Club. The nationally renowned Ribby Hall holiday and leisure complex is at the edge of the town.

Over recent years we have seen what appears to be an increase in family poverty and we believe there to be a hidden raft of people struggling with life, that has grown in recent years through unstable low wage employment. Kirkham parish is now only just above half-way along the national scale of least to most deprivation, a position that has deteriorated significantly over the last five years\*. The church supports collections for the Kirkham Food Bank.



## The Future High Streets Fund and Heritage Action Zone

In common with many towns the high street has faced challenges over recent years - all of the 'high street banks' have pulled out of the Town and a number of retail premises on the high street are empty at the moment. Just prior to the COVID 19 pandemic the town was bidding for a large grant, part of which has so far been agreed, to improve business frontages.

The video linked [here](#) (and listed at the end of the document) introduces the plans. They are potentially transformative to the prospects and wellbeing of the town in the next ten years. A linked aim is to help Kirkham rekindle a "Heritage Culture". This church, with its traditional role as a centrepiece for civic ritual, and its newly-developed community facilities, is keen and well-placed to be a leading force in helping this happen.

## History

Originally the parish of Kirkham in Amounderness was one of the largest in the county of Lancashire and contained 17 townships. The area was occupied by the Romans as a temporary site on the Roman military road that ran through the district on its way from the fort at Ribchester - virtually the whole of the main street lies on the Roman road. The name Kirkham comes from times when Danes settled in this area. Kirkham's name is a combination of the Danish "kirk" (meaning "church") and the Saxon word "ham" (meaning "township" or "settlement").

Kirkham was granted a Royal Charter by King Henry III in 1296, making it a Free Borough and thereby entitled to hold a market and a five-day fair twice a year on certain feast days. The cobbled market remains – there is still a weekly Thursday market – and its so-called Fish Stones date back to 1683.

It is believed that the sails for the Royal Navy in the time of Nelson were made in Kirkham.

## The Church's Position in the Community

As a focal point in the community the church is recognised for weddings, baptisms and funerals however has the opportunity to expand its reach to be seen as relevant and a positive force not just for religion but also through practical and timely support of the community, by means such as the existing monthly Saturday Kitchen, term-time Wednesday afternoon Family Kitchen, and the Wednesday Toddler Group. The recently refurbished Spire at St. Michaels, within the church building, also provides great facilities for activity groups and private hire.

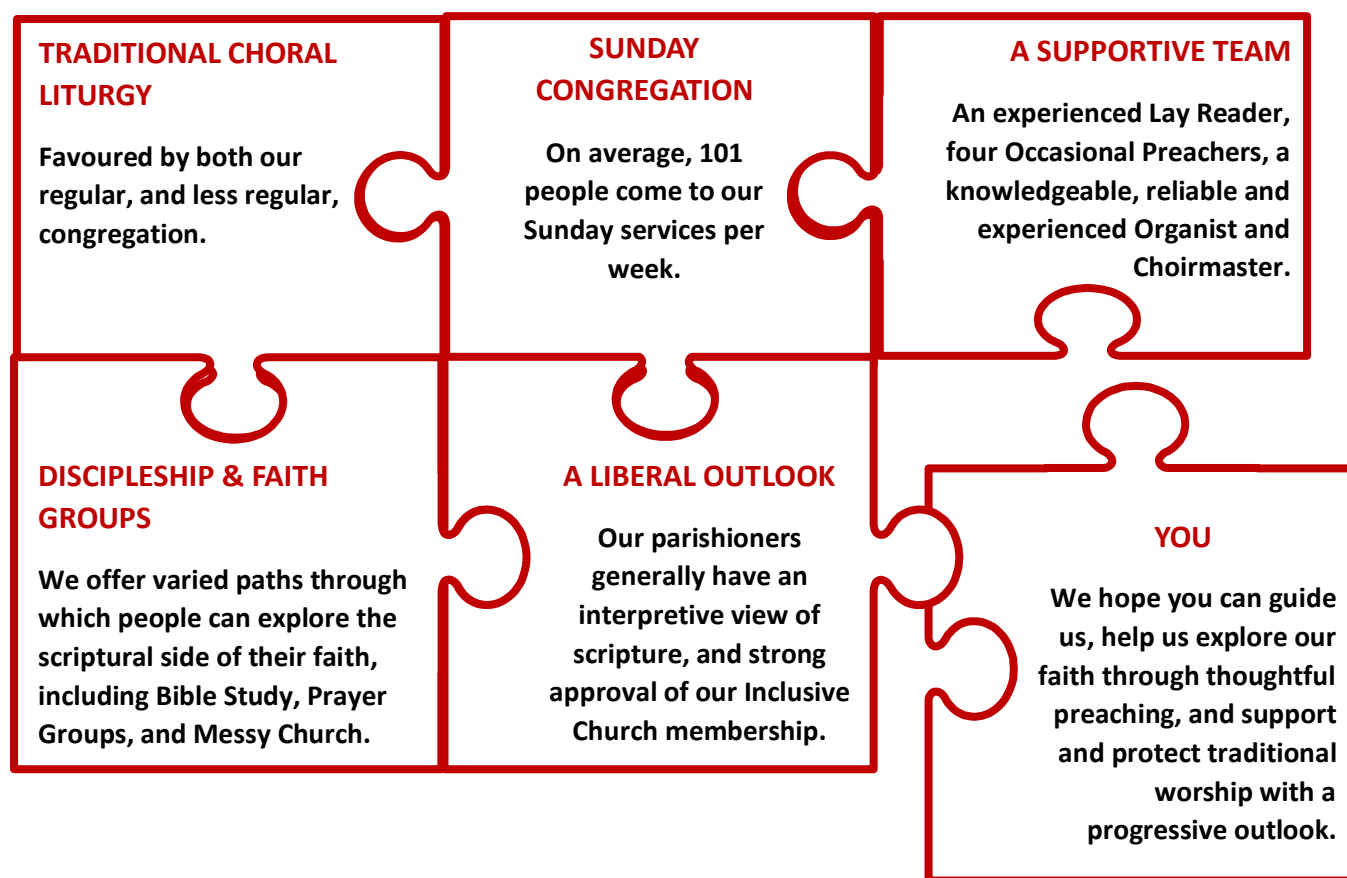
Kirkham Club Day, dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, happens on the second Saturday in June. During the morning all churches in Kirkham and Wesham form a procession of witness. In this respect it is highly unusual among similar traditional events, which include secular elements in their parades.

The afternoon is a mix of ceremonial, including the crowning of the Rose Queen, and community, with St. Michael's Church laying on refreshments, games and stalls and welcoming everyone from the town and beyond.





## The Church Community



## Our Congregation

Our average Sunday service attendance, combining our 8am and 10am service, is 101 (2019 figures).

Our recent (May 2020) survey provides an indication of the age demographic of those who engage with St Michael's Church.

Age	0 to 9	10 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 65	over 65	No age given	Total
Number (All people)	15	8	5	8	21	33	60	3	153
% of 153	9.8	5.2	3.3	5.2	13.7	21.6	39.2	2.0	100.0

The same survey revealed a congregation who have a good level of engagement with the Bible, and that this was coupled with a liberal, non-dogmatic view of it.

It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that St Michael's membership of Inclusive Church is also highly popular amongst the congregation.

## Our Services

Our regular Sunday services follow the pattern described below. The recent Parish Survey (May 2020) showed a strong liking for the fairly traditional, choral liturgy around which our main services are based. This liking was common to regular and occasional attenders alike. In response to the challenges posed by Covid 19, we have started to Live Stream our services on YouTube. The most recent Sunday (at the time of reading this) will be available through our website.

The monthly “All Age Worship” services are more relaxed in nature, but choral hymn singing still plays a prominent part. These services are shorter (without a Eucharist, and a reduced number of readings). This, combined with the attendance of our uniformed organisations, have made this service a popular choice with families.

As with many churches, the “Special Services” in the year attract extra attenders. They remain a very valuable chance to reach the local community. Many such services are common to all areas, but certain ones are either unique to St Michael’s, or retain a special resonance in this area. These include:

**Civic Sunday:** The day after the town’s annual “Club Day” Celebration. It is a chance to invite uniformed organisations and civic dignitaries into church, and celebrate and pray for their contribution to community life.

**Harvest:** Farming is still an important and visible part of Kirkham life, and so Harvest still retains a personal, local feel.

**Remembrance:** In common with many areas, recent years have seen a resurgence in Remembrance Sunday services. Our connection to Weeton Barracks strengthens this locally.

**Memorial Service of Light:** This service commemorates those whom we have loved and lost. People are invited to add names to the list of those whose souls are explicitly prayed-for. Those who have laid loved-ones to rest at St Michael’s are contacted and invited. Although it has only run for a few years, this service has become well-valued in the community.

### Full List of Services

#### Sunday Services

- **8am Service** – Holy Communion said service using the Book of Common Prayer
- **10am Service – 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sunday each month** – Choral Eucharist
- **10am Service – 2nd Sunday each month** – All Age Worship (followed by optional Holy Communion at 11.15)

#### Weekday Services

- **Thursday 9:30am – Spoken** Holy Communion held in the Lady Chapel
- **Friday 7:30am** – Term time only – spoken Holy Communion
- **Friday 2:30pm** – Term time only – School celebration service. The children, staff, parents, grandparents and carers of our neighbouring school, St Michael's CE Primary School, join together to reward the week's achievements.

#### Special Services

- Lent, Holy week & Easter – Ash Wednesday/Evening Compline (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday of Holy Week)/Maundy Thursday/Good Friday
- Confirmation Service – there is an annual confirmation class culminating in a Sunday Confirmation service for both adults and children.
- Civic Sunday
- Harvest
- Memorial Service of Light
- Remembrance
- Christingle





## The Team

A dedicated and experienced team operate at St Michael's, and help with our Services and wider spiritual development. These include:

- Pastoral Assistant
- Licensed Reader
- A small group from our congregation have recently undertaken training as Occasional Preachers
- An experienced Organist and Choirmaster

## The Choir

We have a small but enthusiastic robed SATB choir (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) currently comprising 13 regular members. We are hoping to grow the number of singers once restrictions lift and singing can start again. Practice is normally held once a week, ably led by our organist. The choir sings at the 10am service on Sunday morning and for special services with occasional anthems and solos as appropriate, and also at weddings and funerals (by request).

## Bell Ringers

St Michael's now has 10 bells which were installed in 2017 replacing the 8 bells previously installed. We have a competent team of bell ringers led by a very knowledgeable and experienced Bell Captain. They are always on the lookout for new members and are looking forward to getting back to routine practice and ringing for services when restrictions allow this to be done safely.



## Messy Church

Messy Church is run on a monthly basis and is geared towards primary aged children who attend with an adult. The session starts with a bible story and a prayer, then themed activities followed by a shared meal.

## Discipleship

At St Michael's we are developing discipleship amongst God's people and so helping to grow a healthy church which will transform the town in which we live and worship.

We have a very proactive Licensed Reader who is supportive in encouraging individual bible reading and she reports a steady increase over the last few years of people using bible reading notes. Over recent years several members of the congregation have also undertaken to read the whole bible in a year and the recent parish survey indicates that 33% of the regular weekly congregation regularly read their bible at home.

Our Reader has facilitated bible study groups which are now running informally four times a year with around 10 to 12 people attending and has also started our prayer groups. The prayer groups began with a few people meeting once a month for prayers and pastries and now four years on has expanded into two groups. Our now regular annual prayer walk in the town had to be cancelled this year, however, the prayer groups have formed prayer circles to ensure that they keep in touch and the 14 members regularly communicate and pass on prayer requests.

## Mothers' Union

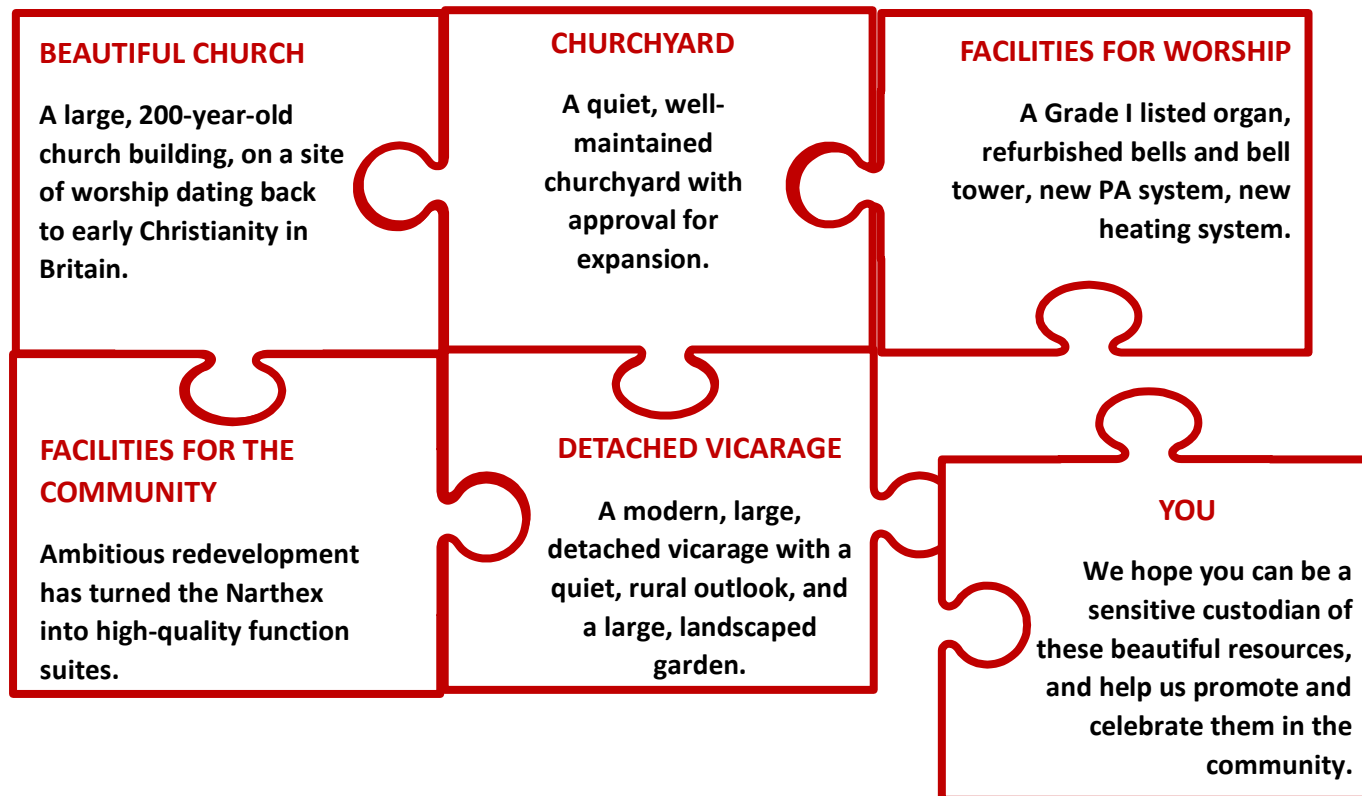
We don't just make cakes! Our Mothers' Union has 46 members who take a full and active part in the life of St Michaels. Amongst them is our Lay Reader, Pastoral Assistant, and one of our Occasional Preachers. Members of our Mothers' Union are involved in almost all aspects of Church life. We have, and continue to develop, good ties with our Church School.

Importantly, our Mothers' Union is not in isolation, maintaining excellent links with other local branches, holding joint meetings and welcoming others to their services. We are part of the Kirkham Deanery, Blackburn Diocese and, of course, the World Wide Mothers Union. We uphold its global aims and objectives, with the aim of being a group that is fit for the 21st century. Whilst Covid 19 has curtailed the meetings, the members have kept in touch with each other and look forward to meeting again without restrictions.

Whilst we consider ourselves to be focused in prayer, worship and friendship, we do – by the way – make good cakes!



## The Church Buildings and Grounds



## The Vicarage



The vicarage is a four bedroomed house with a double garage and ample parking, and is situated behind the church but far enough away to afford privacy. There is a large kitchen with cooker and dishwasher and a separate utility room with a washing machine and tumble drier.

There is a dining room and a lounge that has the benefit of a log burning stove, and patio doors leading out into the garden.

There is a light and airy study that is large enough for meetings of small groups in addition to its secretarial function.

The gardens are landscaped and there are pleasant views over farmland to the hills in the distance.





## The Church



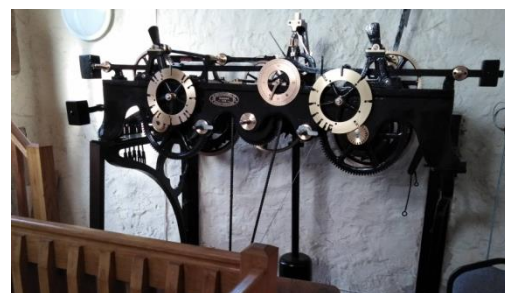
The current Grade II listed building dates from 1822 and is situated on Church Street in the centre of Kirkham and has been under the patronage of Christ Church Oxford since the time of Henry VIII.

The 45m spire of the church was added in 1844 and was completely rebuilt in 2008.

The spire houses the 1924 Potts clock and a ring of ten bells installed in 2017. They replaced the eight discordant bells from 1846 with six new bells that were cast, in addition to four recovered bells. The casting, installation and tuning was carried out by John Taylor Bellfounders and each of the ten bells was engraved with the name of a Northern saint in addition to other dedications to members of the church family past and present.

The church can seat approximately 400 in traditional pews and has a High Altar, a Lady Chapel and a Military Chapel. The church has a hearing loop, PA system and Wi-Fi installed. The heating system was upgraded and refurbished as part of the Spire development.

The Harrison & Harrison organ dates from 1905 and was professionally repaired and restored in 2019 by David Wells Organ Builders Ltd. In 2013 the organ was awarded a Grade I historic certificate, one of only 18 in Britain.



## The Churchyard



St Michael's churchyard is divided into two parts. The Old Churchyard surrounds the church on three sides and includes two Gardens of Remembrance, the older is on the west side adjacent to the entrance path to the church. The most recent, the Billington Memorial Garden, is in the north east corner of the graveyard and provides a tranquil spot for reflection.

The oldest recorded grave is from 1672 which predates the current church building by 150 years.

The New Churchyard is on the west side of the church across a narrow access road. This churchyard is registered with the Commonwealth War Graves

Commission as it contains nine such graves, the earliest dating from the First World War.

The churchyards are maintained by a combination of the Probation Service and an allocated resident of HMP Kirkham with the support of volunteers from the congregation. The church benefits from a brick built shed and modern grass cutting equipment.

## The Spire

The Spire consists of two architect designed rooms that were completed in 2018 in the Narthex of the church and provide a dramatic glass walled space that is used to support the work of the church.



The Kirby Suite situated on the first floor, formerly the balcony, is accessed by an oak staircase or the lift and provides seating for up to 40 people and affords splendid views of the church interior. There is a small kitchen and a toilet on this floor plus electrical power and internet access points set into the floor.

The Pomfret Suite on the ground floor provides space for 60 people and has a catering kitchen with a Food Hygiene rating of five, has Fairtrade status and three toilets including one with disabled access.

The rooms are used by church groups such as Mother and Toddler, Mothers Union and also by the community and private hirers on a commercial basis. This is supported by a team of volunteers with paid administrative input.

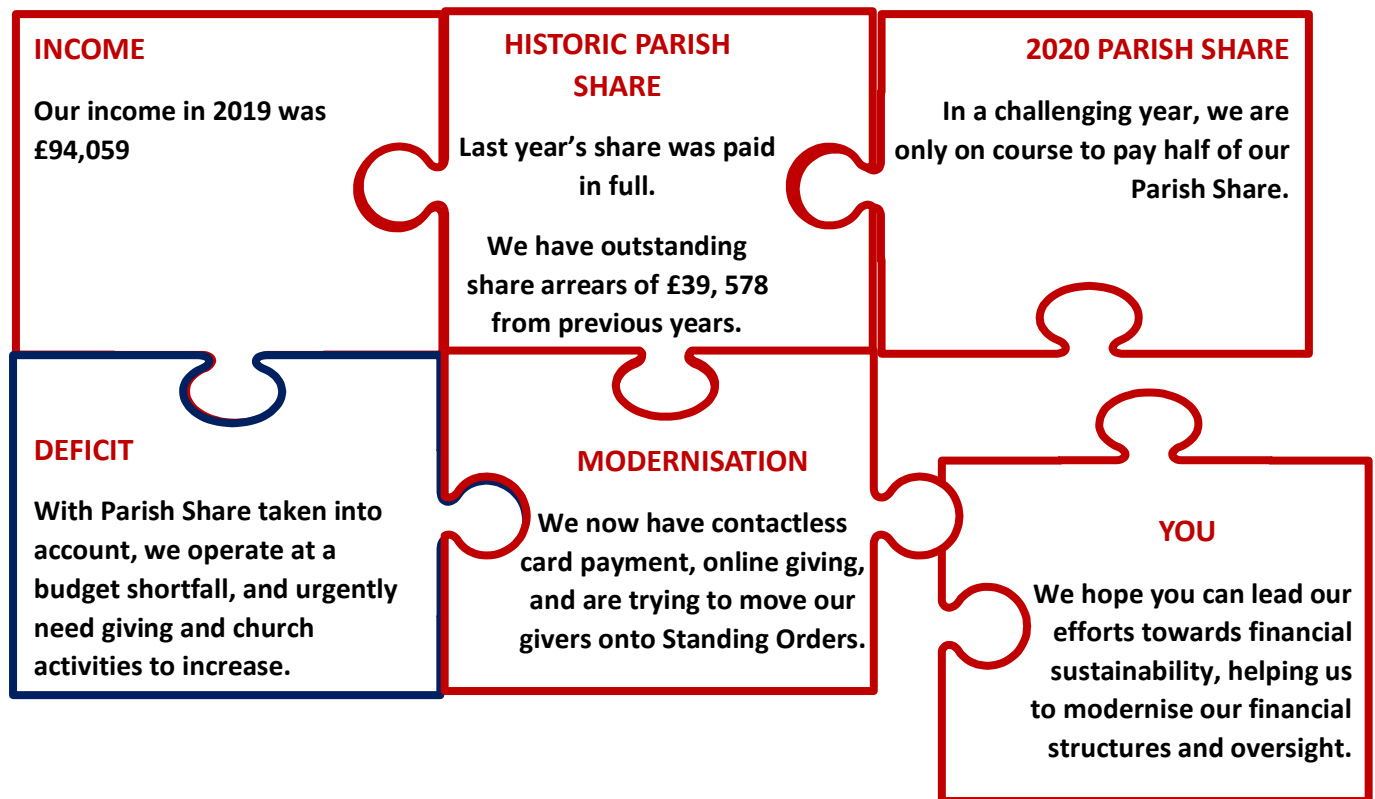
## Primed for Excellence

With the recent refurbishments and redevelopments, St Michael's is well equipped to be a thriving Church. It is a large, welcoming open space. It has facilities equipped for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but installed with full sensitivity to the beautiful architecture of past centuries. It has a space with timeless dignity. With its rare and restored organ, and its brand new peal of ten bells (which attract ringers from across the region), St Michael's is primed to be a centre of excellence for traditional Anglican worship.





## The Church Finances



## Income vs Expenditure

### Giving and Fundraising

<u>Voluntary Income</u>	
Planned Giving	34,860.49
Tax Recovered	8,229.81
Collections - Open Plate	7,755.62
Donations	5,644.29
<u>Activities for Generating Funds</u>	
Club Day Fayre	976.87
November Fayre	768.00
BBQ	271.80
Sundry Income	350.00
<u>Income from Investments</u>	
Dividends and Interest	81.34
<u>Income from Church Activities</u>	
Fees	16,010.00
Magazine Sales and Adverts	762.00
<u>Other Incoming Resources</u>	
100 Club	5,196.67
Charity Collections	487.96
Coffee	734.02
Flowers	1,049.00
Churchyard Income	20.00
Narthex Account	3,420.65
Narthex Hire Income	256.00
Legacies	7,184.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>94,058.52</b>



The table above outlines our sources of income in 2019. The total, £94, 059, needs to be compared to our expenses, which amounted to £116,972.

The Church received a large bequest a few years ago. This money is held in Trust, and strict conditions around its use were expressed in the terms of the Will. Some of the original bequest paid for the modernisation and improvements that have been described. The rest (around half) is invested in property.

What this bequest cannot obscure is the year-on-year deficit in cash flow. This is not a new problem, but is reaching the point where St Michael's ability to operate is threatened, and meeting Parish Share is becoming a real problem.

## **Parish Share**

There are currently approximately 120 people on the electoral roll, however a fall in attendance has meant an associated reduction in income. Whilst there remain outstanding arrears of £39,598 from older parish share bills, St Michael's paid last year's bill in full. This year brings particular challenges with Coronavirus affecting the whole of society and the 2020 parish share (£65,547) is not yet paid. Half of the bill has been met in the first instance and we are in discussion with the Diocese over a payment plan going forward, with the further intention to look at addressing the legacy arrears once we have the increased stability of having a Vicar in place.

## **Pursuing Sustainability**

One purpose of the redevelopment was to provide St Michael's with a way to generate income that could reverse the trend described above. Early signs were good, with local groups and private parties beginning to use the space. However, Covid hit just as "The Spire" was beginning to find its feet.

Determined not to feel sorry for ourselves, we have – in the meantime – worked to modernise our financial structures. We now have an electronic card reader, and have enabled donation through our website. Interest in booking the Spire is starting to return.

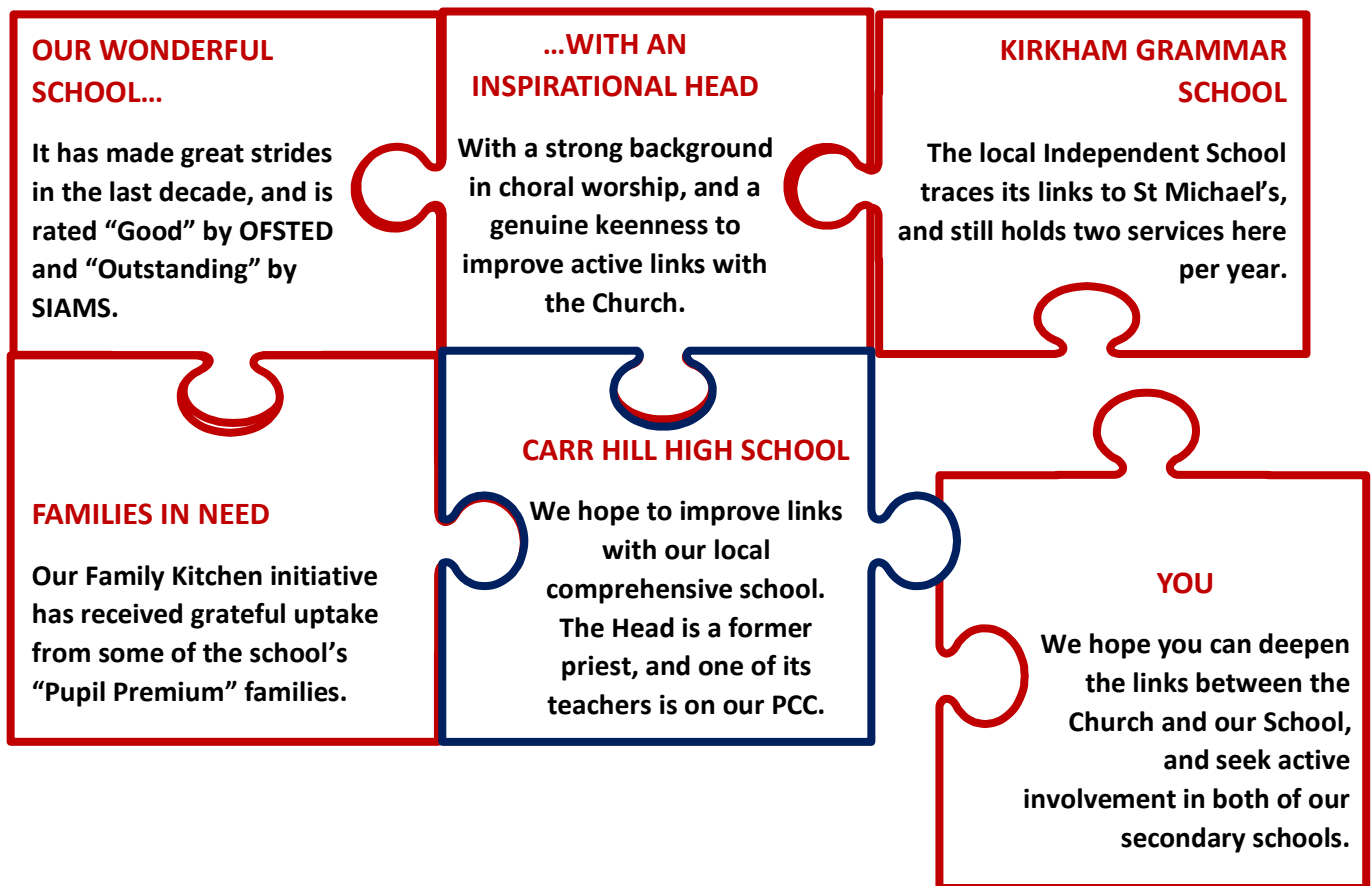
We are also encouraging people to convert to Standing Order in bigger numbers, and to make sure they have shared their necessary details for Gift Aid.

We are working hard, as a team, towards achieving financial sustainability.

## **Large Planned Expenditure**

We have one large item of expenditure to be considered in the near future which is the expansion of the lower cemetery. Originally due to start imminently, PCC have placed it under 6-month review, whilst we assess our bigger financial picture.

## Schools



### St Michael's School

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11*

St Michael's Church of England School, which is voluntary aided, is situated across the road from the church of St Michael's.

There are seven classes with 192 children attending the school. Since the current Head Teacher's appointment in 2016, the school has been deemed 'Good' by OFSTED and 'Outstanding' by SIAMS.

The Christian Faith underpins the ethos of the school, its everyday teaching and learning, the way pupils and staff work together, its aims and expectations for every child on their journey of learning for life. The Head Teacher is keen to develop and further the existing links with the Church. A weekly celebration service is held in the Church which parents are invited to attend; the children hold their Harvest and Christmas services in the church and the school also has strong connections with the MU who provide refreshments for first time parents at the beginning of term and the Family Kitchen.

The Head Teacher describes his school as "buzzing, resurgent, forward looking for opportunities" and, with the staff and Governing body, hopes to forge new and stronger links with the church, where the children play a role in the life of the church and become part the church's family and community.



## Kirkham's Secondary Schools

Kirkham Grammar School, now an independent school (ages 3-18), is located at the other end of Kirkham, but began life (before the recorded founding date of 1549) as a chantry school in the church grounds. Whilst not a Faith School, it still celebrates and maintains its link with our Church. Its Carol Service and Founders' Day still take place at St Michael's, and the Headteacher welcomes visits from the clergy to deliver assemblies.

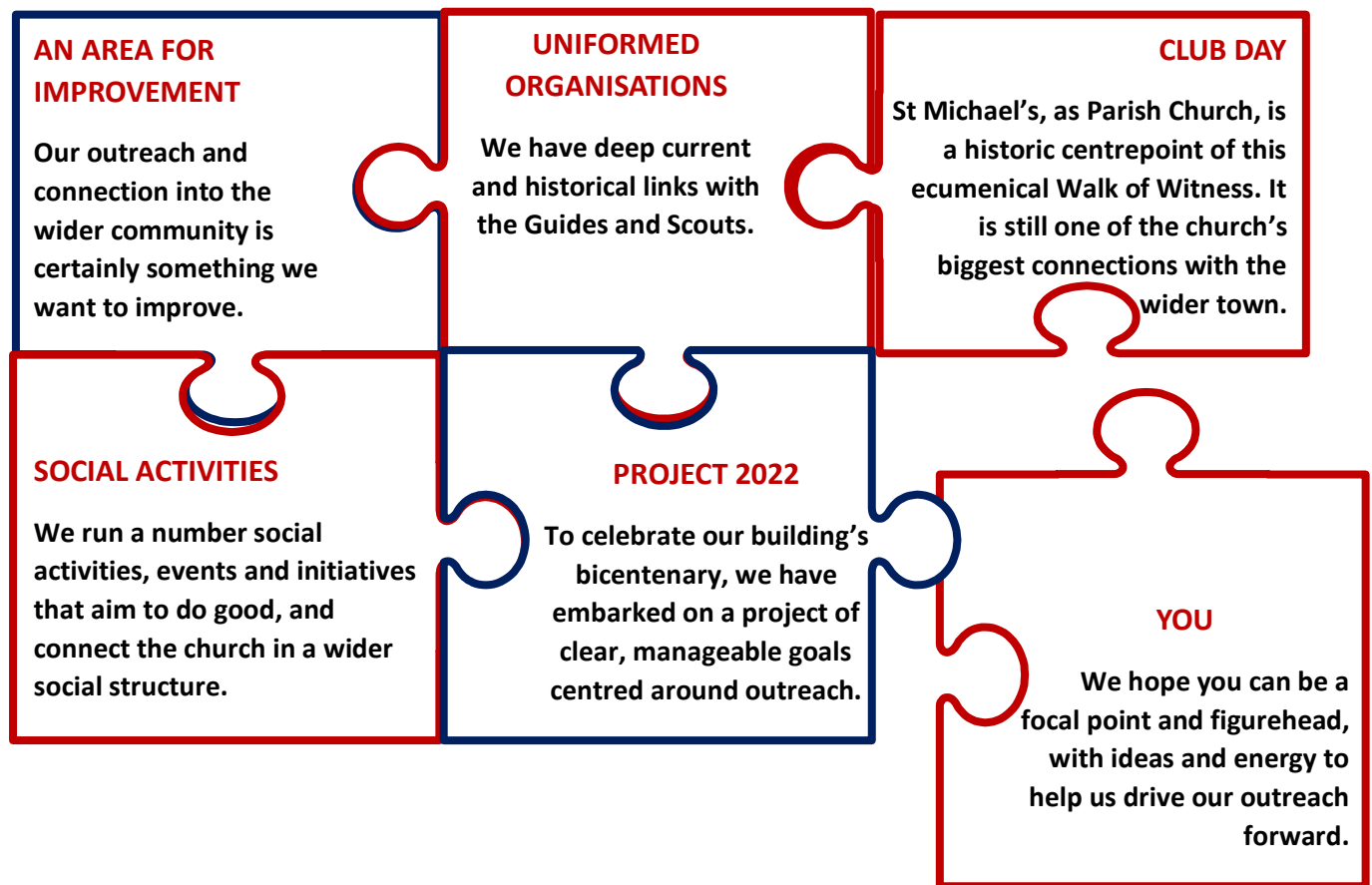
Carr Hill High School is a large comprehensive school (ages 11-16) in Kirkham, founded in 1958. Whilst Kirkham Grammar School derives its catchment from across the area (and well beyond), Carr Hill is the school used by the majority of families in Kirkham. It also serves the surrounding towns and villages. There has been no recent interaction between St Michael's and Carr Hill, and this is something we are very keen to change. The school has previously hosted Carol Services at St Michael's, the current Head is a former priest, and one of our PCC is a Head of Year there. There is reason to hope, therefore, that St Michael's might have a role to play.

It should be made clear that neither of these schools are faith schools. Therefore they are not "mission fields". Rather, they are places where the Parish Church (and its incumbent) can provide true chaplaincy, spiritual guidance, and help to enhance civic pride.





## Our Links to the Wider Community



### An Area for Improvement

The links within the community are good but we know we can definitely improve on these. St Michaels is very much considered by townsfolk as their Church, always there and that sentiment is at the heart of all we do and indeed aspire to, by prayer, worship and practical action. We look forward to celebrating in 2022 the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St Michaels in its current building and reaching out further to the community as we do so.

### Uniformed Organisations

We have a long history of association with the uniformed organisations. Guides and Brownies were started in 1951, almost 70 years ago, and Rainbows in 1987. The girls and their leaders have maintained constant and strong links with us, attending Church Parade, helping out at fund raising. Many families have given loyal service to the Guide movement, continue to do so, and are very much a part of our worshipping community.

The Scouts maintain close links with us, which is identified in their name "2<sup>nd</sup> Kirkham St Michael's Scout Group" which was registered in 1972 (although the group was formed in the 50's after the Second World War). The Group Scout Leader describes their relationship with us as one of 'mutual assistance' - something that we are very keen to encourage and grow. Scouts attend on Civic Sunday, Remembrance Day and Christingle. Their Colours are blessed in Church and previous colours are kept in Church as a permanent reminder of a very important relationship.

## Kirkham & Wesham Club Day

Club Day is still Kirkham's Red Letter Day. St Michaels, as the Parish Church, has a prominent role to play. The walk is ecumenical, and includes all denominations in the town. It also covers the neighbouring parish, Medlar with Wesham. In an age where other town Gala Days have dwindled, Kirkham & Wesham Club Day still stands as a powerful symbol of the town's connection with its churches, the good those churches can do, and the regard with which they are held. The Club Day fete not only provides important funds for the Church but also gives the opportunity to welcome parishioners to St Michaels.



## Annual Events and Fairs

As well as the annual Club Day Fair, we hold an Advent Fair too. Again, they have a good track record of bringing less familiar faces into Church.

Our new Spire redevelopment allows us to be more ambitious in the lunches we host. The kitchen of a professional grade, which allows outside caterers to come in. Our own capable kitchen team have a long track record of producing delicious lunches. Some of the regular ones include the 'Burns' lunch, St Georges Day lunch, a Christmas lunch and a summer barbecue.

## Social and Interest Groups

We reach out to the community through our Mother and Toddler group which is run on a weekly basis during term time. It was founded by the Mothers Union over 30 years ago and is a much cherished resource for the little ones and their grown-ups. A visit by Father Christmas and a Teddy Bears' Picnic are the highlights of the year.

Our Hobby Craft group brings people from all corners of the Parish to work on individual and joint projects. These have included two installations within the Military Chapel to firstly commemorate the end of the Great War, with cascades of red poppies, and secondly purple poppies to remember the service of animals who have died in conflict.

## Social Action

Our most recent venture is the St Michaels Family Kitchen. We provide healthy food after school each Wednesday during term time, and the children also have access to crafts and the very popular Lego box! Our guests are mostly from our Church School, but - by word of mouth - families from other schools in the town also attend.

There is social deprivation within Kirkham, and we try very hard to support families for whom budgeting is hard. We link with the school and the local food bank, whom we have supported for a while. The food bank is also the focus of our new "Feed Five Fylde Families" initiative – part of Project 2022.

During lockdown, we have issued supermarket vouchers to our families which the school has distributed, along with an activity pack for the summer holiday as, due to Covid restrictions, we have not been able to operate.

We also run a Saturday kitchen once a month for anyone to come along and enjoy some company and a tasty breakfast. There is no charge for either of these events but donations are always welcome and it is thanks to parishioners'

generosity that the St Michaels Family Kitchen thrives. It is another aim of Project 2022 that we will increase this meal provision to 3 times a week.

## Charitable Giving

We have a long history of charitable giving or ‘tithing’ at St Michaels although sadly due to financial constraints we have not been as generous as we would aspire to be. However, we continue to sponsor a child in Asia; hold a Macmillan Coffee morning; support the various harvest campaigns; Christian Aid Week; The Children’s Society through the Christingle service, the list goes on and often appeals are made quite spontaneously to support sudden tragedies both nationally and internationally.

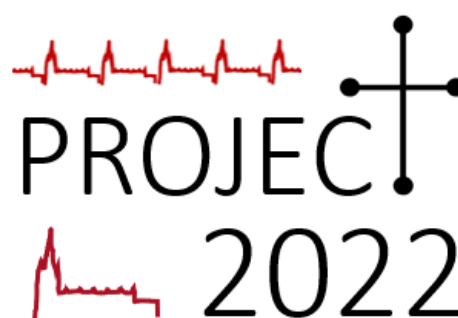
We are now registered as a ‘Fairtrade Parish’ having reached the nationally recognised criteria.

## Project 2022 & Vision 2026

The year 2022 marks the 200th Anniversary of this Church building.

To mark this, we have identified a number of things we would like to achieve by then.

Together, they have the aim of improving the fortunes of the Church, and involving the local community more. That way, we can celebrate the anniversary, and look to the future with optimism.



Our (initial) aims are as follows:

- Expansion of the Family Kitchen (3 times per week)
- Foodbank donations sufficient to feed five families per week
- A junior choir, from St Michael’s school, performing with the Church Choir three times per year
- A Church Choir of 25 members
- An “apprentice” organist
- Service Attendance (10am) to average 100
- Weekly All-Age Exercise Classes
- 12 private functions per year
- 4 heritage events per year
- 6 social nights per year
- Monthly mass litter pick in town
- Hosting Kirkham Market, indoors, 3 times per year
- Bellringing team to increase to 14 members
- 5 clubs or societies regularly operating in Church
- 4 concerts per year
- Hosting of weekly peripatetic music lessons

In many ways, Project 2022 is an attempt to bring about the transformation described in Blackburn Diocese’s Vision 2026 (see “The Diocese of Blackburn” section). The aims are specific, and sensitive to our setting. They take account of our strengths, and weaknesses, as a church. Combined with the Discipleship work of our Reader, we hope they are an outworking of Vision 2026 that is bespoke for our Parish, and will help us to play a strong part in helping our Diocese to thrive. In turn, we will be a healthy church, helping to transform our community.



## **Vision 2026 in Kirkham**

St Michael's Church is keen to play an important part in fulfilling Blackburn Diocese's Vision 2026. More information can be found about the thinking behind Vision 2026 in the Diocese of Blackburn section of this document.

When St Michael's hears the call to "Make Disciples of Jesus Christ", we respond by having expanded our opportunities for Bible Study, with the help of our Reader. We also respond through our talents. This is why professional sound technicians and videographers give of their time to help us deliver services. Many other people, with a range of professional and personal experience, bring that experience to bear here in this Church. This is certainly a church of "doers".

When St Michael's hears the call to "Be Witnesses to Christ", we respond with the practical projects described above. We believe passionately in trying to live by Jesus' example, and – in so doing – to shine God's light in this town.

And when we hear the call to "Grow Leaders for Jesus Christ", we respond by training up members of the congregation to preach, offer spiritual guidance, and run the church professionally.

Vision 2026 is an ambitious project, and any incumbent needs a willing and talented congregation to help achieve its aims. At St Michael's, there is plenty of help to call on.

## Our Vision

St Michael's Mission Statement reads as follows:

***"Kirkham Parish Church welcomes everyone to discover God's love, as seen in the person of Jesus Christ, through our worship, hospitality, learning and life together."***

Central to this is an insistence that all are welcome – just as they are. God's love is bigger than us all, and exists outside of barriers. This is one of the driving reasons behind our membership of Inclusive Church.

Inclusive Church membership, and approval for it, proved to be the strongest area of collective agreement in our recent Parish Survey. There was also a collective leaning towards a traditional style of liturgy and worship.

Combined, these help to form our vision of what St Michael's aims to be: a place that honours traditional worship, but that meets the community with a progressive outlook.

We take seriously our role as important custodians of tradition and history for this town, and find great meaning in ancient signs and symbols. However this is about more than being a living museum. Our services, in which we experience the Bible, great hymns, tranquillity and offer the humble prayers of our ancestors, are an attempt to bring a glimpse of the divine to Kirkham. They aim to be a timeless hour that (with the help of high-quality preaching) looks to give people time to reflect. We want them to be something that complements modern life - and which are, to an extent, an antidote to it.

Outside and around our services, we want to be forward-thinking. We want to create a Church for all of Kirkham. As our survey reminded us, we are operating in a place (and time) where the Bible is not viewed literally. This was the view of our congregation – which is to say nothing of the views outside our community of faith. Such facts demand a gentle and open approach to outreach. At St Michael's, as we look outwards to our community, we want to *preach the Gospel always, and sometimes use words*.

In other words, we want to be a community intent on doing God's work. We want to feed the hungry and help families. We want to help nurture the young people in our schools. We want to invite as many people as possible to experience our facilities, and for them to see them as their own. We want to help connect people to their heritage. We want to help keep our town tidy. We want people to see St Michael's – the building and the body of people – and catch fleeting glimpses of the divine.

*"And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Romans 10:15*

At St Michael's, we are ready to get our feet (and hands!) dirty, and to bring forth the Kingdom of God to this wonderful town. Indeed – as our Parish Prayer exhorts – "to listen, pray, and act for the sake of the Good News".



You are welcome...

...just as you are.

## What We Offer

### The Patronage of Christ Church, Oxford

- ✓ As incumbent at St Michael's, you are supported by the patronage of Christ Church Oxford. It is a centuries-long relationship that is much more than a lip-service connection. Incumbents at St Michael's are invited to biennial conferences/retreats, receive an annual Christmas contribution for books, and can be helped when in requirement of materials to help fulfil their role. For example, where the need has arisen, Christ Church has helped previous incumbents with buying computers and cars. Most of all, though, Christ Church's team offers advice, guidance, and a supportive outside perspective when it is most needed.



*Christ Church*

### A Supportive Team – including Paid Secretarial Support

- ✓ A part time paid PA
- ✓ Two Churchwardens and two Deputy Churchwardens
- ✓ A Lay Reader
- ✓ Four trained Occasional Preachers
- ✓ A Pastoral Assistant
- ✓ A supportive and inclusive PCC with a Secretary and Treasurer
- ✓ A Safeguarding Officer
- ✓ A reliable and knowledgeable Organist and Choirmaster
- ✓ An Audio Technician
- ✓ Website/Social Media Administrators
- ✓ Magazine Editors
- ✓ A lectionary/pew sheet editor
- ✓ A videographer/live stream manager
- ✓ A kitchen team
- ✓ A Sacristan
- ✓ Flower arrangers
- ✓ A cleaning team
- ✓ A team of sidespeople
- ✓ Pro-active members of the congregation
- ✓ A successful, well supported Mothers' Union which contributes to the running of the church
- ✓ A number of other people who run activities that enhance the life of the church

### A Superb Church School, and close ties with the town's two secondary schools.

- ✓ A Headteacher steeped in church tradition, and keen to deepen ties
- ✓ A school with a growing reputation for excellence
- ✓ An increasing number of school families engaging with Church through the Family Kitchen.
- ✓ A grammar school with historic ties and active links
- ✓ A comprehensive school with a sympathetic leadership.



## Connections Into Local Organisations

- ✓ Established links with Brownies, Rainbows, Guides and Scouts.
- ✓ Close relationship with Rotary, 41 Club, Tangent Club and other service organisations.
- ✓ A strong connection with the town's Twinning Association

## A Special Town

- ✓ A town with a strong sense of community
- ✓ A timeless semi-urban, semi-rural character
- ✓ A good standard of living...
- ✓ ...nevertheless, a complex town with people in need.
- ✓ A proud heritage
- ✓ At the beginning of an exciting period, thanks to transformative redevelopment
- ✓ An exciting opportunity to develop, lead and inspire a programme of continuing improvement in the overall mission of the parish, building upon its established base and successes.

## A Lovely Vicarage

- ✓ A vicarage set in large gardens next to the church with panoramic views.
- ✓ Large, modern, spacious.
- ✓ Private yet conveniently placed.

## A Beautiful Church

- ✓ A beautiful church in the Gothic Revival Style
- ✓ New heating, restored listed organ, new bells, redeveloped Narthex with modern fittings
- ✓ Open all day



## Whom We Need

As we await the appointment of a new vicar we are looking and praying for someone :

- ✓ with ideas and energy to help us drive our outreach forward, particularly amongst younger people and to grow the link between the church and our schools
- ✓ who is a good listener, able to communicate effectively and reconcile differing views.
- ✓ able to delegate to attain a reasonable work/life balance
- ✓ able to connect the Bible to everyday life to help us explore our faith and developing the spiritual life of the church
- ✓ take an active role in our town, taking the civic life and traditions of the town seriously.
- ✓ who will support and protect traditional worship with a progressive outlook
- ✓ who can join our efforts towards financial sustainability
- ✓ who will help us promote and celebrate our beautiful resources in the community
- ✓ who will love Kirkham and St Michael's as much as we do (and be prepared to receive that same love in return!)

Thank you, sincerely, for considering the Parish of Kirkham St Michael. We would love to hear from you. In the meantime, you are in our prayers.

## Useful Links and Further Information

The following links might be of interest.

St Michael's Church: <https://www.stmichaelskirkham.org.uk>

Blackburn Diocese: <https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/>

St Michael's C of E School Kirkham : <https://stmichaelscofe.net/>

Inclusive Church: <http://inclusive-church.org/>

Kirkham High Street/Heritage video: <https://1drv.ms/v/s!AmVtcn5TQHV3gsoaNBBLsSRIYWUdPA?e=2q1N2F>

*Copies of our Parish Survey are available, in pdf form, on request.*

### Letter from the Bishop of Blackburn



Thank you for your interest in a vacancy in the Diocese of Blackburn, The Church of England in Lancashire.

In the Diocese of Blackburn we profoundly believe in the difference that the Gospel makes to people lives and so have a deep commitment to building healthy churches which can transform the communities in which they are set. We are looking for people of all backgrounds and traditions who share our passion for making a difference in the name of Jesus Christ.

‘Vision 2026’ is a bold and ambitious strategy which presumes that growth is what God wills for his church and which seeks to deliver growth through making disciples, being witnesses and growing leaders. You can read much more about this on other pages.

Our Diocese serves an area of extraordinary variety, from the stunning countryside of the Trough of Bowland to the former mill towns of East Lancashire, from the University cities of Preston and Lancaster to the seaside towns of Blackpool and Morecambe, from elegant villages to the rows of terraced properties of Presence and Engagement parishes, there is something for everyone. We have parishes of all traditions and are strongly committed to the principle of mutual flourishing. We are also seeking to grow 50 new congregations by 2026 so need people with the gifts of pioneers and evangelists.

If you think that the Church of England is at its eventide and that decline is inevitable, then these pages are probably not for you. However, if you believe that if we trust God, love his people, pray fervently and work hard then all things are possible, then we would love to hear from you. Even if none of the jobs on these pages seem quite right, please get in touch anyway. Please be assured of our prayers as you seek to discern where God is calling you.





## Vision 2026

The year 2026 marks the centenary of the formation of the Diocese of Blackburn. Vision 2026 is our strategy to turn around the long-term trend of gradually declining church attendance. Our vision is to develop healthy churches which transform their communities, a vision in which making disciples for Jesus Christ and pursuing social justice sit side by side.

In 2015 we spent time in prayer with Vision 2026 as the focus. 2016 saw over 80% of parishes appoint lay Vision Champions whose role is to gently nudge /encourage parish leaders and congregations to plan and deliver activities that make disciples of Jesus Christ, be witnesses to Jesus Christ, grow leaders for Jesus Christ and prioritise work among children, young people and schools. We also hosted the Crossroads Mission, with visiting northern province bishops and their teams leading over 400 mission events over an autumn weekend. In 2017 we held a series of study days providing an opportunity for clergy to think about how they engage contextually with Vision 2026 and actively supported Thy Kingdom Come and promoted opening our churches as a place of welcome (and not just on a Sunday).

For 2018, we are encouraging parishes to transform their communities through words and deeds, and are holding a diocesan conference focussing on apologetics in late November. 2019 will be a year focussed on encouraging all of us to be effective disciples.

As a diocese, we are willing to face the cost of change; and in prayer we see the grace and power of God which can alone bring renewal and growth. We are committed to work together (clergy, laity, church schools, diocesan staff and the cathedral) to deliver Vision 2026.

Our Diocesan Vision Prayer is: Heavenly Father, we embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses and to grow leaders. Give us the eyes to see Your vision, ears to hear the prompting of Your Spirit and courage to follow in the footsteps of your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

You can find out more by visiting the Vision 2026 pages on our website: [www.blackburn.anglican.org](http://www.blackburn.anglican.org)



## Our Clergy Wellbeing

If you come to Blackburn Diocese we will look after you...

- We have a great property department, who will do their best to ensure your house works for you and your family and is well maintained.
- We encourage all clergy to take their full annual leave entitlement, and also to use creatively the overtime we all put in to take an extra day off once each month, to enable you to have a midweek 'weekend' away.
- We have a beautiful diocesan retreat house in the grounds of a ruined Cistercian abbey in Whalley (picture above), where clergy are welcome to have personal reading days without charge (bring your own lunch).
- We encourage all parishes in vacancy to consider how they will 'pastor' and support their new priest.
- We have a unique pattern of peer-led Ministerial Development Review, designed by the clergy for the clergy.
- We are setting up a pilot reflective practice group for clergy new in post, in partnership with St Luke's Healthcare.
- If you are looking for a spiritual director or a mentor we have networks of people with whom we can put you in touch.
- Lancashire people are known for their warmth and friendliness and those who are new to the area find it to be an easy place to make friends.
- There are excellent transport connections and the surrounding countryside is spectacularly beautiful.
- For those with children, the Diocese has over 180 church schools including 10 high schools; the vast majority are rated as Good or Outstanding.
- We are always looking for ways for clergy to mix apart from work – including reading weeks, regular hospitality, and a clergy walking group (see picture below)



