



St Michael's Church Blundellsands Parish Profile



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Welcome

St Michael's is a welcoming, inclusive and growing church. As you read through our Parish Profile, we really hope you will feel a strong sense of God calling you with a passion to further the mission and ministry of the Gospel with us and our blossoming congregation.

Having come such a long way in the last 6 years, we are aware that there is much further to go to develop our love of God and be better equipped to spread the Good News of the Kingdom. We know that we need to further our spiritual growth, our communal prayer life and our awareness of need and care for the environment. Furthermore, we must look to the future and address the long term sustainability of a church with few younger people.

We are excited to demonstrate the warm and inviting atmosphere of our church. We hope the following pages will provide you with a comprehensive understanding of what St Michael's represents.

The Vicar we want

We would like a Vicar who will continue with our journey and lead us to a deeper love of God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Having become far more aware of being the people of God in this community we understand that growth, both numerically and spiritually, are our purpose. So, we not only need a person who has a heart for mission amongst the elderly members of the congregation, but also with the younger generation. It would be great to hear more "Godly Chatter".

St. Michael's would welcome a Vicar with passion and energy, who is easily approachable, empathetic and caring, experienced in both creating new programmes and traditional worship.

We are looking for a Vicar who recognises gifts in others and encourages them to use them for God's purposes and lead teams of volunteers to reach out to all ages and grow St Michael's in the community.

An interest in music and IT would help us present our church to even more of the Parish.

What we can offer

A warm welcome to candidates of all backgrounds promising support in both prayer and practical aspects. We love to be actively involved in church services and events within and outside the church walls.

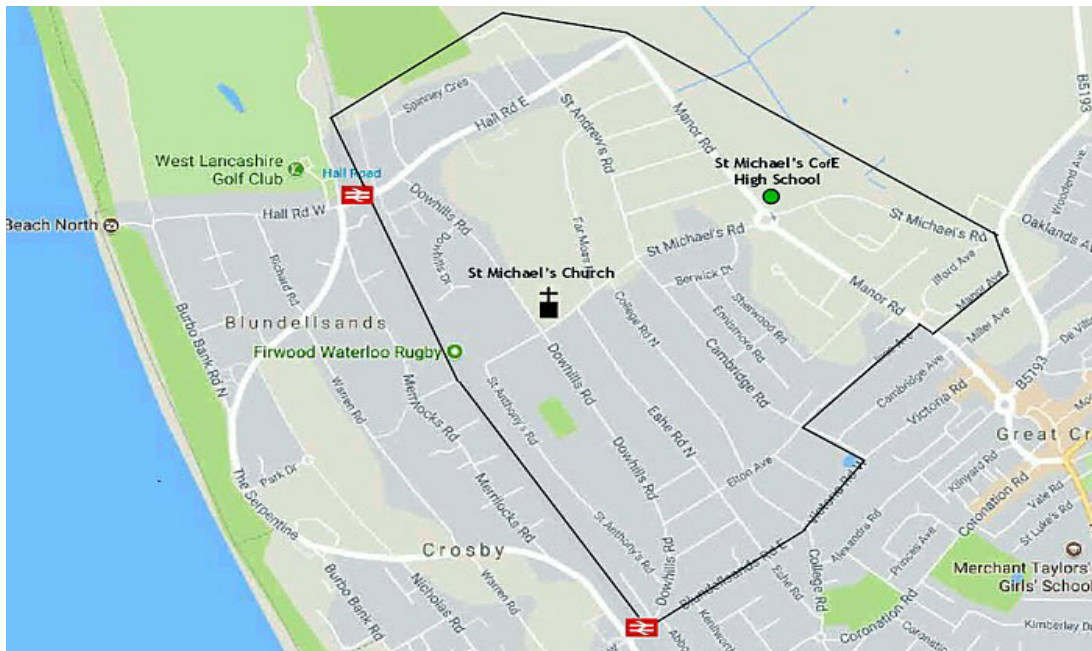
Flexibility to allow you to organise your week, take holidays and time off.

Support from a highly experienced PCC and team of Lay Readers, Church Wardens, Pastoral Assistant and Parish Administrator.

Financial assistance with housing costs and other expenses.

About the Parish of St Michael's

Established in 1907 as an offshoot of St. Luke's Crosby, the Parish lies on Liverpool's northerly boundary, a few miles from the City Centre. With green fields to the north and the Mersey estuary to the west, we are home to approximately 3,500 residents. Primarily comprising suburban homes, the eastern half of Blundellsands makes up the Parish, with large family houses and gardens, semi-detached 1930's residences, 1960's bungalows and an increasing number of flats. In July this year St Michael's will celebrate 100 years as a Parish.



While a portion of the area initially belonged to St Luke's Crosby parish, much of it saw development over the years. The community, originally composed of families, has seen younger members dispersing globally. The aging population has seen an influx of new families attracted by nearby schools like Merchant Taylors' Boys and Girls, St Marys and, in recent years, St Michael's Church of England High School, which is within the Parish.



The Parish hosts a news-stand, a dentist, a small builder's yard, and offices. Sports enthusiasts find amenities close to the church, including Waterloo Rugby Club, The Champion Lawn Tennis Club and the renowned West Lancashire Golf Club.

Anthony Gormley's "Another Place" with Iron Men across the sands, adds to the area's appeal consisting of 100 Iron Men spread along 3 kilometers of Crosby beach.



Mersey Rail Northern Line, with Blundellsands and Hall Road stations at both ends of the Parish, provides a regular service between Liverpool and Southport and we also have a community bus service on our doorstep.

The St Michael's Family

Over the past 6 years, our community has experienced a shift in demographics, attracting a welcoming congregation, primarily aged over 60, many of whom are retired. The positive note is the steady increase in newcomers during this period. Our leadership includes 12 PCC members, who meet bi-monthly, 2 Church Wardens, 3 representatives on Deanery Synod, 2 licensed Lay Readers trained to take funerals and, recently, a younger member of our congregation is pursuing training to become a Lay Reader. Our Pastoral Assistant leads one of our Bible Study groups, teaches in Sunday School, does home visits and preaches occasionally. We also have a number of volunteers who take Communion to the housebound. We employ a Part-Time Parish Administrator (15hrs p/w), who provides high quality support in all aspects of the day to day administration and financial tasks connected with the running of the Church and Community Hall. However, the post will be vacant from July 2024 and we are in the process of seeking a suitable replacement. There are 3 lay-led weekly bible study groups who meet in different locations. Our Treasurer keeps a tight rein on the purse strings and deals with all aspects of our accounts, including the Parish Share, which has always been paid in full.

Our Worship is set to encourage the unchurched and de-churched members of the community, so it has a minimum of liturgy and a mixture of well-known hymns and more contemporary songs. In order to stimulate wider biblical knowledge and understanding, we often enjoy sermon series from a particular book or topic. Our readings and prayers always involve active participation from the congregation and we encourage this by supporting those who are timid in order to aid their spiritual growth. St Michael's is open to change in its service pattern and worship. Our services are screen-projected, eliminating the need for hymn books and morning services are live-streamed when possible.

Many of our congregation contribute to the church's daily operations, such as welcoming our regular members and newcomers, serving hot refreshments post-services, tending to gardens and flower arranging.

In 2019 our attendance was 49 adults and 0 children, while in 2023 our average attendance was 58 adults and 2 children – an increase against national trends of 20%. It would be lovely if it were possible to grow this newly, re-activated children's' ministry.

In 2022, we introduced a more informal, monthly, Sunday evening service in the Community Hall with 35 adults attending. This proved extremely popular and appealed to a wider audience, who would not normally attend our traditional Sunday services. Although we have had to temporarily put this on hold while we have no vicar, we would welcome its return in the future.



In 2023, the Mothers Union, which boasts 26 members, celebrated its 90th Anniversary. Our enrolling member is also Deanery President. Approximately 10 adults convene for Holy Communion on the first Wednesday of each month and enjoy meeting up afterwards for refreshments in the Church Hall.

Our Heavenly Food Lunch Group also meet monthly in the Church Hall, when the main course is provided by St Michael's School's kitchen. It starts with a short 'Thought for the Day' and is a key area of L23 outreach to the elderly and we encourage them to invite friends and family.

We are fortunate to possess a Rushworth, 3-manual organ and have several visiting organists who cover some of our services. Young musicians from St Michael's School occasionally perform at our services and, at our special Harvest and Christmas services, we enjoy music from the band of the Walton branch of the Salvation Army, with whom we have established strong connections. When no musicians are available, we are accompanied by You Tube.



St Michael's and the Community

Over the last few years, the ethos of the church has changed by making the community the heart of St Michael's. What was once a small congregation of retired individuals, has now grown in numbers with wide variety of members including our younger generation.

The occasional offices over the last three years are:

	Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals
2021	2	2	4
2022	5	2	6
2023	6	-	5



Over the last few years, we have steadily increased our giving to local and national charities and we regularly support the South Sefton Foodbank and the Salvation Army and Ukraine Centre with food and toys at Harvest and Christmas Services.



St Michael's has a newly refurbished and beautifully appointed Community Church Hall. It is both a focus for the wider community and an important income stream for the church and extremely well used by the community for courses and activities run by businesses such as Languages for Fun, Limelight Speech and Drama Academy, Pilates, Taekwondo, Tai chi, Move It or Lose It keep fit classes, Crosby Arts Society and Crosby Orchestral Society. We have also hosted parties for Ukrainian families living in the area. Our Parish Administrator oversees all bookings and enquiries.

The Hall is also the hub where our Uniformed Groups, Guides, Brownies and Rainbows meet during school term time. These groups are run by church members who organise a wide range of interesting activities. Parade services in church are held during Harvest and Christmas and the children are involved in collecting gifts from the congregation on these special occasions.



We have a beautiful Garden of Remembrance alongside the church. The Garden and surrounding grounds are kept in good order all year round by volunteer members of our Gardening Team. Last year all their hard work was recognised when they were awarded Level 5 "Outstanding" by the Royal Horticultural Society.

We are a supportive Christian fellowship, marking together many special milestones. Events held at the Hall have included the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Sunday and Christmas lunches and King Charles III Coronation BBQ. We organise local trips to foster unity, which have included visits to places of interest: Birkenhead Priory, Port Sunlight, Calderstones Park, Knowsley Hall, Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and Strawberry Fields. We have also enjoyed short breaks at Parceval Hall.



St Michael's Church of England High School

We have developed close ties with St Michael's School. One of our readers is a School Governor. A former pupil, now studying music at Oxford University, occasionally plays the organ in church during the student holidays, which is a delight.

The church is regularly used by the School for services and our recently retired vicar would lead acts of worship at the School. The church has donated money to their Drama Group to support a play about anti-knife crime. We would hope that the new incumbent would wish to continue to be actively involved with our School.

The Church Buildings

St Michael's started life in a metal clad building, "the Tin Tabernacle" but in 1931 the present brick-built building was consecrated.

Its simple, art-deco design has allowed successive PCC's to keep it in first-class condition. However, we are about to commence repair work to part of the roof. This is expected to take approx. 4 months, after which additional reparation work will be necessary. We have the necessary funding to complete the work and we are also currently promoting a "Raise the Roof Appeal" to help fund the additional work required. Our Treasurer, with helpful advice from the Diocese, has already applied for various grants to support this initiative.

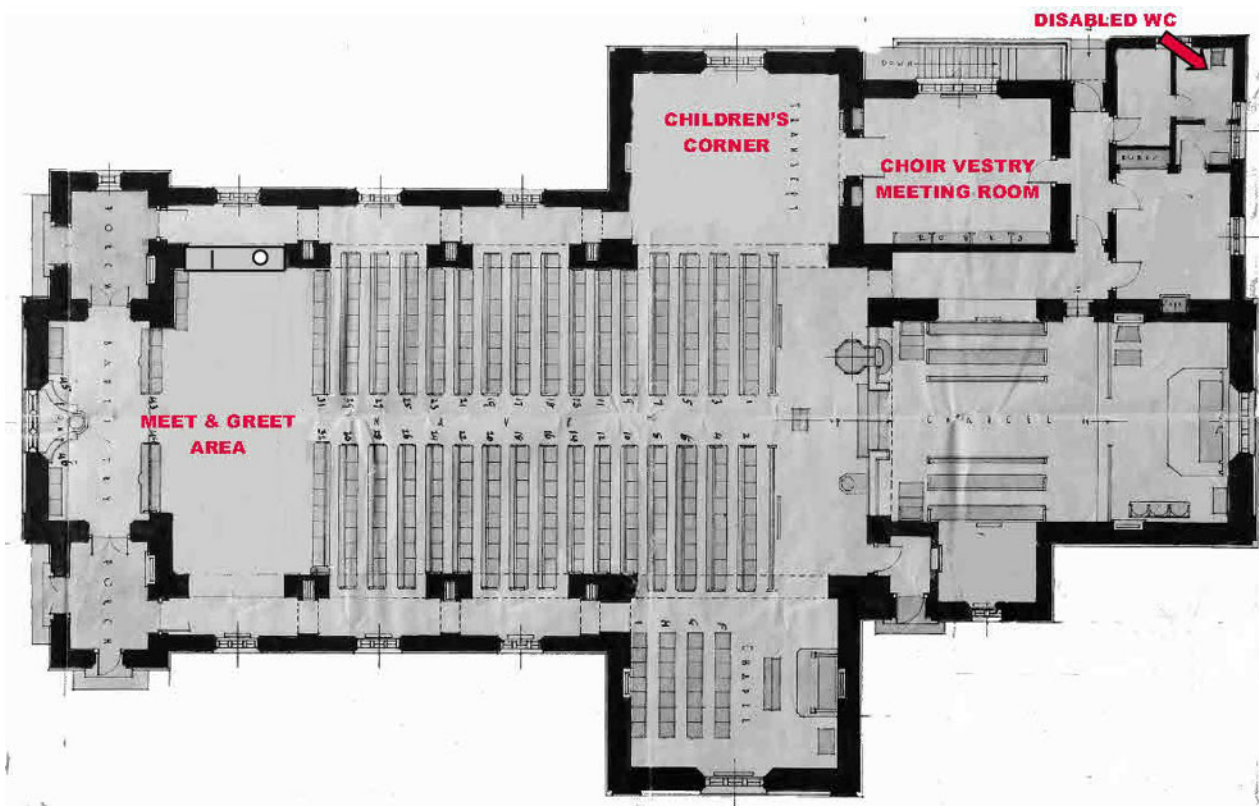


In 1961 a large, brick-built Community Hall was built alongside the church, which is in a very sound state. It comprises a large and a small meeting room, toilets, a fully equipped kitchen and the Parish Office. A member of the PCC has a lifetime of experience in the construction industry and oversees fabric matters.



In the Church, pews have been removed from the West end to create an open area and a coffee bar installed to one side. This has achieved much to create a sense of community, allowing a warm welcome before services and encouraging members of the congregation to stay and chat after services. At the same time, a disabled toilet was installed and an attractive access ramp gives easy access to the church's front entrance.

The Choir Vestry has been upgraded so that it can also serve as a comfortable meeting room and a Children's Corner has been created in the North transept.



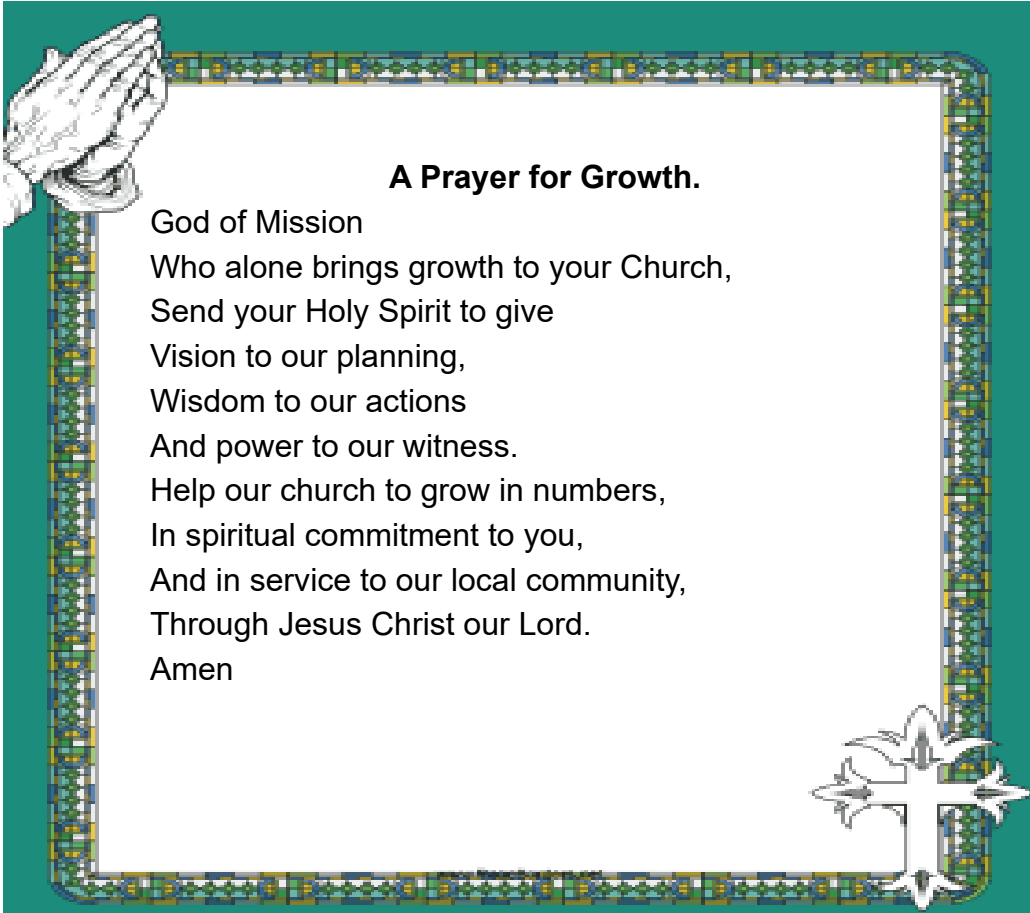
With a seating capacity of about 300, the church is regularly used for services by St Michael's School and large funerals from other L23 churches

About the wider context

As part of the Sefton North Deanery, St Michael's has received consistent support from the Deanery, where the Area Dean and Lay-Chair play crucial roles. The collaborative L23 Partnership, involving the 4 parishes, aims to grow God's church, serve communities and address specific missional needs. It has proved to be a great blessing to the clergy who meet for weekly prayer and mutual support. This collaborative work across the L23 area is an excellent starting point for the upcoming "Fit for Mission" initiative in the Diocese.

Several 'Leading your Church into Growth' (LyCiG) Start Courses have run very successfully. LyCiG has been a real impetus for missional growth and joy through which we have made huge steps forward over the last 5 years. We would wish to continue to build our church on its inspirational and motivational principles: welcoming young and old, encouraging a love of bible reading and flexibly planning ahead under God's guidance through widening our vision for his people in this place. We would like to encourage our new vicar to take a team to attend the National Conference at the Swanwick Conference Centre.

Together we can strengthen God's Kingdom



A Prayer for Growth.

God of Mission
Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

19/05/2024