

St Michael's Horton APCM 2014

Vicar's Report

It has been a joy to come and serve at St Michael's as your new vicar! Here are my impressions, now 8 months into my first year with you all:

- St Michael's people are friendly, welcoming and supportive, with a strong sense of commitment.
- You are prayerful. There is a real love for the Lord here and a sense of his presence in our wonderful ancient building.
- You have gifted and energetic lay leaders
- You have good links with the community of Horton and are strongly identified by many local people as their church
- You put on enjoyable events such as Crafty Church, your Harvest celebrations, New Year dinner and that wonderful Christingle.
- It has been lovely to see the church growing. New people say it is your friendly welcome that draws them in.
- It is great to have children in church when so many congregations these days have none at all. Kids Crafty Church and the week by week provision of Sunday School are energy consuming but greatly worthwhile activities.

If St Michael's has a drawback it is that we tend to do ourselves down a bit. We too readily see ourselves as a small struggling church. In all the ways above we are in fact punching above our weight. Most of what we need is a little more promotion around the community to let others to know what a gem they have in their midst.

On the other hand, dealing with the church yard has been a steep learning curve for me.

Looking to the coming year, I don't want to make too many proposals in advance as I am still doing a number of things for the first time around with you. There are three things we are already committed to though:

1. Confirmation / Explorers course in May: Some new members of St Michael's are already signed up for this.
2. Mission Action Planning: we have not had an MAP before and need to produce one, not only because this is diocesan policy but because it is a great way to give expression to our strengths and weaknesses, articulate our vision and focus our limited resources realistically so as to grow the church. The MAP will need to be prepared prayerfully and with full grass roots participation.
3. Planned Regular Giving: our Deanery has fallen behind in paying its Parish Share, so the Diocese rightly expects us to build up our giving. When people believe in what they are doing they will then feel a growing desire to support it.

I'm looking forward to it and I hope you are too. May the Lord bless St Michael's and build us up through the coming year!

Colin Gibson 15 April 2014