

**King Charles the Martyr Church,  
368 Mutton Lane, Potters Bar, EN6 3AS**



**MICHAEL'S MESSAGES  
47<sup>th</sup> Edition**

**St Luke's Tide 2016**

Dear KCM Members and Friends,

**'ACTIVE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP ACROSS THE DIOCESE HAS FALLEN BY 10% IN THE PAST 5 YEARS'** – this was the startling and sobering fact that the Bishop of Hertford announced at the recent Barnet deanery part of the St Alban's Diocesan programme marking 5 years of 'Living God's Love'. He went on to say that churches have been quite good at two of the strands – 'Transforming Communities' and 'Going Deeper into God' – but not nearly so effective at 'Making New Disciples'.

Nationally the trend is the same – there were 764,000 Sunday attendances in the Church of England in January 2016, a decline of 22,000 from 2015 – less than half the level it was in the 1960s. The Church of England has launched a 'renewal and reform' programme which hopes to 'provide a narrative of hope to the Church of England in the 21<sup>st</sup> century'. The programme also aims to recruit larger numbers of new priests to replace the church's ageing clergy – there are now 300 fewer clergy than in 2012.

Here at KCM we have not been immune to this numerical decline despite our best efforts at outreach. There has been a noticeable drop in Sunday attendance in recent times and this is continuing, a cause of great concern to everyone. It certainly does feel at the moment that, as a congregation, we are in quite a vulnerable position, not least in losing key members of the congregation who have played significant roles over many years in the life of the church. More and more responsibilities are falling on fewer and fewer shoulders and we currently have a significant number of gaps which need filling to enable our church life to continue. Of course, the situation we face is also being faced by many congregations in the Church of England at large. The vicar of a large church in Watford was telling me recently of their decline of both adults and children.

The question I want to pose is: do we continue to manage this decline or do we set ourselves some modest targets for growth spiritually and numerically? The KCM Church Council is creating an updated Mission Action Plan to try to devise realistic and achievable ways of encouraging new growth and we hope to be able to share these ideas more widely with you in the coming months.

As I write this on 18 October, we have just celebrated the Feast of St Luke – and from his gospel are these words of Jesus: *'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field'* (Luke 10/2). **Prayer** has to undergird everything we seek to do – and so we are inviting you to come and join members of the Church Council for a time of quiet prayer in the church on **Thursday 3 November from 7pm till 8pm**. Do come and go during this hour if you are able to. Even if you cannot be in church that evening, there is nothing to stop everyone in the KCM congregation from spending a few minutes of quiet at home, praying for our church to grow in the months ahead. We are also planning to arrange other times when the church will be open specifically for prayer for our growth. So please will you join in praying for the church, for our church, as we seek to grow and build up the Body of Christ.

**SAFEGUARDING** – The Diocese of St Albans writes: *‘Much valued work with children, young people and vulnerable groups is carried out by people, often on a voluntary basis. The contribution they make in nurturing and guiding our children in the Christian way of life can never be overestimated. Sadly it is a fact that adults will attempt to infiltrate any organisation to abuse children or young people. The church is probably no more vulnerable than other organisations, but is unique in its ministry because it is open to all. Every church therefore needs to create and maintain a culture of informed vigilance to safeguard and promote the welfare of our children and vulnerable adults’.*

Here at KCM, we are extremely grateful that Helen Schmitz, a recently retired Head teacher, has agreed to be our Parish Safeguarding Officer. She has worked with the PCC to create a newly approved KCM Safeguarding Policy, based on national and diocesan guidelines, which is now widely displayed in the church, hall and on the website. It is planned that safeguarding training will be available to those members of the church who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults during 2017. If you have any questions or want to know more, do get in touch.

**A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** for the whole KCM family was held in April when there was a presentation given on the life of KCM, as well as full information on the new **Parish Giving Scheme** which has been launched by the Diocese of St Albans. Since then a number of people have joined the scheme, replacing their bank standing order by taking out a direct debit mandate. You will know that this new scheme has a number of advantages, not least for our hard-working Honorary Treasurer, because if you can additionally gift aid your giving, then this is automatically added. Jean Emmans writes: *‘Have you thought, or are thinking about signing up to the Parish Giving Scheme? Many of the church family have already done this. We have some packs available, so please speak to Jean if you have any concerns or questions. If you feel that you still prefer to donate using envelopes and do not already use them, these are available free of charge. In this way, even if you are unable to get to church each week, your weekly giving can be maintained and the envelopes put in to the collection when next you attend! Thank you’.*

**THE LAUNCH OF A NEW THURSDAY CAFÉ:** There is to be an open meeting held on **THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER at 7.30pm** in the Margaret Old Hall which will be convened by David Thomson. There has been a good response to our questionnaire and there is clear enthusiasm to plan a new venture. All are warmly welcome to come and find out more and help develop the wonderful work of the Open Door Café which has been such a significant part of our life over the past 13 years – for which enormous thanks are due to Phil and Jean Emmans and Sue Loader.

**THE 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY of KCM** has been well celebrated during 2016 with, amongst other things, a memorable concert given by Simeon Wood, an enjoyable quiz and a wonderful summer community fair. The final two events are the **Craft and Collectors Day on Saturday 29 October** from 10am till 4pm and the **Christmas Bazaar on Saturday 26 November** from 11am till 3pm. Do come and support both these events. Anniversary memorabilia is still available for sale!

**CHURCH REFURBISHMENT stage 2** – the Church Council have now decided that stone is the best choice for a new church floor. There are two choices of stone we are currently considering – from Dorset and Lincolnshire – and some site visits are being planned to look at those churches which have installed new stone floors. Because this is a crucial decision which has to last for a long time, we cannot rush our final choice. We will continue to keep you posted as our plans develop.

**FINALLY, THANK YOU** to everyone, who contributes to the ongoing life and work of the church. Vulnerable we may be and yet, with all our resources stretched, we still have much to celebrate. Thanks be to God.

With prayers and best wishes, *Michael Burns*