

Links with Families, Schools and Children's Groups in 2019

In 2019 there were 20 baptisms at St Michael & All Angels' Church. 16 children were baptised and it was good to welcome them and their families to Church for the baptism services. The baptism families were invited to Mass on Mothering Sunday, Harvest and they were invited to the Crib Service when the children could come dressed as an angel, a shepherd or a sheep.

It was also a joy to have an adult believer's baptism when we celebrated the Baptism of Christ on 13th January and later in August the believer's baptism of a teenager. Two adults received conditional baptism in preparation for Confirmation. They were mothers who were baptised during the Mass with their children. The Mass with Confirmation at our Patronal Festival on 29th September was a wonderful time when our five Confirmation candidates were confirmed by Bishop Norman: three adults and two girls at Secondary School.

Fr Neil leads an assembly at St Michael's Junior School in each of the 6 terms. Elizabeth Bryson leads worship at the Infant and Junior Schools in every term. She also welcomes the Wendy House Nursery into Church for a service at Easter, Harvest and Christmas. She leads a Stations of the Cross in Lent for the Year 6 Junior School pupils. In September we have class visits from the Junior School to have a guided tour of the Church and a short service. The children enjoy having time to look around and ask questions. The Infant and Junior Schools came to Church for their Easter Service; for Founders' Day in July when all the Year 6 pupils were given an award; for a Michaelmas and Harvest Service when the children brought generous contributions of food for the Food Bank that made a wonderful display for our Harvest Festival; and for their Christmas service. The Junior School came to Church on Remembrance Day, when it was very special to have 2 minutes' silence with them at 11 am on 11th November. It is good to welcome parents and grandparents to Church at the Schools' Services.

The Scouts, Guides, Cubs, Brownies and Beavers were invited to Church for Mass on Mothering Sunday and at Harvest, when some of the groups prepared and showed posters in the Sermon. The Guides made an acrostic poster and here are the other posters shown on Mothering Sunday 2019:



At our Harvest Festival Mass the Cubs, Beavers and Brownies showed these acrostic posters:

H is for
A is for
R is for
V is for
E is for
S is for
T is for



The Scouts, Guides, Cubs, Brownies and Beavers were invited to the Carol Service when some children from these groups did a reading. The St Michael's Infant and Junior Schools, the Wendy House Nursery, Cubs, Brownies and Beavers were invited to the Crib Service when the children could come dressed as an angel, a shepherd or a sheep.

The wonderful Children's Corner at the back of the Church, refurbished and equipped by the Mothers' Union, makes a very welcome space for children who come to Mass on Sundays with their parents. Children at baptism services and the younger siblings at the schools' services enjoy playing and colouring in that special corner of the church.

Fr Neil is chaplain for the Air Training Corps 40F (Maidstone) Squadron, where he runs a padre's session once a month, if there are no enrolments for him to carry out.

Fr Neil officiated at Christmas Carol Services at St Augustine's Academy.

Children in our Church family enjoy being actively involved in the Mass. In 2019 three children have been in the Choir, two of them preparing for and achieving Grade 1 in singing. Five children, including one newly confirmed regularly read at Mass. We are pleased to have a boat-girl on the serving team. At the Crib Service seven children in our Church families had parts in the Nativity Play.

Elizabeth Bryson, Reader