



OUTREACH

Central to the church's ethos have been many forms of outreach activity and concern for the wider community.



Barn Dance

Early initiatives included the very popular International Student Weekends, started in 1967 by Brian Griffiths, which ran for forty years. These weekends, held in conjunction with other local churches, enabled overseas students from colleges in London to come and spend a night with families in Amersham. The weekends were great fun, with a Barn Dance on the Saturday evening followed by a walk and tea on Sunday afternoon. The students involved really appreciated the chance to spend time in a family and the whole experience was enriching for both hosts and guests.



Leonard Hicks leads the International Student Weekend Sunday afternoon walk



Jen Steele with Easter Remembrance cards

In the early 1970s, Brian Griffiths, the first vicar, invited CRUSE, the bereavement support organisation, to set up an office in St Michael's, thereby ensuring the building was used during the week, as well as on Sundays. Since then, there have been various initiatives to offer everyone the opportunity to remember loved ones, particularly around All Souls Day at the beginning of November, and at Easter, a time of death and resurrection.

In the 1970s, other community-support organisations also started holding their meetings at the church, and continue to do so, forty years on.

In 1980, proposals for the church to directly employ two community workers were implemented. Their role was to reach out beyond the congregation to the wider community including people under stress, or suffering from mental illness, and mothers with young children. Later we were joined by several different parish workers.

In 1985, a Pastoral Care committee was formed from members of the congregation, all of whom had some training in caring. This group oversaw the development of various initiatives, including the monthly Healing and Wholeness sessions, a quiet time of 'letting go' and allowing God to heal and restore. Details of dates & times are on the Church website - <http://www.stmichaelsamersham.org.uk/>

The setting up of the Wheeler Coffee Pot, at a time when there was only one coffee shop in Amersham, as an interchurch activity based in St Michael's provided a meeting place for those in town during the week, with a chance to enjoy coffee and biscuits and to chat with friends old and new. This long-running venture still takes place on Tuesday mornings and provides a much-valued service.

St. Michael's has supported the Fair Trade Foundation for a number of years, hosting Fair Trade stalls on the forecourt (now St Michael's Square) on several occasions, as well as obtaining increasing amounts of its own requirements from this source.

In 2013, the church became a collection point for Chiltern Food Bank. Donated goods are regularly taken down to the distribution centre in Chesham.



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For many people setting foot inside a church for the first time can be a somewhat daunting experience and it was partly with this in mind that 'The Well' was set up in the late 90s to broaden the scope of activities offered by the church. A variety of groups, courses and one-day events took place and successfully encouraged many to come through the door and try something new, such as Pilates, Introduction to Watercolour or Dancing for Life. New friendships were forged and interests kindled.



The Amersham Millennium Lectures, proved an extremely popular venture and attracted people from a wide area who were challenged and entertained by an eclectic range of speakers, such as John Shelby Spong, Rabbi Julia Neuberger and Yasmin Alibhai Brown. Many people became regular attenders, appreciating the opportunity to listen to such high-calibre speakers.

Further afield, visits to Prideaux House in Hackney were triggered by the Faith in the City initiative and clothing collections for their Charity Shop were regularly organised by the 50+ Group.

Other links followed on from this including visits by members of the Youth Club who put on one of their shows for the older people. Members of the group have visited St Michael's and friendships have been forged over the years.



Entertainment at Prideaux House



Visitors from Prideaux House



St. Michaels visited Prideaux House in February 1989



Visitors from Prideaux House



Being shown around Hackney



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The church's position in the centre of Amersham has provided it with opportunities to 'meet people where they are'. Over the years, there have been various outdoor activities including earlier celebration weekends when the vicar and churchwardens dressed up as clowns to greet passers-by. It has acted as host for community services such as the Royal British Legion's Remembrance Day observance, and the Town Carol Service.



British Legion Service



The creation of our new St Michael's Square in 2012, together with the adjoining Quiet Garden and Labyrinth, has extended the scope of our outreach with events such as Midsummer at St Michael's and Teatime on the Square giving visitors the opportunity to sample coffee and cake with friends. The additional seating provided has made it a popular place for lunch for people working locally, particularly in the summer.



The Church is open during the day for anyone who wishes to come in to enjoy a moment's stillness, or to light a candle and say a prayer for someone.