

Report from St. Michael and all Angels, Atworth for year 2008- 09

The church of St. Michaels and all Angels in Atworth is in the Benefice of Atworth with Shaw and Whitley and so is combined with Christ Church, Shaw, which means that the services are shared as well as the Vicar!

The 1st and 3rd Sundays in the month are held at Atworth and the 2nd and 4th at Shaw, with the 5th Sunday alternating between the two.

We also have a pattern of Services of sharing the major festivals like Christmas and Easter in a way which alternates between the two church buildings.

When Christmas Day is at Atworth one year then the next year it will be at Shaw.

This year looking at the church services notices and village magazine will be particularly important as Palm Sunday is on the 1st Sunday in April but will be at Shaw and Easter day on the 2nd but is at Atworth!

I would like to express grateful thanks to Kenneth Spencer for the excellent Village magazine and webpage.

I have now been here for nearly 2 years and my post is Priest-in-Charge of the two churches but also with responsibility for the Secondary schools in our location- Stonar, and George Ward.

During this past year in the life of the churches in the Benefice we have had much to celebrate:

- 4 new Lay Pastoral Assistants commissioned to the Benefice enabling us to extend our provision of pastoral care;
- Stewardship Campaign increased regular giving and both churches paid their parish 'share'- thanks to the generous support of the villages as well as the church congregation;
- Extensive refurbishments to Atworth Church Hall;
- Successful introduction of new monthly 'Let's Celebrate Together services designed to attract all ages. Churchfields, the village school were involved in the December Service and Stonar school also have led 2 Services;
- Celebration of Festivals involving members of the wider community through The Nine Lessons and Carols Service and through the Let's Celebrate Together Services;
- Monthly 'Prayer Hour' introduced in Atworth;
- Roof between the tower and church at Atworth church replaced.

- Working party successfully tidied up Atworth churchyard- with grateful thanks to those who keep the grounds and the team are always keen to have new people to join them in this;
- Crèche area for young children introduced in both churches so we can be family and child-friendly;
- TOAST – Teenagers group are thriving and have participated in church social events and led a 'Let's Celebrate' Together service;
- Disabled ramps and wheelchair facilities provided at both churches;
- Extensive programme of social events has involved the local community and raised £9,100.

Other items we celebrated in the Benefice

- New format for the Sunday Notices
- COAST – children's group now extended to Shaw
- New path leading to Christ Church, Shaw
- Successful Lent Course and Advent Reflections held, involving other denominations
- New welcome cards introduced
- Badges to identify sides people and church wardens
- Features publicising services and social events appeared in local media
- Bible study continued to be supported
- Increased cross-over of readers, sides-people and intercessors between the two churches
- Collection for Christian Aid raised £1,295
- Choir continued to perform to an excellent standard including a concert performance of Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*, and leading the All Souls and nine lessons and carols services
- Posters advertising future services displayed weekly

At St. Michael's, during the year, we have had 7 baptisms, and 2 young people, one from Atworth and one from Stonar were confirmed at our Deanery Confirmation Service.

We had 6 Church Funerals Services this year. At one of the Funerals the renovated village bier was used.

With no weddings in the last year, I am pleased to announce that there will be a wedding in Atworth, in August, this year.

In July we will be sadly saying goodbye to our Choirmaster, Alan Jones, who will be retiring. We are grateful for his contribution to church life through his dedication to his role and his musical skills and abilities.

We hope to find someone who will take over this leadership role in our Benefice who will build on and develop our church worship for the future.

The fabric of the Church will be a major concern for us in the coming year as the Quinquennial Report on the church building will be taking place next year.

We will need to ensure that funds are available for any structural work undertaken and internal decoration will need to be a focus for us.

This year we celebrate 40 years of being a Benefice and special celebrations are on the weekend of the 12th September for which we are pleased to be joining in with the Parish Council event on the Saturday as well as holding other events on that day.

The AGM for the church is to take place on Tuesday 28th April at 7:45pm in the church hall, when we will be voting for PCC members, for Churchwardens and other officers like the Treasurer and Secretary, reviewing the past year and looking forward to the future.

This is an open meeting and everyone is most welcome to attend.