

The Parish Church of Saint Michael, Cornhill

City Deanery
Diocese of London

Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986

Statement Concerning the Conditions, Needs and Traditions of the Parish

With a strong Eucharistic tradition, St Michael, Cornhill, needs a priest sympathetic to the English catholic tradition, who will enthusiastically maintain and protect the traditional forms of worship which are dear to the congregation, and who will preach powerfully and informatively on the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith.

May 2012

Saint Michael, Cornhill
St. Michael's Alley,
Cornhill, London,
EC3V 9DS

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1. The Parish

Location and Demography

The parish is located in the central part of the City of London. The area covered by the parish is made up roughly of three blocks: that bounded by Threadneedle Street, Bank Lane, Throgmorton Street and Old Broad Street; another bounded by Threadneedle Street, Cornhill and Finch Lane; and a further area south along Cornhill. It is approximately 40 hectares in extent. It is located entirely in the City of London which, while being one of the world's major financial centres, has virtually no resident population. There is, consequently, a large working population which commutes daily (except at weekends) from a large catchment area in Greater London and the Home Counties. The City is largely deserted at weekends and at night.

Much of the parish consists of offices relating to the provision of financial services, although there is a growing square footage of retail businesses. Until recently, the London Stock Exchange was located in the parish and St Michael's retains its close connection with the Stock Exchange even though it has relocated elsewhere in the City. The working population is drawn predominantly from social classes ABC1. There are no schools, colleges or hospitals in the parish. While the City Corporation has been encouraging both retail and residential development in the City, there is little scope for major developments of either form in the parish and it is unlikely that the parish's character will change materially in the foreseeable future.

Other Parishes united with St Michael, Cornhill

In 1906, the parishes of St. Peter le Poer and St. Benet Fink were united to St. Michael's upon the demolition of the former church, the latter having been united to the former after its demolition in 1846; hence the practice of appointing six churchwardens, two for each parish.

Patronage

Since 1503, the patronage of St Michael, Cornhill has been in the possession of the Worshipful Company of Drapers, one of the Great Twelve City livery companies. The parish enjoys a close and constructive relationship with its patron and over the years has benefited from very considerable financial support from that source.

Electoral Roll

At the end of 2011, there were 58 names on the Electoral Roll. None of those on the Electoral Roll resides in the parish.

2. The Church

Brief History

The Church lies over the remains of the Basilica – the northernmost part of the great Roman Forum built in the first century AD. It stands near to the site of a church founded by King Lucius in AD 179 - the oldest site of Christian worship in London. The name 'Cornhill' is first mentioned in the 12th century, the 'hill' indicating the rising ground on which St. Michael's stands, and 'corn' being derived from the corn-market which was once held there.

The Church of St. Michael's is known to have been in existence before the Norman Conquest, for it is recorded that in 1055 Alnothus the priest gave it to the abbot of Evesham. During the reign of King Henry VII (1485-1509), the patronage was transferred to the Drapers' Company, which still has the gift of the living and plays an important and constructive role in parish life to this day. The 500th anniversary of the Drapers' Company's patronage was celebrated in 2003 and commemorated by the restoration of the east end of the church.

The Church, with the exception of the tower, was completely destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666. The present Church was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren between 1669 and 1672. The interior, with its majestic Tuscan columns, was beautified and repaired in 1701 and again in 1790. Pre-Victorian features that remain in the Church today include 17th paintings of Moses and Aaron incorporated into the reredos, as well as a wooden sculpture of 'Pelican in her Piety' dating from 1775. The vestry retains its 17th century panelling, with a fine carved overmantel.

The interior was extensively remodelled in the High Victorian manner by Sir George Gilbert Scott between 1857 and 1860. Scott recalled that he 'attempted by the use of early Basilican style to give a tone to the existing classic architecture'. As part of this scheme of reordering, the eminent woodcarver William Gibbs Rogers carved new pews and a pulpit and lectern (which earned him a prize in the Great Exhibition of 1851) for the Church. In addition, an ensemble of stained glass was made by the firm Clayton & Bell and a new porch, with a tympanum sculpture of St. Michael by John Birnie Philip, was added.

The Church was fortunate to escape serious damage in the Second World War. The interior was restored in 1960, with the roofs and the nave of the tower being renewed in 1975.

Other Facilities

St Michael, Cornhill, possesses no other buildings or rooms beyond those of the church building itself. In particular, there is no longer a rectory. Throughout his incumbency, the Rector was accommodated in the Watch House, Giltspur Street, adjacent to the church of St Sepulchre, Newgate, of which he was also the Rector. This will not continue following the retirement of Dr Mullen.

The churchyard, laid to lawn and small garden, is well-maintained and enclosed behind railings which afford protection from nocturnal invasion. The lawn is much used and appreciated by Sunday worshippers during clement weather. There have been no burials in the churchyard for many years.

3. Church Services

St Michael, Cornhill, is a typical City of London parish, with virtually no resident parishioners. However, it is a thriving centre of traditional worship and Christian teaching, thanks to a dedicated core congregation on the one hand and to the efforts of the retiring incumbent, Revd Dr Peter Mullen on the other.

The centre of parish life is the Sunday Choral Eucharist with about fifty in the congregation, all of whom travel (often with great difficulty) from outside the City, some travelling considerable distances to attend services which combine traditional English Christian liturgy with the highest standard of choral music. This has created an informed and affectionate community of convivial souls of all ages and backgrounds, fostered also through regular parish events. This community sees itself as composed of High Church Anglicans or Prayer Book Catholics, in the line of

Lancelot Andrewes, John Donne, Richard Hooker and T.S. Eliot, with a faith based firmly on the study of the Bible and the Church Fathers. The congregation is devoted to the use of the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Bible in services (except on infrequent occasions, such as the feast of Corpus Christi, when a Latin (Tridentine) mass is occasionally used). While the church is firmly in the category of the High Church, incense is not used. Many of the congregation are members of the Prayer Book Society, and the church has recently become a corporate member.

In addition to the Sunday service, St Michael, Cornhill celebrates Holy Communion (said) every Wednesday and Friday at 1.10pm, frequent christenings, weddings and memorials. The Book of Common Prayer is a common factor in these services. The parish also observes Ascension, Corpus Christi and the Triduum. The feast of the Ascension is marked by a full choral mass followed by the climbing of the church tower by the officiant, choir and congregation, the singing of an anthem and the blessing the City of London.

The typical congregation for Sunday services numbers about 50 from a variety of backgrounds including Asian and African with a significant number of white middle class members. Ages range from very young (usually one or two children under 5) to octogenarians. It is estimated that the average age is around 40.

Several City livery companies and guilds hold their election services, carol services and other special services at St Michael's, and several have chosen to have the Rector of St Michael's as their chaplain, irrespective of where their halls or offices are located. The City of London New Year Service is a highpoint of City religious life, attended by a capacity congregation from all walks of City life and addressed by a celebrated guest speaker.

Typical congregation numbers during 2011 were: Sunday 50; Wednesday 8; Friday 5.

In recent years typically between 5 and 10 baptisms have been conducted, approximately 5 marriages solemnized and one funeral held annually at St. Michael's

There were 20 special services for city institutions, livery companies and local firms, including carol services and the City New Year Service.

4. The Musical Tradition

The strong musical tradition at St Michael's has been upheld by a succession of highly distinguished Directors of Music (most recently the current holder of that post, Jonathan Rennert, who was appointed in 1979). Our 11am Sunday service is choral and always features musical settings from the classic tradition of church music from Tallis, Ockeghem and Byrd through Purcell and Vittoria, Mozart and Haydn to Vaughan Williams, Elgar and Britten. An organ recital is held each Monday (since 1916) – the longest-running series of such recitals in the world – featuring visits from many of the world's leading organists. The continuity of this unique series of recitals seems assured since the complete rebuild of the 17thC organ in 2010 at the cost of £400,000, thanks largely to a lottery grant.

Famous organists of St. Michael's have included:

Obadiah Shuttleworth (1723-1734): Composer and violinist who played at concerts organised by Thomas Britton ('the musical small coal man') in Clerkenwell and at the Swan Tavern in Cornhill. He was also organist at the Temple Church.

William Boyce (1736-1768): One of the foremost English composers of the 18th century, he was also appointed Master of the King's Musick in 1755 and organist at the Chapel Royal in 1758. His eight symphonies, anthems and odes are well known.

Theodore Aylward (1769-1781): Composer who became Gresham Professor of Music in 1771, and organist of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, in 1788. He was involved in the organisation of both the Shakespeare Jubilee Procession of 1769 and the Handel Commemoration of 1784.

Richard John Samuel Stevens (1781-1810): Composer mainly of glees who succeeded Aylward as Gresham Professor of Music in 1801. He also served as organist at the Inner Temple and Charterhouse. His memoirs, which have been published in a modern edition, present a fascinating insight into the musical world of Stevens' time.

Richard Davidge Limpus (1849-1875): Founder of the (Royal) College of Organists, which was originally based at St. Michael's, in 1864. Some of the College's early fellowship and associateship examinations took place at the Church.

Harold Edwin Darke (1916-1966): Composer best known for his setting of 'In the Bleak Midwinter' and his Communion settings. In 1916, he started a series of Monday lunchtime recitals that continues to the present day, and founded the St. Michael's singers in 1919. During the Second World War, he served as acting organist at King's College, Cambridge.

In addition to the proud musical tradition of St Michael's, the church has always possessed a celebrated ring of bells which has attracted bellringers from far and wide to ring on Sundays and other special occasions. As the bells had reached the end of their useful lives, a new ring of bells was cast in 2011, the £180,000 cost being entirely paid for by donations.

5. Ministry and Vision

The principal thrust of the ministry: St Michael's has become a focal point for a significant number of members of the Church of England who seek to adhere to the traditional forms – the Book of Common Prayer, the King James Bible and a strong theological component in the preaching; the weekday ministry is directed at the working population of the City and its institutions. Eight City livery companies and guilds hold regular services at St Michael, Cornhill, and a number of banks and other companies hold their carol services there. There is little overlap between the congregation for the Sunday services – which is a widely dispersed group who travel to attend, and those for the weekday services, typically City workers and occasional tourists.

Mission Action Plan

The Mission Action Plan for St Michael, Cornhill, was last updated in 2010 and is available on request. A key section of the Plan is the strategy, which is set out below. A new plan is to be written in 2013.

Our Strategy

- *Focus on the 11am Sunday Eucharist as the basis of Parish life and our mission;*
- *Offer excellence in liturgy, music and preaching. The use of the Book of Common, Prayer, King James Bible and English Hymnal is central to this;*
- *Be alive to the mission opportunities arising out of our status as a City Church and develop our relations with the City and Livery companies, the Sheriffs and Mayoralty, for example through our very successful revival of the City New Year Service;*
- *Spread our message through publications, lectures and special events;*
- *Promote ecumenical contact with other branches of Christianity and with other faiths, in particular with the Roman Catholic Church, the Proclamation Trust, the Baptist Church, the Methodist Church and with the Jewish faith;*
- *Provide pastoral care to those affected by various forms of addiction, especially to alcoholics and drug addicts;*
- *Recognise and exploit the opportunities for world wide mission provided by new technology, especially the internet;*
- *Serve the weekday City community through weekday services;*
- *Advertise commercially where appropriate.*

Pastoral Care

In a City, non-residential parish like St Michael, Cornhill, the nature of the incumbent's pastoral ministry is quite different from that of a conventional parish in which the majority of the congregation live within the parish or close by. In particular, the pastoral issues which make up so much of the conventional incumbent's pastoral work such as ministering to the sick, the elderly, young people, single parents, the disabled, the unemployed and the homeless, are less relevant, although such pastoral care as does take place is inevitably more time consuming, being geographically widespread.

St Michael's has a long tradition of providing pastoral care to alcoholics, and AA meetings are held in the vestry for two hours at lunchtimes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. A parallel organisation for cocaine addicts holds meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Parish Organisations and Education

There are currently no parish study groups, no youth organisations, and no Sunday school associated with the parish.

There are no schools in the parish, whether affiliated with the parish or not. The parish has, however, been deeply involved in aspects of musical education, for example by:

- the provision of an organ scholarship. The holder (currently Gregory Drott) serves as assistant to the Director of Music, plays the organ in church services and gives recitals during the period of his scholarship. Funding for the scholarship is provided by the Sir George Thalben-Ball Memorial Trust
- the arrangement of numerous projects for school children to become familiar with the church's organ and organ music since the instrument's rebuilding in 2009.

The Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993

The PCC has never debated whether to consider Resolutions A or B of the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993.

6. Ecumenical Relations and Work with Other Parishes

In spite of its small size (colloquially “the Square Mile”), the City of London contains 37 [parishes, of many different characters. Fewer than half provide Sunday worship. The geographical proximity of so many parishes means that the clergy of the deanery work closely together. However there are no specific areas of work shared with neighbouring parishes.

St Michael Cornhill had shared its incumbent with the parish of St Sepulchre-without-Newgate, but there was virtually no contact between the two congregations. The connection between the parishes will not continue.

St Michael, Cornhill has always sought communication and mutual understanding with other tendencies within the Anglican Church, to other divisions of the Christian Church, or other religions. The congregation regularly includes members of the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches, and the church has welcomed a very wide range of preachers including Jews and Muslims.

7. Other Members of the Team

Clergy

There are no assistant clergy employed by the parish. In the incumbent's absence, arrangements are made for clergy to celebrate the Eucharist. During the interregnum, the Rev. Bill Wilson, a retired priest from Brighton, has kindly agreed to take the Sunday services. Alternatively, a portion of reserved sacrament may be administered by the Lay Curate (Mr Rupert Meacher), one of the Parish Clerks (see below) or a member of the congregation licensed for this purpose.

Parish Clerks

In view of the union of St Michael, Cornhill with St Peter le Poer and St. Benet Fink, there are normally three Parish Clerks associated with the parish. The Parish Clerk of St Michael's is Mr Rupert Meacher; the other two Parish Clerks are: Mr Paul Pritchett (St Benet Fink). The position of Parish Clerk of St Peter le Poer is currently vacant.

Music Staff

The Director of Music is Mr Jonathan Rennert MA, FRCO, FRCCO. He is responsible for the entire musical life of the parish including arranging the organ recitals referred to above and managing the choir, which is composed of (normally) 8 largely professional musicians.

Churchwardens

There are currently five churchwardens: Sir David Howard Bt, Mr David Bland (also PCC chairman), Mr Michael Berry, Mr Paul Pritchett & Mr William Halson. Churchwardens act as sidesmen when required at Sunday services and at Livery Company and Guild services.

Other Parish Workers

The Vestry Clerk is Mrs Val Pinnington.

The Parish Beadle is Mr Nicholas Dixon.

The post of Treasurer has been vacant since the death of the previous Treasurer in July 2011. The duties of Treasurer have been carried out ad interim by volunteers assisted by the Rector. In addition, Mr James Irvine, the treasurer of St Bride's Fleet Street, has spent some time on parish accounts since the beginning of the interregnum.

The Diocese of London has recently arranged for the parish to benefit from the services of Jill Holmes on a part-time basis as Administrator. She will devote seven hours per week to St Michael's, other parishes taking up the remainder of her time.

Apart from a part-time cleaner, no other parish workers are employed by the parish.

The Parochial Church Council

The PCC comprises 16 members including the Rector, Parish Clerk, Director of Music, Clerk to the Drapers Company (Rear Admiral Alastair Ross CB CBE) and the 5 churchwardens. It meets approximately every other month.

8. Finance

Income

The parish derives its income from four main sources: (a) congregational giving; (b) donations; (c) the Worshipful Company of Drapers, the parish's Patron; (d) fees for weddings and memorial services; (e) the voluntary parish rate; (f) rent

The amounts received as unrestricted income from these sources, and others, in 2011 were as follows:

	£
Congregational giving	21,620
Donations	4,852
The Drapers' Company	13,000
Memorial services, weddings etc	6,100
Voluntary rate	11,889
Rent	4,050
Other (including grants)	<u>11,173</u>
Total Income	<u>£72,684</u>

Expenditure

The parish's expenditure in 2011, including Diocesan Common Fund contribution, was **£80,588**. The largest component of expenditure at St Michael, Cornhill was contribution to the Common Fund: this was £35,000 for 2011 (£31,266 in 2010).

The other major element of parish expenditure has been the cost of music ((£21,098 in 2011). This includes the salary of the director of Music and the fees paid to the choir, which is composed of professional musicians. Until 2010, a proportion of the cost of the choir was met by the St Michael, Cornhill Music Trust, but the Trust's resources are now exhausted.

Reserves

At the end of 2011, the parish's unrestricted reserves were £67,746.

Capital Projects

St Michael, Cornhill, has recently completed two major projects: a comprehensive rebuild of the organ at a cost of slightly over £510,000 (largely financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund) and a new ring of bells, at a cost of nearly £187,000 (financed by donations, especially from one benefactor). Little is currently envisaged of a capital nature, although a significant amount will need to be spent on redecorating the church within the next few years.

9. What we look for in our new Parish Priest

Maintaining the religious and liturgical traditions of St Michael, Cornhill

St Michael, Cornhill, is a parish in the Laudian English Catholic (or Prayer Book Catholic) tradition which grew significantly during the incumbency of Revd Dr Peter Mullen. This brought people from far and wide to worship at a church where they perceive a rare combination of solid, no-nonsense traditional Anglican worship with very strong musical tradition is to be found. The PCC is predominantly of the view that this is the “USP” of St Michael, Cornhill, and wishes to continue it.

Further growth in the congregation is likely to result from a continuation of this approach as an alternative to the more widely available forms of worship involving the use of modern liturgy and more modern translations of the Bible in place of the King James Bible. It will require the new incumbent to be a person with strong leadership and personality who is prepared to project a public profile in his or her own individual way.

In summary, with its strong Eucharistic tradition, St Michael, Cornhill, needs a priest sympathetic to the English catholic tradition, who will enthusiastically maintain and protect the traditional forms of worship which are dear to the congregation, and who will preach powerfully and informatively on the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith.

Enthusiastically embracing the mission to City institutions

A material part of the incumbent’s mission will be to the City’s institutions. The incumbent may be called up on to be chaplain to one or more livery companies or even to the Lord Mayor or sheriffs. There will certainly be a busy round of livery company and guild services. The new incumbent will need to feel at ease with the opulence of the City but will also need strength of character and diplomacy to resist the pressures that may be exerted to water down the religious content of some of these services, either in respect of the prayers used or the content of the sermons to be preached.

Being able and willing to care pastorally to a geographically diverse congregation

Given the dispersed character of the congregation, when members of the congregation are hospitalized or otherwise bedbound, the incumbent’s pastoral visits may be out of London.

Considerations as to gender

Although the PCC has never debated the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure, and therefore has no formal objection to female candidates, the parish has a certain conservatism in such matters