



# PARISH PROFILE

FOR

## The Parish of Three Saints

Serving the Somerset villages of  
Brent Knoll, East Brent, Edingworth, Rooksbridge,  
Lympsham and Eastertown

**3 beautiful village churches**



**1 young parish**

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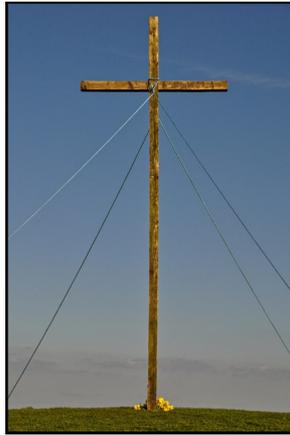
Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Rev 19. 6



## **Welcome**

We are the Parish of Three Saints in the Diocese of Bath and Wells and we are delighted that you are taking the time to read our Parish Profile. We hope that it accurately reflects who we are and that it will help you judge, with God's discerning spirit, whether you are the right priest for our parish and we are the right parish for you, so that we can work together in advancing God's kingdom.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Mrs Carole Carter, our Parish Administrator, at [office.tpots@gmail.com](mailto:office.tpots@gmail.com) or on 01278 769082



One of the crosses erected on the top of Brent Knoll at Easter

## **Our Vision for the Parish**

Our desire is to deepen our spiritual awareness and relationship with God so that we can serve our communities more effectively as His hands and feet.

We want to develop our sacred spaces to be welcoming, flexible and suited to the broad ranging needs of our communities.

## **Who we are**

We are a young, rural parish formed in 2012, when the existing Benefice of St Michael's, St Mary's and St Christopher's re-constituted to become The Parish of Three Saints. We now have one PCC serving three villages, which all have beautiful listed church buildings, plus three smaller hamlets. Our last incumbent focussed on the process of unifying our new parish, with much effort put into discipleship, learning and fellowship.

In line with our vision to become an outward looking Church family in our neighbourhood, we feel an increasing need to connect more deeply with the communities in our villages, thereby transforming ourselves to be more Christ-like.

We currently run Messy Church, but would like to expand this and also start a youth group for older children. We have a strong Pastoral Care Team, who are working hard to build relationships with people in our villages and we have started a Listening Project in the parish.

## Our Priorities for the Future

We feel that God is calling us to reach out to people in our communities; both young and old, churched and unchurched, with the same unconditional love and acceptance that He has shown us. A number of us have been given a heart for pastoral care, some for listening, some for children, some for older folk. We trust God that He will show us how to use our spiritual gifts to be His hands and feet and equip us to address the following priorities.

- **Children and Young People** - We would like to grow Messy Church and provide more clubs, activities, groups and events for the young people in our parish.
- **Worship** - We feel it is important to keep a mix of different types of services but ensure that our worship is exciting, inclusive and welcoming.
- **Community** - It would be lovely to use our buildings for all sorts of events and groups that enhance village life and grow a sense of belonging.
- **Buildings** - We need to make our beautiful historic church buildings fit for purpose, accessible, comfortable and welcoming, with flexible space that can be used for a variety of activities on Sundays and during the rest of the week.

## Tasks for our new Priest

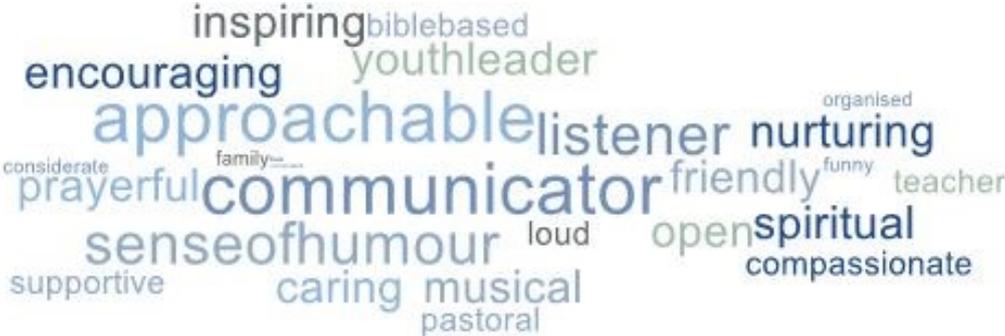
**We are looking for someone, led by the Holy Spirit, to;**

- \* Communicate the love of God to everyone in our communities
- \* Inspire us to live out the vision for our parish
- \* Help us grow in faith through spirit-led teaching
- \* Encourage individual spiritual growth
- \* Introduce different types of worship alongside the traditional
- \* Be a visible and listening presence in all our villages
- \* Nurture our spiritual gifts so we can be God’s hands and feet
- \* Be actively involved in our three Church schools with the possibility of expanding this role across the Deanery
- \* Continue the challenging job of unifying our parish
- \* Support the Pastoral Care work already happening in our communities
- \* Engage with and help shape the “Re-Pitching Our Tent” project to make our sacred spaces more accessible and welcoming

Please help us grow in Faith

Holy Communion to housebound parishioners, please

### Qualities the Church Family would like to see in our new priest



## Our Parish

### Overview

The population in the parish includes people from all walks of life. Some are farmers, others have local jobs and some are self-employed. A fair proportion are professional and business people, many of whom commute to Bristol or further afield. There is relatively little unemployment and each village has its share of retired people.

Our villages have strong and vibrant communities, where people look out for each other and support one another in times of need. Although on the face of it, the area is a prosperous one, there are some real pockets of deprivation not many miles away. Transport can be a problem for those without a car and there is little for young people to do. With donation boxes located in all three church buildings, volunteers regularly deliver to local food banks. House prices are fairly high, creating difficulties for local people wishing to get started on the housing ladder. To try and address this, a few affordable homes have been built in East Brent and Rooksbridge and a proposal for more is being looked into in Brent Knoll and Lympsham.

The parish is part of the Axbridge Deanery and is in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. In the 2011 census 71% of the population claimed to be Christian, although parish membership in general across the same area represented around 5%, so there is much room for mission and outreach. As of 30th April 2018 we have 134 on our Church Electoral Roll and so far this year we have performed 21 baptisms, 10 weddings and 31 funerals in our parish. The churchyards at St Michael's and St Christopher's are still open but the one at St Mary's is now closed, with burials taking place in the adjacent cemetery.

As a parish we abide by the Diocesan Safeguarding procedures and have a Parish Safeguarding Officer, Mrs Kathy Quinnell. Our PCC has its own safeguarding policy and some PCC members, particularly all the LPAs, have attended the relevant Safeguarding workshops held by the Diocese.



### History

In 2012, after years of consultation, the three PCCs of the Benefice voted to become one Parish with one PCC. This was a brave step and, although we are still not completely integrated, or totally united as a parish, we are progressing together. This organisational change, though necessary, has been quite challenging, especially for those who have lived in our villages for a long time. So, for the last six years we have been trying to encourage one another to worship as a Church Family wherever the services are held in our parish, and a core of people now do this.

Some people's loyalty to their local village church and reluctance to worship in either of the other two buildings may be due not simply to village allegiance, but also to transport difficulties, lack of facilities in the church buildings, parking issues or problems with access. We continue to pray for unity in our parish and creative ways to bring this about.



Some of our Church Family who were confirmed in November 2017





## Our Parish

### Worship

We recognise that everyone worships God in different ways - some in our parish prefer to use old, familiar, well loved words that they have grown up with, some like modern language and a less traditional approach, some prefer modern choruses, guitars and screens and some like different elements of all these styles of worship. We hope our new priest will keep a range of different services to cater for everyone.

**The Parish Eucharist (PE)** is currently the cornerstone of our Sunday Worship, using modern interpretations of church liturgy that follow the Church Seasons throughout the year. These were introduced by our previous priest and have been popular with the Church family.

**The Book of Common Prayer** is used both for Holy Communion at the 8am service (HC) and a monthly Evening Prayer at St Michael's, Brent Knoll (ES) and is popular with some of our worshippers.

**All Sorts Worship (ASW)**, which used to be held on the first Sunday of the month, was a shorter, more informal and family-oriented service. Hymn books and service sheets were often replaced by a screen, and music and film clips were incorporated into the worship. Modern choruses and also traditional hymns were often accompanied by the guitar. The results of the parish survey have indicated that this is something that most of the Church Family would like to see re-introduced.

A Lights of Love service is held in November to commemorate those who have died, and a midweek Worship is held at St Mary's, East Brent, and St Christopher's, Lympsham.

We are very grateful to our organist, Mrs Pauline Chadwick, who also, on occasion, accompanies our worship on the piano.

Vestments are always worn and services are rotated through the three churches on a monthly cycle:

	8am HC	10am PE	6.30pm ES
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	Rotation	Rotation	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	St Michael's	St Mary's	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	St Christopher's	St Michael's	
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	St Mary's	St Christopher's	St Michael's
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday		Rotation	



Allelujah



Liturgical Wheel.

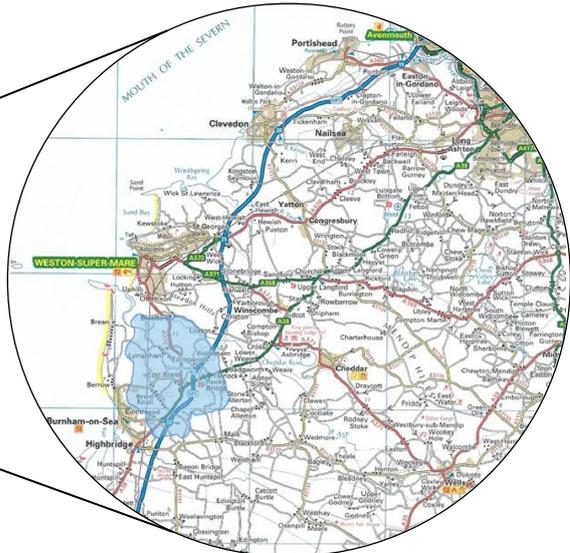
Created by the Brent Banner Team



Emmanuel



# Where we are



 =The Parish of Three Saints

We are a group of Somerset villages and hamlets approximately an hour south of Bristol, 40 mins west of Wells and very close to Burnham on Sea. The market town of Taunton is 25 minutes south on the M5 and Cheddar, with its famous gorge and cheese factory, is 20 minutes north east.



We have good road and rail links with easy access to the M5 and M4, east to London and west to Wales. The nearest mainline railway station is Weston super Mare, which also has a newly renovated pier, beachfront shopping and leisure complex. Bristol is famous for its Balloon Festival, waterside restaurants, cinemas, theatre, Clifton suspension bridge and excellent shopping centres. Bristol Airport is only 30 minutes away and caters for national and international air travel.



All three villages in the Parish of Three Saints have Church of England schools with Pre School groups. Lympsham and East Brent are First Schools which cater for 4 - 9 year olds and Brent Knoll is a Primary School catering for 4 - 11 year olds. Lympsham and East Brent have recently become part of the Multi Academy Trust, The Wessex Learning Trust, which includes Hugh Sexey Middle School in Blackford, and Kings of Wessex Academy in Cheddar. The children at Brent Knoll Primary School move on to King Alfred's School in Burnham.



**Brent Knoll**, with a population of approximately 1250, has a parish hall, a tennis court, a Post Office and shop, a Methodist Church, where we hold our PCC meetings, St Michael's Church and a very popular pub called the Red Cow with a skittles alley. Brent Knoll is at the base of a conical hill rising 500 feet above sea level, with the remains of an ancient fort on the summit. Roman coins, urns, parts of weapons and other relics have been found there. This hill, clearly visible from the M5, is between Brent Knoll and East Brent and you have a magnificent view from the top over the Quantocks to Brean Down, the Mendips and South Wales.

**East Brent** is a friendly little village with a population of approximately 1300, situated near the coast of the Bristol Channel, containing the hamlets of Edingworth and Rooksbridge. It has a Methodist Church, a public house, a doctor's surgery, a carvery, a village hall and St Mary's Church of the Blessed Virgin.



**Lympsham** is another popular village of approximately 800 people. It has a Post Office and shop, a social club in the Pavilion for cricket, tennis and skittles teams, a community café and a long list of clubs and societies. The hamlet of Eastertown is also an important part of the village.



## What we offer

Above all, we offer you our friendship, fellowship and prayer and a shared commitment to meeting the challenges identified.

We will support the on-going development of your ministry and will encourage you to make the most of any opportunities for learning and development.

We feel it is very important to give you adequate time for family life and recreation and to help you maintain a healthy work/life balance. We will respect your chosen day off and holiday breaks.

We have a small team of lay leaders to support you, one of whom has stepped up to lead the 8am Worship of the Word services during November, one who leads the Wednesday Emmaus Group and also a Reader, who assists at services, leads Messy Church and has been taking Evening Prayer during our vacancy

We also have four hardworking churchwardens, a growing Pastoral Care Team, an established rota of Bible readers and an Intercessions team in place.

## Our Ministry Team



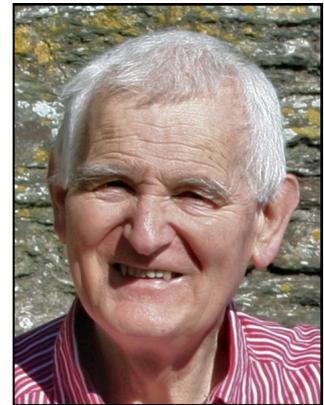
Nikki Burns, our Reader, was licensed by Bishop Peter at Wells Cathedral in October 2015.

Her particular ministry is nurturing and supporting people, and helping them to discover and develop their spiritual gifts.



Mrs Carole Carter, our Parish Administrator, works in the Church Office, East Brent three days a week, 10am-1pm.

She also serves as PCC Secretary.



Jim Hanmer has been our Parish Treasurer since 2016.

He also works as Co-ordinator for RPOT (Re-Pitching our Tent) and organises Gift Aid.

## Our Churchwardens



Mrs Gwen Hatton  
St Christopher's  
Since 2009



Miss Frances James  
St Michael's  
Since 1980



Mr Mike Smith  
St Michael's  
Since 2009



Mrs Kathy Quinnell  
St Mary's  
Since 2012

## What we offer

### Our Parochial Church Council (PCC)



Our PCC is a full team of 20 caring, committed, and at times overworked, members of the Church Family.

We meet several times a year at the Brent Knoll Methodist Church and are all part of at least one team or sub-committee.

### Our Lay Pastoral Assistants (LPAs)



Our Lay Pastoral Assistants, commissioned in June 2017 at St Peter's and all Hallows, West Huntspill.

We seek to be God's hands and feet, pastorally serving both the Church Family and those in need in our neighbourhood.

### The Church Office



The Church Office is located in Church Road, East Brent, approx. 200 metres from St Mary's.

It is the hub of parish organisation, where you will always receive a friendly welcome from Mrs Carole Carter, our Parish Administrator, who works here three mornings a week.

It is a well equipped working office with a photocopier, a meeting space with table and chairs, a small kitchen area, a toilet and parking.

### Plus...

We also have a large number of wonderful volunteers who ring the bells, arrange the flowers, fundraise, lock and unlock the church buildings every day, clean and dust, polish the brass, wind the clocks, cut the grass and look after the grounds.





## Axbridge Deanery

Axbridge Deanery is situated from the west coast at Bream as far as Easton at the other end towards Wells. We are mainly made up of rural villages. Burnham parish is our largest of around 12,000 people. However, our main tourist areas around Bream and Berrow can attract as many as 100,000 people in peak tourist season. The area around Highbridge and Burnham has seen significant housing development and population growth. Axbridge Deanery is also home to the famous Cheddar caves, another area of significant tourism.

We have great respect for each other in all of our different contexts and I am pleased to say that our chapter meetings are very supportive as we share our joys and our concerns over a pub lunch and help each other through the often complex demands of parish life. Deanery Synod gathers around four times a year where we encourage active participation through discussion in groups and in plenary. We have been known to meet in unusual places, such as on a dairy farm or in the beautiful setting of Bagley Baptist with stunning views across the Mendips.



Rev Sharon Crossman  
Area Dean

The current deanery mission plan includes space for creativity responding to current context. The plan celebrates the way, that as a deanery, we are good at working across boundaries and encourages ways in which we can support each other by sharing in training opportunities and the creation of local teams with neighbouring parishes and in local ecumenical settings.

As part of the plan, whenever a vacancy arises, the deanery mission and pastoral group considers and makes recommendation to the parish to consider one of the “Champion” roles we are developing. The parish of Three Saints has long had a close relationship with all three schools in the villages and with this in mind we hope that the successful candidate will enjoy working with the diocesan schools’ team to coordinate training and support networks across the deanery as we further develop collective worship and chaplaincy teams. As a new venture there is plenty of room for innovative thinking. It is envisaged that this part of the role would be on average about a day a week.

Reverend Prebendary Sharon Crossman, Area Dean

**For more information, please see the Deanery website - <https://axbridgedeanery.com>**



A view of Brent Knoll from the south

## Your Home

The Rectory is situated in a quiet location in the village of East Brent, overlooking fields, St Mary's Church and Brent Knoll.

This spacious detached family home comprises four good-sized bedrooms (Master with en-suite bathroom and walk in wardrobe), 3 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, separate utility room, downstairs WC and family bathroom. It also has a large downstairs office, a separate space to keep work away from the distractions of a busy home.

The property also has off street parking for three cars, a low maintenance garden, and patio doors onto a large patio to the rear. It has gas central heating and UPVC double glazing and recently upgraded broadband speeds of up to 32Mbps.

The Rectory is in the catchment area for Hugh Sexey Middle School and the senior school, The Kings Academy, both church schools with excellent reputations and both part of the Wessex Learning Trust.

### 3 Ash Trees, East Brent



Front view of the house with office on right



Rear view showing the garden



Fitted kitchen with oven



Large lounge with fireplace



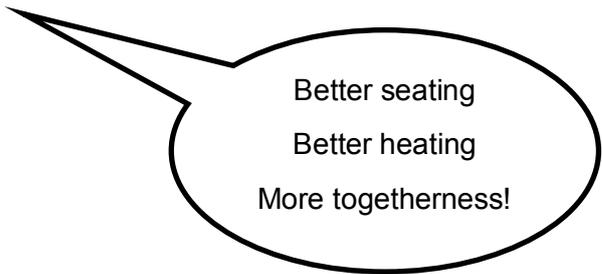
# Parish Vision Survey

In order to reach out to people living in our parish and gain an understanding of how they view Church, we recently carried out a Parish Vision Survey. Questionnaires were made available to all in the community, church-goers and non church-goers, at three local Post Offices, to the parents at our three Church of England schools, at the Community Café in Lympsham as well as to those registered on the Church Electoral Roll and those in the Church Family.

We asked what people valued about their parish, how they felt the parish could better serve the village communities, what changes they would like to see in the next 5 years, and what their concerns were.

97 replies were returned and the major themes to emerge were;

- **Children and Young people**
- **Worship**
- **Community**
- **Buildings**



These themes were further explored at our Vision Evening and the following suggestions were put forward as priorities under each heading.

## 1. Children and Young People

Grow Messy Church

- Build on the contact between the priest and the children when he/she goes into schools
- Pray for and encourage more leaders
- Find ways of including parents of the children in our three schools

Make some Sunday worship more family oriented

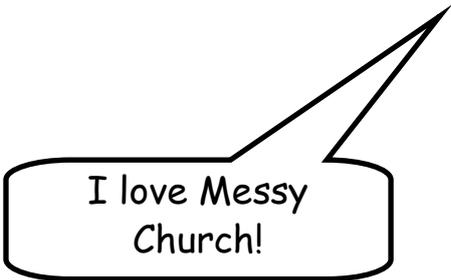
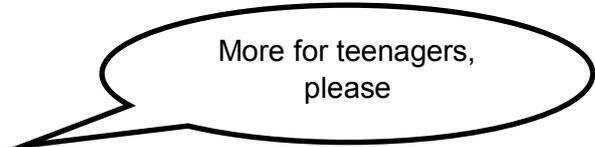
- Be creative. For example, Café Church
- Include the Brownies, Guides and schools more in worship and the life of the Church
- Use modern choruses, everyday language, more music and drama in services
- Encourage Lay members to lead

Celebrate festivals outside

- Harvest festival on the village green, Koinonia Festival outside, Ascension Service up Brent Knoll

Provide more activities

- Youth Club/Sports Club/Bible Study group for young people



10 minute sermons?

Please make services more "family friendly"

## 2. Worship

Keep a mix of different services

- Make worship exciting, creative, spiritual, engaging and accessible to all
- Try 45 minute services with short, concise sermons
- Keep the traditional services but also bring back informal, family oriented worship in everyday language, maybe at different times of the week and even outside.
- Develop a lively, youth service with music and drama

More Prayer Groups

I like to kneel at the altar rail to receive communion

Carry on the tradition of "Carols at the Red Cow"

What about having services that help the community relate to and understand life's challenges?

Set up a church-run community car scheme

## 3. Community

Improve communication between our parish and the three villages

- Keep people in the community better informed about the need for fundraising to benefit from the large amount of support and goodwill that exists in the villages
- Make our Sunday Link more widely available in Post Offices and on noticeboards
- Develop a stronger sense of Pastoral care in our community by sharing the names of our LPAs and also the Pastoral Care Coordinator's contact number with Village Agent and other carers.
- Provide clubs and activities for our young people in addition to the many clubs, lunches and social gatherings on offer to the retired people in our community.
- Modernise our buildings so that more events, such as art exhibitions and concerts, can take place in the church buildings.

Flexible seating to facilitate wider community use

Please don't forget faithful housebound members of the Church Family





#### **4. Buildings**

Modernise the buildings internally without losing their character

- Keep all our church buildings open
- Engage the villagers in specific fundraising projects, such as adding kitchens and toilets to St Mary's and St Christopher's
- Draw on the huge amount of support expressed by non church goers for help with maintenance and improvement projects
- Remove some of the pews to allow space for other events to happen in church
- Add parking space where possible. For example, the field opposite St Michael's is owned by the church and could be used to create parking spaces
- Expand the Friends Group of St Michael's to the other villages

Modern facilities,  
please!

Better wheelchair  
access, please!

### **Re-Pitching Our Tent (RPOT)**

"Re-Pitching Our Tent" is the Parish's initiative to attempt to meet the challenge of making our three grade 1 listed church buildings "fit for purpose" for the future. At present, although beautiful and with significant historical value, the space within these buildings is inflexible, not only for worship, but also for hospitality and community events. Maintenance and heating costs are also extremely high and becoming unmanageable.

We have felt for some time that God is calling us to be good stewards of our sacred spaces by making them more suitable for mission and outreach, as well as preserving them as places for future worship. We want to invite the community in without people having to squeeze into uncomfortable pews, being unable to mingle due to the inflexible layout and having to put up with the lack of any toilet facilities.

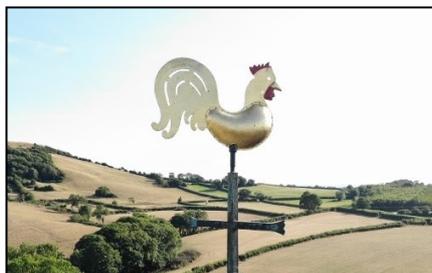
We want to welcome people by providing refreshments or lunches without carrying urns of boiling water across the church. We want a space where children can run around, where meetings can be held, a place where people want to hold art exhibitions, flower festivals and other events.

A Working Group (WG) has gathered views from the Parish Councils, local schools, community representatives, other denominations and our Youth; and our Architect has created drawings which have been presented to the WG and the PCC.

Our proposal was submitted to The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) in March 2017 and a delegation of DAC members visited the Parish in August 2017 to gain a better understanding of the situation. Following this visit, we were advised to develop a comprehensive Business Plan to prove that the proposed improvements would make the buildings more sustainable. That is, if we removed some medieval pews and created a more flexible layout, the buildings would increasingly attract greater community and parish use.

At a PCC meeting in July 2018, following a paper from the Steering Committee, it was decided to carry out urgent quinquennial work and, alongside this, embark upon a first stage of improvement to ensure all buildings had catering and toilet facilities plus effective heating. This work will need the support of local champions and a plea has gone out for volunteers.

We believe the next phase of the project will need the full support and guidance from our new Priest and look forward to discussing this with all applicants.



The weather vane from the top  
of St Mary's spire

## Views from the Children

The children of our three church schools were asked what kind of person they would most like the new priest to be.

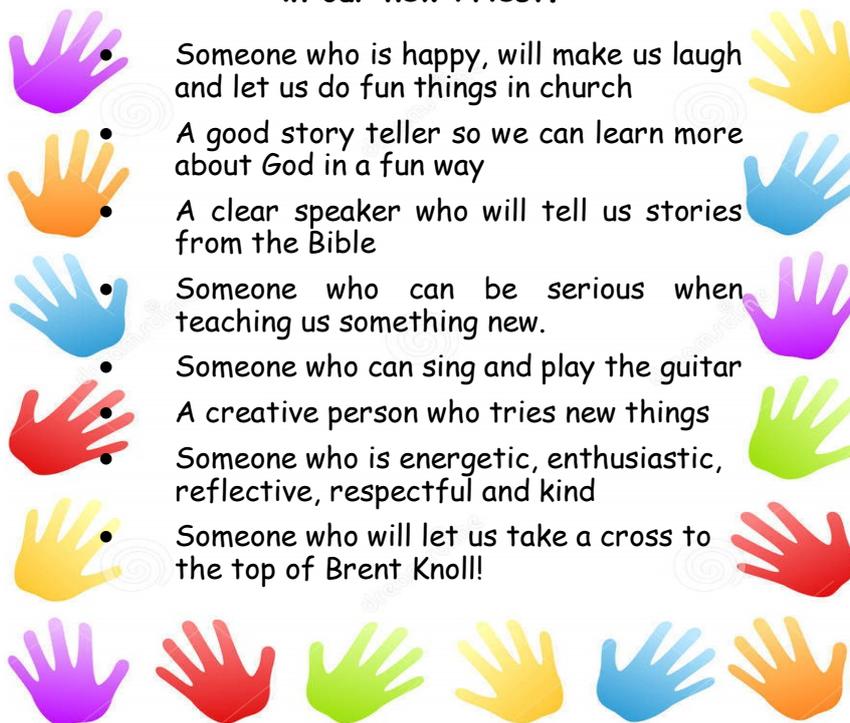
200 post-it notes later.....their ideas and thoughts are summarised below.

I want someone who is happy and not grumpy

I would like someone who can sing and play the guitar and other instruments



What the children at Lympsham and East Brent Academies would like to see in our new Priest.



I hope the new priest tells us more about why Christians believe in God



## Views from the Children



I want the new vicar to take a cross up Brent Knoll with us

I want them to be funny

The children from Brent Knoll School would really like a Priest who;

- Will come and sing with us
- Will come and meet us in the playground
- Can show us that God is everywhere, not just in church

I hope the new vicar is someone we can talk to



Brent Knoll Year 6 Leavers at Wells Cathedral



Brent Knoll School Nativity Scene

## Our Church Life

### Pastoral Care

Jesus said,  
"A new commandment  
I give unto you:  
Love one another.  
As I have loved you, so you  
must love one another"

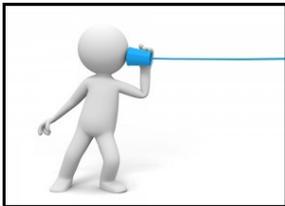
The last two years have seen The Parish of Three Saints' desire to serve our community develop and grow. Building on our existing pastoral care provision, and with much prayer, reflection and discernment, a new commitment to broaden the pastoral ministry in our Parish developed. A team of eight Lay Pastoral Assistants were trained by the Diocese, commissioned in June 2017 and now form the core of the Pastoral Care Team.

We have since welcomed new members to the team, which meets regularly to pray, learn, reflect, share and train. A deepening fellowship has grown as the team meet socially too.

Pastoral Care is the responsibility of all of us and the team works closely with all members of the Church family responding to need where it arises and seeking to bring the love of Jesus to all. Being His hands and feet, His eyes and ears in our parish and wider community remains our focus. In practical terms this might mean offering help with lifts, gardening or providing meals. Or it might mean visiting people in hospital, being there for a bereaved neighbour or being a listening ear when someone is going through a difficult time. The pastoral groups we currently offer are outlined below.



### The Listening Project



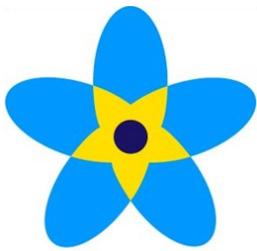
This grew out of a vision to develop a more outward looking focus to Church life in our parish and to encourage better two-way communication in the life of our Church by growing a "Listening Culture". We wanted to learn to really listen to God and to one another better. We already had several stand alone pastoral groups in our parish doing a wonderful job of caring for different groups of people, but this was going to have a wider reach with "listening visits" being offered eventually to everyone on the Church Electoral Roll.

The LPA course run by Rev Jonathon Philpot from St Mary's, Berrow, had particularly focussed on improving listening skills and putting Christian pastoral care into practice. This coupled with an idea from the Developing Healthy Churches initiative, plus a lot of prayer, discussion and reflection, led to the Listening Project which has to date resulted in all PCC members having had a visit.

We are not experts or trained counsellors, but we pray before we visit people that we might go with humility, a non judgmental attitude and a real desire to listen carefully. We trust God that He will guide us and equip us as we visit people and that the common themes, issues and hopes that come out of this project will help us discern God's plan for our neighbourhood. We also hope that the feedback from this venture would be useful to you, the new incumbent, if you were to take up this post.



## Alzheimer's and Dementia Carers Group



Started in October 2014 and run by one of our LPAs, 8 - 10 people from the local area regularly attend this monthly group.

The group provides support, friendship, information and an opportunity to share experiences in a comfortable environment. Kim Wilcox, the Village Agent, also attends and can make follow-up appointments if requested.

I can't tell you how much this group has helped me, in caring for my mum.

## Bereaved Friends Group

Started in 2014 and held monthly, this group is led by two members of the Pastoral Care Team and meets in one of the team members' home.

The aim of the group is to provide support and fellowship for those who have lost a loved one, whose passing has left a gap in their lives.

Tea and delicious cakes are always served.



We always end up laughing a lot!

## Comfort Group

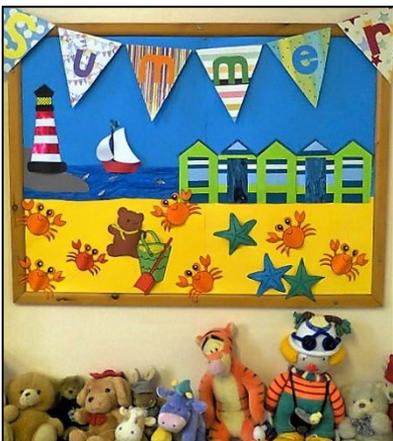
Our Comfort Group meets on the third Thursday of each month, in the relaxing ease of someone's home. This group is an informal meeting for people who are living with long term illness, to enable them to meet together with a like-minded circle of friends for comfort.

Those who attend can come together in a safe, friendly environment to share and listen to one another, with no need to participate if they feel uncomfortable doing so.

Information may be shared about events and resources that might be helpful. It is hoped that the group will grow and develop, seeking and giving comfort, guidance and support to one another. There is also time for fun and laughter and the enjoyment of a cup of tea or coffee, cake and biscuits.



## Toddlers



This is a friendly, caring group run by members from both The Parish of Three Saints and the Brent Knoll Methodist Church meeting every Tuesday during school term time. We love seeing our Parish Priest and the Methodist Minister and really look forward to their visits especially at Easter, on our Summer Outing and at Christmas.

**Toddlers' request:** "We would really like our new priest to make amazing duplo sculptures and to play a musical instrument to accompany our carol singing at the Christmas Party, but most importantly we would just like it if you came to visit us when you can and have some fun with us – hopefully soon."



## Prayer

**Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything  
by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your  
requests be made known to God.**

**Philippians 4. 6**



There is so much need for prayer. We are all in God's hands and await his healing power to come upon those we pray for. We continually rejoice and give thanks to God for answered prayer .

The Prayer Group is open to everyone and new members have recently joined. We start the year with Holy Communion administered by Reverend Stanley Price, and then meet once a month to pray in confidence for those known to us who are sick or in need.

If anyone in the parish needs prayer at any time they get in touch with Gwen Hatton, our prayer coordinator, who shares the prayer request at the next meeting. If it is urgent she emails or rings members of the prayer group, so we can bring that person or situation before God straightaway.

We have recently visited all our three church buildings to make sure that they each have a separate prayer corner with

chairs or kneelers, a prayer tree for people to leave their prayer requests on, the Parish Prayer Calendar and prayers and booklets to take away. We would like to develop the prayer life of our parish by extending our prayer chain to more of the Church Family and by offering prayer after Sunday Worship again. This is an area where we need leadership and God's guidance.



It would be great if we could have a labyrinth permanently set up in one of the churchyards!



## Labyrinth

At Pentecost, over the weekend of 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> of May, we set up our labyrinth in a peaceful garden with the centre right under the shade of some apple trees.

We were blessed with really beautiful weather and everyone was encouraged to use the labyrinth any time over the weekend. People did, walking early in the morning and in the cool of the evening.

There was a small basket of suggested prayers that we could use. Alternatively we could pick up a pebble or shell and use this on our contemplative journey, bringing our problem before the Lord or thanking Him for a blessing.

Feedback from the labyrinth has been wonderful, people found it really useful. One of the interesting things was when you thought that you may have reached the middle you were faced with another gentle incline to climb. Our spiritual journeys are never straight forward, are they!

## Learning and Discipleship

### Emmaus Groups

Exploring the basics of the Christian Faith through the Emmaus Course has been at the heart of strengthening our relationship with God and nurturing our own personal faith. Several Emmaus courses have run over the last four years, which have been a huge source of spiritual growth for several people.

Over the past year we have seen the start of two new Emmaus groups, on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. A third group on a Monday has been discovering what the essence of life is, how we survive or not as human beings, and the possibility of discovering a mystery called God, all whilst living on an island.

All who have attended these courses have been encouraged to question freely, learn, reflect and grow in their relationship with God and one another.

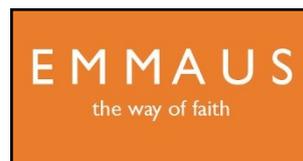
#### Comments from the course.

I didn't know I could ask such questions!

The Spirit moved me in a deep way.

Can God really work through me?

A nurturing, loving culture is emerging as God equips us to bring His love to all areas of our lives.



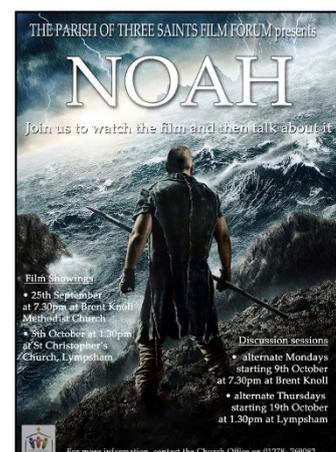
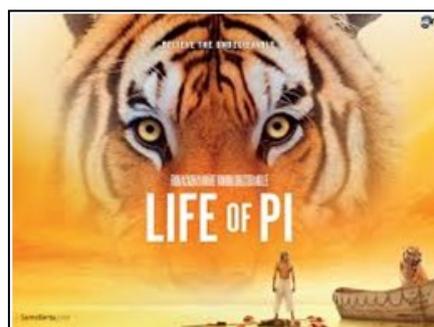
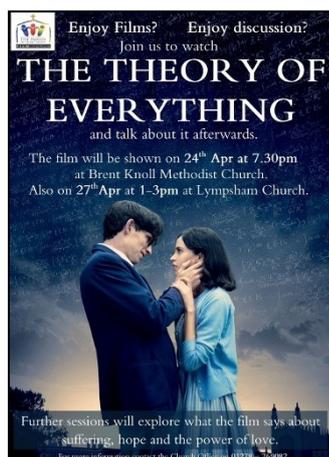
### Film Forum

Film Forum is essentially about moving into the territory of what we don't know, and treating this with the awe and humility it deserves.

Using a film as a starting point, it is about sharing our life experiences, reflecting on them, seeing them in the light of the wisdom of the Christian Scriptures and, above all, acknowledging to ourselves and each other how very much we don't understand.

Since we started this group in February 2017, we have watched three very different films, "Life of Pi", "The Theory of Everything" and "Noah" and have been challenged and encouraged by all the films in different ways.

We hope to start the Film Forum up again in January 2019.



## Messy Church



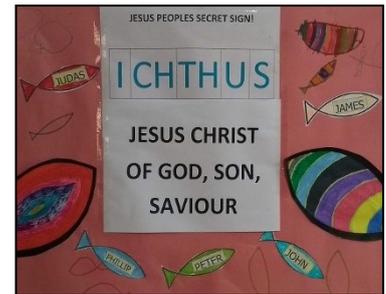
"Messy Church" is about involving the children in different activities around the bible story of the day. It is about hospitality and sharing of food, singing and interacting. It is very much about involving the adults too, as a wonderful way of introducing or bringing them back into fellowship, spending time in church and learning together.

The link with our three Church of England schools is strong and they hold their own Messy Church Assemblies. It is wonderful to see the innocent wisdom that comes from the children who are obviously gaining a sound basic knowledge through their schools.

"Children are our future" so we would like to reach out in exciting ways to the children and young people who live in our neighbourhood. This was also one of the major themes to emerge from the Parish Vision Survey.

Our aim for the future is to build on our core group of children who meet every fortnight in St Mary's Church and open Messy up to more children and their parents. Planned improvements to the church buildings will help with this, plus we plan to review what time and day of the week we offer Messy Church so that we can hopefully include children past the primary school stage.

It's lovely to hear it in a simple way I can understand.



## Lent Forum

For the last seven years our parish has held a 6 week Saturday morning discipleship course during the period of Lent. Breakfast is shared together followed by a time of learning, sharing, prayer and reflection. These sessions have been wonderful opportunities to take a deeper look at aspects of our own faith and relationship with God, and people have also been encouraged to explore their spiritual gifts and how they can be used within our Church.

Subjects we have covered are:

- Exploring God's Mercy
- The Lord's Prayer
- The Jesus Agenda
- Exploring God's Love
- Fit for Purpose – reflecting what we do as Church
- The Beatitudes
- God's Space in you (adapted from the book by Melvyn Matthews)



We have always found the Lent Forum extremely valuable and would very much appreciate our new priest leading such courses in the future.

## Fellowship and Community



The Koinonia Festival was a church away day to celebrate Pentecost. We invited the Methodist church in the parish to attend, as well as sending out a general invitation to all those on the Church Electoral Roll. A Messy Church tent was set up, a labyrinth created in doors to allow time for personal contemplation, and a space for people to share their personal experiences of God and how they came to faith. We all enjoyed a bring and share lunch together. It was a wonderful day full of fellowship and learning.



### Coffee Time



Coffee Time, held on a Wednesday morning at St Mary's church in East Brent, began several years ago with the idea of providing a space for parents at the nearby school gate to meet their friends after delivering their children to school. It runs during term time and some Wednesdays in the school holidays but it is open to anyone around at the time not just parents. We usually have quite a few dog-walkers, and occasionally visitors to the area, who stop for a coffee.

Everyone is welcome (and their dogs) to come for tea, coffee or even hot chocolate with cream and the works! There are always biscuits on offer and even the dogs have their own supply of dog biscuits.

From 8.45 – 10.00 the church resounds to happy chatter and laughter from those who are there to meet friends, make new friends and catch up on the week's news. As Church, it is our joy to reach out and offer friendship and God's love in this way.



### Brent Banner Team

The Brent Banner Team meets on an ad hoc basis at Woodlands and in members' homes, where we plan, develop and work on new projects. In 2014 we created two banners, "Allelujah" and "Emmanuel." The first used handprints and the second used gold stencilled angels and were hung at Christmas services in the Parish.

We have all discovered the fun in working together, learning different skills and watching the projects evolve. The group has also spawned a book club.

During 2015 we produced three further banners: Holy Flames (for Pentecost), God Provides (for Harvest Festival) and Doves of Peace (for Christmas). In 2016 we created a Lent Banner and dressed three kings for Epiphany. We have also made a Liturgical Wheel, a hanging entitled "Rays of Hope" and are currently working on two further banners of fabric poppies for the chancel at St Michael's Church, to mark the end of the First World War. Images of our work can be found on the Parish website and we always welcome new members.



Rays of Hope

### Art Group



The Stations of the Cross are gradually being created by our Art Group in Bleadon and by others. Pastels, Watercolour, Inks, Oils, Mixed Media - we try them all.

Readings are then added and our own paintings are displayed every Lent through until Easter in the form of an exhibition, which is rotated around the churches. We hope the paintings will help everyone understand more fully what Christ did for us at Calvary so long ago. The community are encouraged to come and share the experience.



## All Sorts Community Choir

Since the choir started in September 2015 we have had various Musical Directors, who have encouraged us to stretch ourselves, learn from each other and just enjoy singing and having a good time.

Josh Burns joined us as Musical Director in February 2017 after completing a Music degree at Bristol University in 2016. He has given the choir the confidence to sing harmonies, acapella and has written several arrangements for us to sing. In January 2018 Liz Randall joined us as our accompanist, which has also really helped us grow as a choir.



Whilst numbers in the choir fluctuate, we have on average about 16 attending each week at our Thursday evening rehearsals. We would like to increase this number and are always looking at ways to engage with the community.

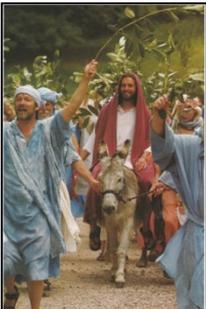
So far in 2018 we have sung at a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party, at the local community cafe in Lympsham, at a wedding and at a Care Home. In June and July we sang at two local fetes and will also put on a summer concert in St Michael's church. Bookings have also come in for September and October.

We continue to build on our vision of the ALL-Sorts choir being for everyone, with all sorts of abilities, all sorts of ages, learning all sorts of music but all growing together, having fun and singing.

## The Life of Christ

The Life of Christ is a powerful biblical outdoor drama that takes you back in time to when Jesus lived on earth.

A group of us from the parish travelled by minibus, taking our picnics and our chairs to the beautiful grounds of the Wintershall estate, near Guildford, Surrey. In this peaceful place with its lakes and ancient woodland, we followed over 100 actors in full costume re-enacting the remarkable events of Jesus' life. The play started in Bethlehem about 2000 years ago and focused on Jesus' childhood, His ministry, death, resurrection and ascension.



It was a glorious sunny day in June and people found the whole experience very empowering, encouraging and moving. The actors gave Jesus' teaching from the Bible special resonance and authority.



"Whenever I hear the Gospels being read in church I am transported back to that hillside, hearing the actor playing Jesus speak that day"

## The Jesus Agenda

**GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR, FREEDOM FOR THE PRISONERS, RECOVERED SIGHT FOR THE BLIND, SETTING THE OPPRESSED FREE, PROCLAIMING YAHWEH'S FAVOUR.**

As a response to the 2017 Lent course we now have a group that meets approximately once every six weeks to discuss and put into action the huge challenges that are presented in the Jesus Agenda. How can we in our small part of the world help transform it, how are we looking after the lonely and homeless in our own neighbourhood, how can we help end extreme poverty across the world through advocacy?

Our parish has been involved with Christian Aid for many years, but this summer we tried something different. We had a stall selling Haitian food and a games stall at two of our village fetes to try and raise awareness about the devastation caused by the hurricanes in Haiti.

Some further initiatives being considered by the group are:-

- stocking fair trade products for our tea/coffee after worship,
- stopping the use of plastic at church events,
- printing a calling/introduction card for all houses in our parish.

The challenges are huge but 'in Him we live and move and have our being' and with The Holy Spirit guiding us we can transform our world.

**But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!**  
Amos 5:24





## Our Church Buildings

### A Brief History

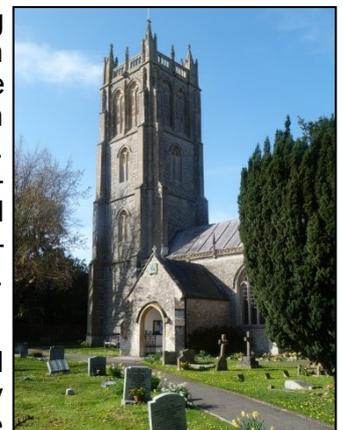
Our three churches were all built in the middle ages. In medieval times there was competition for control of the then three local Parishes between the Bishops of Wells and the Abbots of Glastonbury. East Brent and Lympsham were controlled by Glastonbury but South Brent, as Brent Knoll was then known, was part of the Wells estate.

**St Michael's in Brent Knoll** is the oldest of our churches with evidence of Norman construction in the south porch. The church was largely rebuilt in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries with a tower and north aisle being added. There are two significant medieval furnishings in St Michael's, the panelled roof of the N aisle that contains 96 panels all of different design, and the bench ends, the most famous of these being the three that depict the story of the Fox and Geese. It is probable that the story these bench ends tell originates in a dispute between the Bishop of Wells and an Abbot of Glastonbury in the late 15<sup>th</sup>C. The Abbot is depicted as a fox dressed as a bishop looking after a flock of geese in the first panel. The two other panels show his fall from grace. The other notable feature of the church is a monument, created in 1663 to a local gentleman and his family. Sir John Somerset was one of the local gentry. Sadly he had two wives and a number of children who all died before him. The churchyard contains some interesting table tombs that were fashionable in the 18<sup>th</sup>C, and, somewhat unusually, the village War Memorial.



**St Mary's in East Brent** dates from 1300, the tower and the spire being added about a hundred years later. This makes St Mary's an unusual church for Somerset, which is famous for its church towers. There are a number of notable medieval furnishings in the church, which include two effigies of knights in armour and a fine collection of bench ends. The latter came about through a close association with Glastonbury when John Selwood, who was already the Abbot, built himself a manor house close to the church, and became the local vicar as well. He provided the church with the cast off benches from a refurbishment at Glastonbury Abbey. During the 1630s St Mary's was enriched by the addition of a pulpit, a west gallery and a magnificent plaster ceiling. Since that date the most notable incumbent has been George Dennison who was vicar from 1845 to 1896. During that time he created the first proper water supply by damming one of the streams that flow off the Knoll. He also founded the Harvest Home that celebrates the bringing in of the harvest. A cross was erected in the churchyard to his memory.

**St Christopher's in Lympsham** has a Norman font but the main building probably dates from around 1400. Apart from a list of the Vicars of the Parish there is not much known about the church until the 19<sup>th</sup>C when three generations of the Stevenson family were Vicars from 1809 to 1912. Between them they were responsible for major reconstruction work at St Christopher's. This refurbishment has provided us with an excellent example of Victorian restoration work. Dominated by the neo-Gothic style, introduced by the Oxford movement of the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup>C, the wagon roof of the nave with its impressive bosses and the colourful west gallery are good examples of this. There is also an impressive collection of stained glass windows.



Today our Parish churches are all used regularly for worship. After the original Parishes amalgamated into a Benefice in 1982 a pattern of rotating Sunday services was set up that continues under the new Parish of Three Saints. The buildings are also used for fundraising and social events and our local schools hold services in the churches at the ends of term and at Festival times. We are currently planning how to tackle our Quinquennial work, which is required on all three churches. It is of paramount importance that the buildings remain sound for future generations to use, but we also need to consider carefully how we can improve the facilities inside the churches so that they can be used more easily for a wider range of functions.

## Finances

When The Parish of Three Saints was formed in 2012 the Parochial Church Council (PCC) took the decision to separate the costs of maintaining our three church buildings from those of our Mission & Ministry.

The main reason for this was an awareness that some parishioners would prefer to support 'their own building'. As a result, we now manage our finances through two funds with four accounts. Our Heritage fund has three accounts, one for each building and our Church Life fund has one account for all our Mission & Ministry income and expenditure.

The three buildings are financially supported by their individual fundraising teams, grant funding and those who have committed to be a Friend of 'their' church.

Church Life is funded via our planned giving, a share of some fund raising and parochial fees. Church Life and Heritage have the constant challenge of how to raise sufficient funds to meet the need of the Parish, with Church Life Income and Expenditure only balancing in 2016 and 2017 thanks to generous one-off donations.

Fundraising takes many forms across the parish and is dependent on the hard work of a small number of people. Two church fetes raise approximately £6000, summer teas and coffee mornings are popular, as is the monthly East Brent Pub Quiz. Various music and other events are held, often supported by the All Sorts Community Choir. Although all events are enjoyed by those who attend, we are faced with the challenge of how to attract wider community involvement.

As can be seen from our figures, our Planned Giving is only 45% of our expenditure and just 70% of our Parish Share contribution, which has been paid in full for the last 5 years. Only 50% of our Church Family pay by standing order despite annual giving reviews.

Although we have a Reserves Policy, provisioning for reserves or project planning is difficult due to the balances available. Church Life balances need to be available to ensure commitments are met. However, St Michael's has a reserve of c£30,000 in Unit Trusts and St Christopher's has £150,000 on deposit, thanks to a very generous legacy.

In anticipation of our Re-Pitching Our Tent project carrying out major improvements to all buildings, little quinquennial work has been undertaken in recent years. This has helped maintain our Heritage balances. However, there is now some urgent work we must commission, which will involve additional fundraising, grant applications and use of current balances. This will be managed to ensure funds are not depleted below a level to compromise our Reserves Policy.

The financial figures for 2017 are available from the Diocese.



# Our Church Fetes

The church fetes are a crucial source of fundraising and usually the result of a lot of effort and hard work by a small number of people. They are usually well attended by people from the village and beyond, and provide a chance for the whole village to come together in a fun, relaxed atmosphere.

## Lympsham Fete in June 2018



## East Brent Fete in July 2018





## Our Church Schools

It is a privilege to have three Church Schools in our parish and we have good links and a healthy relationship with each school. Through our Priest's involvement as chaplain and ex-officio governor and also having Church representatives as Foundation Governors in each school, we seek to grow and deepen this relationship,

We believe that we are better at supporting children and young people if we work together, so we are always looking to find new ways to develop our partnership, putting into practice the belief we have in each other and in wanting children and young people to have 'life, life in all its fullness'.



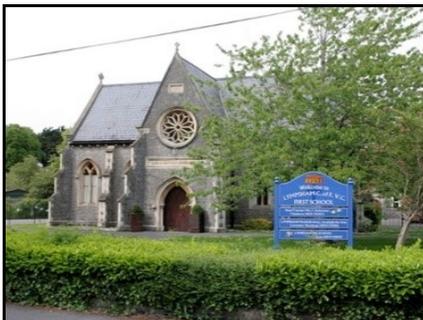
East Brent  
Church of England Academy

Please have a look at the individual school websites for more information. Here are a few words about each school.

### **Inspiring learning for life**

East Brent Church of England Academy is a small village school ideally situated next to St Mary's Church, East Brent and with beautiful views of Brent Knoll. Their provision for children extends from ages 4 to 9 and they also have a Pre-School located at the Village Hall close to the school for ages 2-4.

[www.eastbrentcofeacademy.co.uk](http://www.eastbrentcofeacademy.co.uk)



Lympsham  
Church of England Academy

### **A Christian Community with Children at its heart**

Lympsham Church of England Academy aims to provide children from ages 4 to 9 with an education of the highest quality, within a happy, safe and healthy environment which embodies Christian belief and practice. They strive for a culture where school and family learn and work together and where each child's natural curiosity and sense of discovery is nurtured and developed.

[www.lympshamfirstschool.org.uk](http://www.lympshamfirstschool.org.uk)

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016 East Brent and Lympsham schools each became an academy and are both now part of a multi academy trust known as The Wessex Learning Trust, which includes 8 schools across the Cheddar Valley Area. Through well-established positive partnerships they are now able to offer provision across the multi academy trust from ages 2-19 where they can develop the whole child, celebrate differences and meet individual needs in a safe and secure environment.



Brent Knoll  
Church of England School

Brent Knoll Primary School caters for children from ages 4 to 11 and provides a happy, caring atmosphere where children can fulfil their potential, grow in self confidence and develop respect for the people and environment around them. They have special links with St Michael's church and involvement in the life of the parish, which ensures children and staff are part of a Christian community where everyone is valued.

<https://slp5.somerset.org.uk/webs/brentknoll/SitePages/Home.aspx>



## Diocesan Vision

***In response to God's immense love for us we seek to be God's people, living and telling the story of Jesus.***

Our vision speaks of the story of Jesus; his life, teaching and work, his death and resurrection; the story which is the context of our faith and the content of our message.

We seek **to live** this story as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world and **to tell** it, both in sharing the good news and by the way in which our lives speak about Him.

The diocesan strategy is built around three priorities:

- To place mission and evangelism at the heart of all we do.
- To re-align our resources towards mission.
- To identify, develop and release the gifts of all our people.

These priorities provide a framework for decision-making and planning at parish, benefice, deanery, archdeaconry and diocesan levels.



Living the story. Telling the story.

## Prayer during our Vacancy

Dear Heavenly Father,  
You have taught us in Your Word to cast our cares on You,  
so we humbly come before You now.  
We ask for Your protection during this interregnum  
so that we use this time to grow in faith.  
We are nothing without You to guide us and  
You know us through and through.  
Help us to be more aware of each other's needs,  
taking responsibility and going the extra mile.  
May your Holy Spirit guide all those involved in the selection process  
As we endeavour to discern who you are calling  
To serve alongside us in this place.  
We ask all these things in the name of Jesus.  
Amen.