THE CHURCHES OF
St Michael All Angels
Southam, Woolstone, Gotherington & Oxenton

1 October 2026

ISSUE 71

STAYING CONNECTED

Dear Friends,

"*As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.*" (Genesis 8:22)

It's been a hard, dry year for the land — the drought this summer has left its mark, and many of us have noticed the leaves turning early, autumn colour creeping in ahead of schedule as trees and hedgerows respond to the lack of water. Against that backdrop, God's promise after the flood, as Noah steps onto dry land, feels worth holding on to: that the rhythm of the earth — seedtime and harvest, summer and winter — will not fail. But more than that - that God's care for the earth, for us, will never cease.

It's a quiet but steady kind of promise. Not a grand statement about the future, but a faithfulness written into the ordinary pattern of the year, even when that pattern feels disrupted or out of step. Whatever uncertainty we carry — including for the land itself — the seasons keep turning, and God's care keeps pace with them.

Living among these fields, we see that rhythm daily, even in a difficult year. As we look ahead to the next term, which include highlights such as our Harvest services, I hope we can carry that same quiet gratitude with us: not only for the harvest gathered in, but for the faithfulness beneath it all.

Revd. Ben Williams
Team Vicar





Introducing Phoebe Titley

Phoebe is serving as an intern with St Michaels over the coming year for some 32 hours a week. The PCC have paid for her course fees to enable her to receive training in Christian leadership and discipleship - specifically around Youth Work and Worship Leading. We see this course as an investment in her and in the future of God's kingdom - rather than a paid job. As such, her course fees are covered and she remains living with her parents - but part of her serving this year, is fund-raising for some living expenses. If you felt you could sponsor her that would be wonderful (!) - please do get in touch with Tim.



Hello! For those of you who don't already know me, my name is Phoebe Titley and I have been a member of St Michael's for around 18 years. This year I am going to be studying with South West Youth Ministries (SWYM) with a placement at St Michael's. During this year I will be training in youth work and worship leading. Whilst on placement, I will be working with the young people at their Friday youth group and on Sunday mornings in the children's groups. I will also be working alongside Lucy Barbour in Cleeve Secondary school (my old school). In addition to this, I will be leading the worship on Sunday mornings. I'm really looking forward to building good relationships with the young people this year and experiencing what it's like to work within the church!

I was introduced to SWYM by Tim, he showed me the year-long course called 'Be Transformed'. This course involves learning about how to serve in youth groups and how to lead worship alongside building a foundation of knowledge to aid me in both. As I explored this course it seemed to include everything I was interested in learning about and had felt an urge to study previously (having looked at doing a joint honours in music and philosophy, when applying to universities). I went to an open day at Lee Abbey in June – I had a very enjoyable time there and met some lovely people and was able to experience how much of the learning happens there. After this open day with much prayer and thought I decided this seemed like the right course for me.

I believe God has given me a gift in my ability to play the piano, and as much as playing in front of people is not where I feel most comfortable, I think it would be wrong of me to not use this gift. I also love to spread the gospel with young people. I had the privilege of teaching in a CofE Primary school this year and it has truly been a joy to hear the children exited to go to church and tell me about their respective churches. I hope the young people in this church can feel the same excitement to meet with God here.

I am excited to see what God has planned for me this year, I hope that my confidence will be built in my ability to lead worship and youth work. During this year I am aiming to foster good relationships with the young people and encourage them in their faith. I hope that they can be excited to meet with the Lord. In addition to this, I hope that God will work through me as I come to lead worship and create a space for everyone to encounter the Holy Spirit. Please do pray for me as I go into this year. Prayer for confidence in myself and my trust in what God can do, prayer for wisdom in making the right decisions in youth and worship and prayer for a deepening relationship with God as I walk with him throughout this year.

This matters enough for me to commit a year to this as I believe it will be a great chance for me to develop my abilities and relationship with God and hopefully see more of how God wants to use me. I think it is so important to spread the word to young people so they can grow up confident in God's love for them. Through the youth groups they are in together they can encourage each other in their faith. It isn't always easy to be a Christian in secondary school, so it is important they have a supportive community of people their own age to support them. Furthermore, worship was what reignited my own faith when I was in university, thus I believe it very important to invest in worship so other people can have the same experience. Worship is such an accessible way for people to meet with the Lord, so I think it's a really key part of church. I'm really looking forward to this year, and I hope that the Lord can use me to serve well during this year at church.



I spotted missing seeds from my large sunflower the other day—then spotted the culprit—a pigeon helping himself!
Kate



St Martin de Tours Church, Woolstone,
St John the Baptist Church, Oxenton,
and using 'The Old Chapel' in Gotherington

SERVICE INFORMATION FOR OCTOBER 2026

PLEASE NOTE SERVICES WILL START AT 9:30 am, STARTING ON SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER FOR ONE MONTH. SEE NOTICES AND WEEKLY NEWS FOR OCTOBER TIMES.

Sunday 4 October:	Holy Communion	Oxenton
Sunday 11 October:	Morning Praise	Gotherington Village Hall
Sunday 18 October:	Holy Communion	Woolstone
Sunday 25 October:	Café Church	Gotherington Village Hall

Team Rector	Reverend Tim Garrett	tim@stmbc.uk
Team Vicar	Reverend Ben Williams	ben@stmbc.uk
CHURCH OFFICE	See Notice Boards	07354 874617
Churchwarden	Michael Bower (Oxenton)	01242 672900
Churchwarden	Sarah Whitehead (Woolstone)	01242
PCC Secretary	Pauline Bower	01242 672900
PCC Treasurer	Michael Bower	01242 672900
Bell Ringing Team	Pauline Bower	01242 672900
Church Flowers Woolstone	Joan Hocken	01242 674453
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The Parish Safeguarding Officer	Pauline Bower	01242 672900
Newsletter Editor	Jean Wickens	01242 679345 jeanwickens242@gmail.com

Our next themed readings:

4 October
Harvest
Leviticus 19 (9-10) and 23 (22)

11 October
Preparing to Worship:
Ecclesiastes 5 (1-6)

18 October
Thanksgiving Gift Sunday
2 Corinthians 8 (10-15)

25 October
Worship is Word-Shaped
Colossians 3 (12-17)

Church of the Ascension,

Southam

Sunday Bible Readings from the Lectionary

Trinity 18 (Harvest)
—4 October
Job 1.1; 2.1-10
Psalm 26
Hebrews 1.1-4; 2.5-12
Mark 10.2-16

Trinity 19—11 October
Job 23.1-9,16,17
Psalm 22.1-15
Hebrews 4.12-16
Mark 10.17-31

Trinity 20—18 October
Job 38.1-7[34-41]
Psalm 104.1-10,26,35c*
Hebrews 5.1-10
Mark 10.35-45

Trinity 21—25 October
Job 42.1-6,10-17
Psalm 34.1-8,19-22*
Hebrews 7.23-28
Mark 10.46-52

Service October 2026

Sunday 4 October
9.30 am—Harest Holy Communion at Church of the Ascension, led by Nat Garrett

Sunday 11 October
9.30 am—Holy Communion at Church of the Ascension led by Carol Farrer

Sunday 18 October
—Church on the Hill, meet at Cleeve Hill Golf Club led by Lucy Barbour

Sunday 25 October
9.30 am—Harvest Breakfast Church at Southam Village Hall, led by John Donovan

Our Pastoral Assistants are here

to support the pastoral work in this benefice.

- *If you would like to chat or need help - you or your family, friends or carers can contact us on your behalf.*
- *If you are going into hospital, moving or going into a care home - so we can keep in touch.*
- *If you can't get to church and would like Home Communion in the comfort of your own home.*

Contact: the Church Office 07354 874617
Email: pastoral.stmichael@gmail.com



HOME COMMUNION

Our Pastoral Assistants' Team offer anyone who can't get to church a short Home Communion service in the comfort of their own home.

We are also available to pray with those who can't get to church, in their homes, if that is helpful.

Please call the Church Office
07354 874617

St Michael's Church Weekday Open for Visitors/Private Prayer

Monday 11am - 2pm
Wednesday 10am - 4pm
Thursday 12pm - 2pm

(times may occasionally change due to Services or volunteer availability - check with Church Office 07354 874617)

Thursday 10.45am Communion Service St Michael's Church

1st Thursdays of the month

Oct	*1st*
Nov	*5th*

If you do NOT wish to receive copies of Staying Connected, please phone the Church Office on 07354 874617

For more information about our services please see:
www.stmichaelsbishopscleeve.co.uk
Email: admin@stmichaelsbishopscleeve.co.uk
Tel: 07354 874617

PRAYERfocus

I have been particularly blessed in my family relationships and I frequently offer thanks and praise to God for the joy I experience through my family. Join me in praise and thanks for your own family and others who support you in any way at all. I am very much aware that there are many for whom family relationships are a source of sadness, strain , worry or distress. So let's focus prayer on families this month.

Please join me in praying for members of your own family . Pray for the happy occasions coming up like marriages, new births and celebrations of significant events in their lives. Also bring to God any hard situations you know about, asking God to be very real in the lives of family members who are facing distressing times.

After this widen things out to pray for family life in our communities. Pray for families, young and old that are finding life more and more challenging. We hear of so many who are struggling with health issues, those for whom it is difficult to make ends meet, needing financial support and physical help with life. Pray for God's help for these groups of people.

Ask God to help our government to make wise and compassionate decisions regarding health and social welfare, end of life care and support for those with mental health issues, and pray for local organisations that provide help in these areas.

May God be very close to each of you and reveal to you His pleasure in hearing your prayers.

Have a blessed month.

L. D.



St Michael & All Angels, Bishops Cleeve

Please join us for our

SUNDAY SERVICES

All at 9.30 am

1st Sunday – Morning Prayer
2nd Sunday – Holy Communion (with choir and organ)
3rd Sunday – Holy Communion
4th Sunday – Holy Communion (with choir and organ)

All at 11.15 am

1st Sunday – Contemporary Worship (Explores Extra at St Michael's Centre)
2nd Sunday – Contemporary Worship (Explorers Extra at St Michael's Centre)
3rd Sunday – Contemporary Worship with Holy Communion
(Explorers Extra at St Michael's Centre)
4th Sunday – Contemporary Worship (Explorers Extra at St Michael's Centre)
5th Sunday - Joint Service (Explorers Extra at St Michael's Centre)

The Church of the Ascension, Southam

Please join us for our

SUNDAY SERVICES

all at 9.30 am unless otherwise stated.

1st Sunday – Holy Communion at Church of the Ascension
2nd Sunday – Holy Communion at Church of the Ascension
3rd Sunday – Church on the Hill at 10.00 am
4th Sunday – Breakfast Church at Southam Village Hall

The Parish of Woolstone with Gotherington and Oxenton

Please join us for our

SUNDAY SERVICES

all at 9.30 am unless otherwise stated

St Martin de Tours, Woolstone

1st Sunday—Holy Communion at St John the Baptist, Oxenton
2nd Sunday—Morning Praise at The Old Chapel, Gotherington
3rd Sunday—Holy Communion at St Martin de Tours, Woolstone
4th Sunday—Café Church at The Old Chapel, Gotherington
5th Sunday—BCP Holy Communion at St John the Baptist, Oxenton