We are a church on a journey...

For the last two years, St Michael's has been on a journey to flourish in God's love by:

DISCOVERING God's love

NURTURING growth in God's love

SHARING God's love

This is our purpose as a church.

Like any journey, there have been smooth roads, a few potholes and some unexpected detours! But we've always travelled together as companions: honest, hopeful, and trusting that Christ walks with us.

This 2026-28 Church Flourishing Strategy is our map for the next part of that journey. In developing it, we have noticed what has already started to flourish in St Michael's and sought to find new ways to help people discover and grow in God's love among us.

This isn't just any journey...

As we travel together, we continue to strive to be an inclusive, community-focused church that seeks to help people from all backgrounds to encounter God in both traditional and contemporary ways, and to be a safe place to explore faith, ask questions, and grow as a follower of Jesus.

*This **mission** shapes everything we are and do...*

We have a clear sense of the next destination for our journey...

By 2028, it's our vision that we will see...

Flourishing in the number of people DISCOVERING God in St Michael's

- Around 70 people regularly attending Sunday worship, and a worshipping community across the month of at least 100 different people (including 30 under-18s)
- New faces exploring faith, finding belonging, and taking the steps of baptism and confirmation

Growth in the NURTURING of people's faith

- At least half of our regular worshippers — children, young people and adults — belonging to a small group for prayer, learning and friendship
- A growing confidence to pray together, ask questions, and share faith in everyday life

More SHARING of faith through both our words and actions

- Every regular worshipper finding a way to serve Jesus in church and wider life
- Increasing lay leadership and involvement in church life and deeper partnerships with schools, local groups and community organizations

We think carefully about how we travel together...

As a church we have agreed to journey with:

Spirituality | Inclusiveness | Compassion | Courage | Generosity

These values are our compass points, ensuring we keep Christ at the centre.

Our journey is well fuelled...

We will travel towards our destination with the help of:

- **Prayer** — woven through our PCC, our worship, our groups and our homes
- **Shared leadership** — a strong PCC and wider team of volunteers taking shared responsibility for the flourishing of St Michael's
- **Open communication** — clear, kind and creative; helping as many people as possible stay connected, informed and included
- **Welcoming buildings** — spaces that are cared for, accessible and sustainable, where people can meet, worship and feel at home
- **Faithful finances** — resources managed wisely and used generously to support our mission and ministry
- **Whole-church stewardship** — each person encouraged to discover and use their God-given gifts to build up the life of our community

In the next year we're travelling towards our destination down three intertwined routes...

ROUTE 1 – Creating even more inclusive and engaging worship

Deepening the sacred dimension

- Appoint a music leader to help us grow both traditional and new ways of worship
- Continue experimenting with creative services beyond Sunday mornings
- Offer refresher training for intercessors, readers, servers and welcomers
- Form a worship-planning group to widen creativity and leadership of worship

Invitation, gathering and welcome

- Develop personal invitation lists and tailor invites to different services
- Invite new community groups — schools, uniformed organizations, local partners — to join us at special services
- Create a small communications team to help with the effective communication of worship through noticeboards, print, social media and the website
- Encourage people to reach beyond their familiar circles in church life, and notice and engage newcomers
- Reinstate a Pastoral Care Team to notice and follow up on absence

- Create a welcome pack and newcomer gatherings

Buildings and grounds

- Ensure worship spaces are both accessible and welcoming
- Creating a new youth-centred room in our hall
- Keep gardens beautiful and prayerful

- Worship God the creator through simple eco-church steps — e.g. recycling, biodiversity, energy efficiency

ROUTE 2 – Establishing and resourcing small spiritual-growth groups

Advent and Lent groups

- Continue varied annual groups as invitational spaces — encouraging regulars to bring friends
- Intentionally use these groups as stepping stones into ongoing small groups

Other discipleship groups

- Hold an annual explorer course for adults and young people
- Create a clear journey from exploring faith → belonging → discipleship
- Establish at least two new lay-led groups for study, prayer and community
- Provide training and mentoring for group leaders

Prayer and connection

- Form an online prayer group linked with wider church rhythms
- Share simple daily-prayer resources for home use

ROUTE 3 – Building a route to friendship, faith and discipleship for children and young people

Worship

- Continue to involve more young people in leadership roles
- Through the CofE Growing Together initiative, support young people to plan and lead a project or event
- Create occasional youth-friendly worship outside Sunday mornings

Belonging

- Provide a youth group centred on friendship, invitation and faith (Diocesan resource dependent)
- Provide a regular toddler group

Discipleship

- Build up Sunday Xtra with new leaders and resources
- Offer faith-in-action opportunities — volunteering, gardening, community service
- Encourage intergenerational friendships and youth leadership in worship and events
- Create a post-16 bridge through mentoring and diocesan links

Reviewing our journey

Once a year, the PCC will pause to look back at the road we've travelled — noting where we've seen signs of life, where the road has been rough, and where God might be calling us next.

We'll share those reflections with the congregation and celebrate them in worship.