



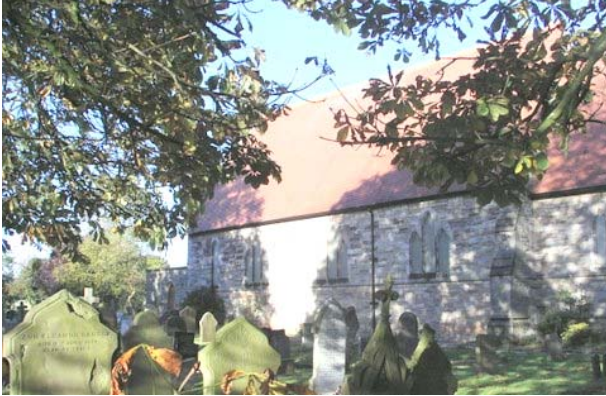
# St Michael's - Area A - Academics



# Parish Profile

## Barnston with Pensby 2010

### Our parish and its surroundings



Situated on the Wirral Peninsula, surrounded by the River Mersey, River Dee and the Irish Sea, Barnston and Pensby, although only a mile apart are quite different locations. Barnston is set in farmland and close by is Barnston Dale with the Fox and Hounds, a pub dating back to the 15th century. The only local shop used to be the Post Office but it's change to a hat shop leaves little of a village centre now. The main housing is some distance from the church. Parishioners live in a wide area from Thingwall to Heswall and slightly further afield.

About 10 years ago we extended the existing hall by building an upper storey, known aptly as the Upper Room. This gives a large meeting room and several offices; one each for the Vicar, and the Parish Administrator and one, which until recently was let out to CASM, a local charity working in schools and with young people addressing the problem of alcohol and drug misuse. We were also able to update the facilities downstairs.

There are several schools in the area, Barnston Primary School, which began life as a church school in our current church hall. The other is Heswall Primary, a short distance as the crow flies. It is a pleasant walk across the fields. Recently the Year 1 and 2 pupils spent a day at our church and the visit was enjoyed by all; the church team, teachers and children working together to discover how God's house is used.



Pensby is a more densely populated area and St Michael and All Angels, modern in style, was built in 1958. Four years ago we had a major building project, knocking down the existing church hall and creating a wonderful new hall adjoining the church. We call this 'The Cross at the Crossroads' as it is in the centre of



Pensby with a row of shops opposite. As we envisaged this has become a vibrant Community centre; the attractive foyer with it's café-style tables and chairs between the church and the large spacious hall makes the whole area suitable for large functions, it has been used in this way on many occasions. The buildings are surrounded by an open grassy area where we have planted spring flowers and trees, giving a welcoming aspect to the shoppers and passers by. This building project was a major step of faith but already it is fulfilling our hopes and dreams.



Pensby Primary School is about ½ mile away, Nearby there are also Thingwall Primary School and Stanley Special School. We have excellent relationships with all the schools and encourage them to visit and use our churches. The two secondary schools, Pensby High School for Boys and Pensby High School for Girls are just on the border of our parish and are popular in the neighbourhood. Wirral Youth for Christ, a team we support, is active in these schools. Also in the area is Pensby Wood Day Centre for adults with severe learning and physical disabilities and volunteers from our church are frequently found helping there.

The **Population** of the area is about 16,000 and our worshipping community is approximately 500. Obviously these numbers show there is a vital need for outreach in our community. One of the projects under consideration was to begin the establishment of a

church plant in the Heswall Hills area; ideas were for a café church or a Messy Church at Barnston School but are 'on hold' until we have a new incumbent.

## Life in our churches

### Clergy and staff

We are blessed in having two clergy to lead our parish. The Vicar lives in a well-maintained large Victorian three-storey house with out-buildings, adjacent to the church. There is an extensive garden to the rear



backing on to farmland.

The Vicar has overall responsibility for the parish and mainly leads the worship in Barnston Church. The Associate Minister, Rev'd Ian Urquhart, lives at 8, Antons Road, Pensby, a well-maintained semi-detached house. He has particular responsibility for the worship and pastoral care at St. Michael's.

The work of the parish is equally divided between the Vicar and the Associate Minister according to their talents and strengths. A preaching programme is worked out at the beginning of each quarter and shared amongst the clergy, lay readers and the two retired clergy who give generously of their time and talents. Services usually involve members of the congregation in leading worship, readings and prayers. The PCC have requested a trainee curate to begin working in the parish in 2012.

Our paid Parish Administrator is Jan Murphy and she works Monday – Friday from 9.00 to 12.30.

Our church wardens are Hilary Bird and Brian Dolman, Deputy Wardens are Keith Orum and David Williams. Ann Vassie is our Parish Clerk and we have an active PCC. We have five Pastoral Workers and many volunteers forming a reliable, hard-working team.

### Corporate worship, celebration and teaching

Each year we have a motto text. This year it is :

**Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3: 13b - 14**

Our clergy believe that their aim is to explain the Bible and bring its message to all in a relevant, meaningful

way. They endeavour to develop styles of worship which promote spiritual growth among people from different backgrounds. This has involved differentiating the music, liturgy and 'flavour' of the various services each week. So our services take place as follows:

### Christ's Church, Barnston

Sunday Morning services begin with 8am Communion, alternating between 1662 and Common Worship and this service has no music. Congregations average about 30 and tend to be older in age. Breakfasts after the service on the first Sunday in the month are proving to be popular and encourage more social interaction.

At 10.30am we have a warm, friendly, relaxed service with contemporary music accompanied by a lively music group. Congregations average about 80-100 with a wide age range. Stepping Stones, held in the choir vestry, for the under 5s encourages families with young children to feel comfortable; for 5-10s we have



Jaffa Club in the church hall, although there are not many in that age range at the moment. For 11-14s we have Pathfinders in the Upper Room with various sociable activities suitable for this age range throughout the year.

The first Sunday in the month is Parade and Family service when we welcome the uniformed organisations and their families. Numbers attending have fallen over recent years and we hope to encourage more interaction between church and these organisations. Parade services aim to have talks and activities suitable for young people with the use of modern technology where possible. Often this teaching is as relevant for the old as well as the young. The second Sunday is based loosely on Morning Service with the young joining us for the first part of the service then leaving for their own activities. Third Sunday is Family Communion when the young people have their own activities first, then join us for the actual communion. The fourth Sunday is usually a Baptism Service. On these occasions the church is often bursting at the seams and it's a wonderful opportunity for evangelism as many of the visitors are obviously unaccustomed to being in church and it's a wonderful chance to show them God's love in action. We aim to be as friendly

and welcoming as possible at these times, for the regulars it's a bit like 'family hold back' as we try to make our visitors feel comfortable.



### **St. Michael and All Angels**

Services here follow a similar pattern. For the 9am service the clergy often make a hasty exit at Barnston to take the same service to Pensby, again to a generally older congregation.

The services here follow the same pattern as Barnston but begin at 10.45am and congregations average 60-70 people of mixed ages and are led by a small Music Group. There is a Sunday School, but numbers are small with very few teenagers.

The 6.30pm service alternates between Barnston and Pensby and is either Communion or Evening Service. This is usually a traditional service with more substantial teaching. We have a small choir and the organ is played by our excellent organist Alan Davies. Sometimes we have a Healing Service, often led by our resident retired vicar, David Trollope, and we have experimented very successfully with a Taize style service.

At Pensby there is also a mid-week service of Holy Communion at 10.30am on Wednesdays and many only come to this service.

### **Quinquennial Inspection**

This took place in both churches in December 2010

### **Ecumenical Activities**

Our clergy have excellent relationships with the other churches in the area, meeting occasionally to organise special services, outreach, assemblies in schools and teenagers from our church attend a Youth group at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Heswall. We hope that ecumenical meetings can be more organised in the future.

### **Pastoral Support**

The clergy are a crucial part of the pastoral care given to those in need, especially to those with whom they come into contact through occasional offices. This reflects the kind of care that Jesus himself gave. It is

evangelical without trying to be. It is followed up by our pastoral workers and the bereavement team. Also of great help to people going through difficult times are our housegroups;

### **Housegroups**

We have had housegroups in our parish for about 20 years. There are 8 groups with about 50 members. Bible study varies and recently we have been using sermons preached at Evening services with questions for discussion offered by the writers of the sermons. Members find these meetings valuable for the support and fellowship they offer and the chance to study the bible and pray together. Groups are encouraged to have a main focus for outreach, for example care for the elderly or being 'welcomers'. They meet either weekly or fortnightly in people's homes either in the evening or afternoons. We are always trying to welcome new members. Recently a young people's housegroup has been formed and seems to be thriving.

### **Mission Support**

Our parish has partnership links with individuals and organisations working for Christ across the world. We support them with prayer and money. Whenever possible we visit our partners and receive visits from them. We learn from them what it means to be committed disciples of Jesus. We hope they benefit from our support and encouragement. Our partners include :

- Sena and Jane Ounate-Lare working for Crosslinks
- David and Jane Hucker working for South American Missionary Society
- Nabil and Sarah Shehadi working for Church Missionary Society
- Mike and Judy Clark working for Operation Mobilisation.

The Mission Committee raises the profiles of mission and distributes the tithe of our income set aside for mission. We support other mission work locally, nationally and overseas and also have two separate funds, one to enable young people to undertake short mission projects and the other to help adults who might not otherwise be able to help in mission work. In addition, members of the church family donate to special appeals throughout the year. In 2002 a group of adults visited Kenya, led by our Associate Minister at the time to help in Testimony Faith Home, an orphanage in Eldoret. Since then there have been further visits, in 2006 a group of young people continued with this work, and one of our church members undertakes regular visits with Crosslinks to assist churches there.

### **Parish Weekends**

We organise weekends away, we have been to Scargill in Yorkshire, Abbott's Grange in Grange-over-Sands and in recent years a group has regularly attended Spring Harvest at Skegness. These have

been wonderful occasions of revitalisation and spiritual renewal from which we have all returned full of enthusiasm

### Baptism preparation

A baptism team member will visit the family before the preparation classes begin. Each family will attend the classes, we encourage Godparents to come as well. The course consists of 3 x 1 hour sessions. After the baptism the same team member visits the family to take the baptism certificate together with a CD of the service.

Each year we hold an Easter Bunny Party, a Teddy Bear's Picnic, a Christmas Party and a Christmas Tree Service held in the church. Invitations are also sent out for other appropriate services. One of our Mother's Union Projects is to send each child an anniversary card of his/her baptism for 5 years.

### Children's Activities

We were blessed in having a Children's Worker, Janet Arnold, during her time with us she established a number of children's activities, which are still flourishing.

One of these is **Messy Church**, which takes place on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month in Pensby Church. This is popular with about 50+ children accompanied by a parent or carer who attend each month. We also welcome families who do not usually go to church



each Sunday. We begin with a drink and informal play, followed by organised craft or games activities in the hall. Then we go into church for a story, worship and prayer, short and simple. A hot meal is cooked on the premises and served in the foyer by our amazing food team, enjoyed by all. We are looking at ways of increasing this monthly contact.

Another of Janet's legacies is '**Open the Book**', a programme of Bible stories delivered each week in dramatised form. We have two teams; this year the Tuesday team visit Pensby Primary KS2 and Heswall Primary KS1 and the Thursday Team visit Thornton Hough Primary in a village just out of our parish. Previously we have delivered OTB to other local Primary Schools, Stanley Special School and Pensby Wood Day Centre. We can return to them after 3 years as the pupils move on.

Last year we started an **Assembly team** which visit schools post OTB once a month in a rota with clergy from other churches. We offer an Assembly based on a dramatised 'Naughty Nora' story with a relevant Bible message. At the moment we are visiting Heswall Primary KS2, Barnston Primary and Dawpool Primary in Thurstaston Parish and Thornton Hough Primary.

**Little Tugs** is held on Monday mornings in Pensby Church Hall for toddlers, giving the opportunity for children to play together while parents, mainly Mums, can share time together. Perhaps this is a chance for discreet evangelism as many non-church members attend.

In August we held a **Holiday Club** for children as an extension of Messy Church, called the **Egyptian Adventure**. The 4 days culminated in an exciting, fun-packed service on the Sunday morning. It was a very enjoyable and worthwhile event for all involved, not least the teenagers who helped and who loved the interaction with the children and don't have many opportunities to come together in this way. All the children were delighted to be given a Children's Bible and hopefully it will bring back happy memories and knowledge of God's love for them and lay seeds of faith to grow over the years.

The well-established **Uniformed Organisations** at both churches are areas with which we need to establish better links so that these children can be incorporated more into the life of the church. This will be one of our GAP targets for the coming year.

### Adult Activities

**Alpha and Beta groups**, since 1999 our church has run regular Alpha Courses, sometimes with other local churches members attending, and we are now on our 27<sup>th</sup> course. We believe that evangelism is one of our main priorities and many new members have joined our congregations through Alpha. Beta groups follow on from Alpha and we now have three thriving groups. The meal shared together is a valuable time to chat and exchange news. A small band of very enthusiastic supporters help with the catering and running of the courses.

**Holiday Club for Seniors**, for the last 4 years we have held this event for older folk on 4 consecutive Thursdays in July/August and for 1 day in the Christmas holidays. Each day was packed with interesting activities including a day trip, this year to Llandudno. A hot meal was provided each day by an enthusiastic team, who enjoyed the fellowship and food as much as the participants. This club is run under the expert organisation of one of our Pastoral Workers and is extremely popular.

**Bereavement Fellowship Lunch** is held monthly in Barnston Hall and provides a hot meal cooked on the premises by an enthusiastic team. It is offered to those who have recently been bereaved and members of the Bereavement Team are present to offer words of encouragement or solace if needed. This is not a sad

or solemn event, the discussions range over many topics and there is much laughter as the regular attendees meet up and exchange news

**Carers' Get Together** provides a sympathetic and welcoming environment for all carers and former carers who give of themselves to provide a better quality of life for those they love. They meet once a month in St. Michael's Church Foyer to have lunch and a varied programme of informative talks, exercise, relaxation or fun activities giving mutual support and friendship. They aim to improve well-being by reducing social isolation and help restore confidence.

For older church members we have **Meeting Point** held fortnightly at 10.30am in St Michael's Church Centre. Suitable talks, activities and outings are organised for Over 50s. This group has been running for many years and has about 30 members. It is an outreach activity and some members do not attend church at the moment but are encouraged to do so and new members are always warmly welcomed.

**Marriage Preparation**, each year we hold at least one Marriage Preparation day, to which all wedding couples are invited. During the day all aspects of marriage are covered from the music in church to financial concerns. Most participants arrive looking deeply worried but as the couples are leaving to go home they have lots of useful information about not only the wedding day itself but also about their lifelong commitment to each other. We try to offer advice on how get through the inevitable ups and downs of living together so that their marriage is one of understanding, loving, cherishing and communicating with each other. We try to show how warm and hospitable our church is, and our kitchen team are on hand to provide a good lunch and refreshments. We are always delighted when we receive positive feedback from those attending, and it's not unusual for them to remark that they have found out new things about each other during the discussions.

**Mothers' Union** brings together some of the most committed women in the church family (and some men!) and will be celebrating 45 years of membership at Pensby in 2011. They meet fortnightly, have Corporate Communion on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday each month and support various projects in the church and the community. They supply Baptism cards and candles and remember the birthdays of newly baptised children for 5 years; they support the Melanesian Brothers, Arrowe Park Hospital Baby Unit, Women's Refuge at Styal Prison amongst many other projects. It is hoped to start a Young Families Group as part of the M.U. at Barnston Church in 2011.

**Contact** is a monthly meeting for ladies held in Barnston Church Hall with an interesting programme of activities and visits. Some are thought-provoking and some purely social. It has about 30 ladies attending.

Each year we form a **Choir** to join with the Salvation Army to give a Christmas Concert. The choir of 30-40

singers practise each Tuesday evening in November and provide an opportunity to enjoy singing together. They then perform with the Salvation Army Band and Singers at the beginning of December. This is always a joyful start to the festive season and we are able to bring in older folk from local homes for the elderly.

**Internet Café** is held each Monday afternoon for those who are not experienced, introducing them to computers, email, internet etc. Training and support is given.



**Drama Productions**, we are fortunate in having a Drama teacher in our congregation and she produced a pantomime 4 years ago to raise money for our Pensby Project. This was extremely successful and audiences were delighted to see our two clergy as the Ugly Sisters tottering about in high heels! Now we have St. Michael's Hall, we are able to house more productions, the last being 'A Hard Act to Follow', a Victorian Music Hall and plans are in process for



another production in July. Our new incumbent would be most welcome to join us. These events are a valuable and visible expression of the corporate and vibrant life of our church.

## Prayer

The Prayer life of our church is important to us all. In our services church members are encouraged to lead the prayers and there are enthusiastic and committed groups who meet and pray together regularly. We have a Prayer Ministry Team which ensures that sensitive listeners are available after each service for individual private prayer. There are a number of prayer triplets, an early morning prayer meeting 7 – 8 am that focuses on the Alpha courses in particular and a prayer chain for important prayer requests.

**Centrepoint** is the monthly prayer meeting for the life of the parish and the world beyond. This is not always attended as well as we would like, but is being re-invigorated at the moment.

Prayer support is offered through housegroups and mission committee meetings. The clergy and office staff have morning prayers each day.

At certain times of the year we hold sessions of 24/7 prayer often jointly with other local churches. The Upper Room at Barnston provides a peaceful and reflective space where prayer stations can be set up for these occasions. We have a timetable so that continuous prayer can be offered. On Rogation Sunday we had a 'Beating the Bounds' prayer walk conducted by the faithful few.

## Our Vision for the Future

As part of our Growth Action Plan last year we, the PCC, produced a Vision Statement as follows:  
This parish:

- Studies the Bible to hear God's voice and understand his purposes
- Believes that God is at work in the world
- Believes that God calls all people to new life in Jesus Christ
- Has been put at the heart of this community to worship God and proclaim the good news about Jesus
- Reaches out in service to the needs of the community
- Welcomes all who come to us, so that they may learn about Jesus
- Cares for its members
- Encourages all Christians to grow in discipleship, and to use their gifts in the service of God
- Is open to the leading of the Holy Spirit to undertake new tasks, and to know when activities have run their course.

## Our next incumbent

We are praying for God's chosen person to endorse our vision statement and be prepared to work enthusiastically to fulfil its goals.

- A dynamic inspirational person, with a fresh vision of how our church can grow and a passion for outreach amongst young people
- Someone with an eagerness for evangelism and a deep personal faith who will take joy in sharing that faith with others and continue an outreach programme
- A servant leader with proven ability to delegate, enable and foster the gifts and skills within our church family and clergy team
- A gifted Bible teacher and communicator able to show the relevance of scripture to contemporary life
- Someone open to the Holy Spirit who is committed to the authority of scripture in all matters of faith and conduct
- A compassionate pastor able to support and develop our pastoral ministry and build our life as the body of Christ

- A person with positive views on women taking an active role in church life
- A sense of humour would be helpful

## Our young people would like:

- Someone like my Dad who would talk to me (*from a 4 year old*)
- A man or woman who would care about me and say hello when you see them (*from a 6 year old*)
- Someone who is funny, kind, considerate, organised, prayerful, with a heart for children (*from some teenagers*)



## Finally

We have tried to paint an honest picture of the current life of our churches and our hopes for the future. Our strengths have been well-covered, in particular the broad base of trained and experienced lay supporters.

Our needs lie especially in children's and youth work where we are concerned that our numbers are so low; and also in recruiting leaders from within our congregation as so many activities are led by the faithful few. The idea of a church plant could be an exciting venture for a new incumbent

The interregnum is a challenging time as we seek prayerfully to understand God's vision in our Parish. We trust that whoever He is calling will relish the opportunity to help shape our future and take our church forward to grow in faith and be a vital force in bringing God's love to our community.

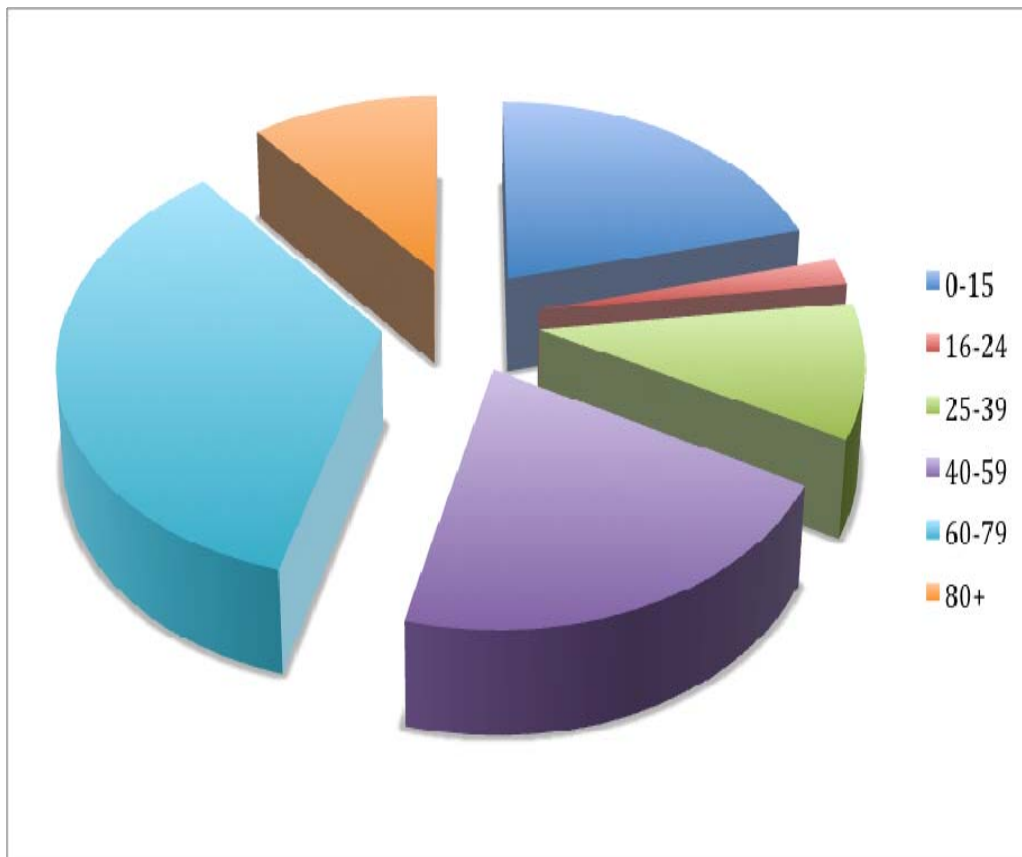


## Attendance Survey 2010

During the Spring of 2010 our church conducted an attendance survey. For ten weeks we took a register of everyone who attended the services in both churches and the results revealed interesting and important information which will help us focus our work in the coming years.

Highest weekly attendance	413
Average weekly attendance	331
Number of individuals who attended during survey	884

### Profile of congregation by age group



Our church membership is 'unbalanced' by comparison with the surrounding population. We have more older people 60+ and are poorly represented in teens and 20s mainly because we do not have a university or college locally and many young people move away for further education.

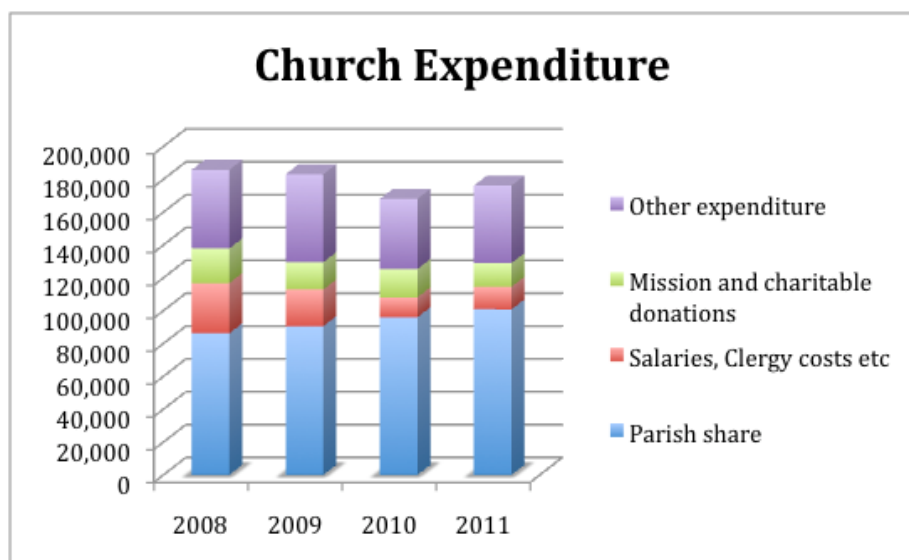
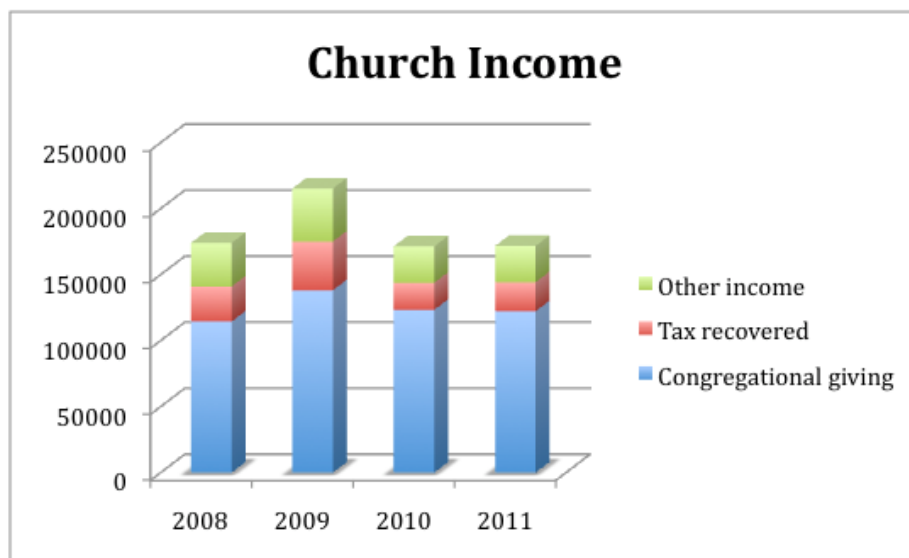
Comparing with a previous survey in 2003 the faith community has increased from 467 to 512 but the turnover has been 51%

Two interesting findings are:

- 30% of the electoral roll do not attend church but 29% of adults attending are not on the electoral roll
- adults are attending more regularly now than in 2003

## Finance 2008-2011

	2008	2009	2010	2011
	Actual	Actual	Forecast	Budget
	£	£	£	£
<b>CHURCH INCOME</b>				
	2008	2009	2010	2011
Congregational giving	114397	138126	123300	122200
Tax recovered	26550	36963	20500	22000
Other income	33082	40160	27560	27500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>174,029</b>	<b>215,249</b>	<b>171,360</b>	<b>171,700</b>
<b>CHURCH EXPENDITURE</b>				
Parish share	86,146	90,529	96,000	100,800
Salaries, Clergy costs etc	30,619	22,368	12,100	13,700
Mission and charitable donations	21,034	16,616	17,250	14,470
Other expenditure	47,964	53,595	42,725	47,200
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>185,763</b>	<b>183,108</b>	<b>168,075</b>	<b>176,170</b>
<b>NET INCOME (-EXPENDITURE)</b>	<b>-11,734</b>	<b>32,141</b>	<b>3,285</b>	<b>-4,470</b>





Egyptian Adventure Leaders



Altar at St Michael and All Angels, Pensby



Looking towards Pensby from Barnston Churchyard

Barnston Vicarage and Garden

