Michaelmas Reflection 2026: St Michael, Creation Care, and the God Who Sees
(Joining Michael in the Work of Guardianship) **John1.47-end.**

St Michael the Archangel never lived on earth as we live. He is honoured as a saint because he stands in the presence of God, leading the heavenly host and defending creation from the powers that seek to distort it. Look at him on our pulpit: the carving shows him poised in vigilance. His stance tells us something vital — **God's care for the world is never passive. It is active, purposeful, and protective.** And that same determined calling rests on us.

Michael's struggle in the heavens mirrors our earthly vocation as an **Eco Church**. The work we do in our churchyard is not simply mowing, planting, or tidying. It is our gentle participation in God's **guardianship** of creation. Our stewardship is not merely operational; it is a theological commitment to safeguarding what God has made. Each zone of our grounds expresses a nuanced dimension of this guardianship.

This year, Michael's witness meets another powerful moment in Scripture: Jesus' encounter with Nathanael in *John 1.47–end*. Jesus sees Nathanael before Nathanael sees Him. He names him truthfully, calls him deeply, and promises him a vision of heaven opened — angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

Michael belongs to that company of angels. And Jesus' words remind us that their ministry is not distant or abstract. It is woven into God's ongoing work of revelation, protection, and renewal. **Heaven is not sealed off; it is open and accessible. God's care is not hidden; it is active. Creation is not abandoned; it is beloved.**

This is the context in which we understand our vocation as an **Eco Church**. The work we do in our churchyard is participation in the same guardianship Michael embodies and the same divine attentiveness Jesus shows to Nathanael — **the God who sees, the God who calls, the God who renews.** Our two fig trees on the south-west side of the bell tower are living symbols of this truth.

Zone A: High Access Areas — Care as Hospitality

When Jesus looks at Nathanael, He sees him clearly and honours his dignity. In the places most used by visitors, mourners, and pilgrims, we seek to do the same. We keep the ground safe, tidy, and welcoming so that those who come seeking peace encounter an oasis of calm, and as such, a place that reflects God's gentleness.

Michael's protection inspires our commitment to accessibility and order; Jesus' recognition of Nathanael inspires our commitment to seeing each person who enters our grounds with equal compassion and respect.

Zone B: Meadow and Biodiversity Areas — Care as Resistance

Jesus tells Nathanael he will see "greater things" — signs of heaven breaking into earth. Our no-mow meadow area is one such sign. Left to flourish through spring and summer, it stands as a deliberate act of resistance against the forces that diminish life.

Allowing wildflowers to seed, insects to thrive, and soil to recover is a small echo of Michael's struggle against destruction and Jesus' **promise of renewal**. Each September cut, each handful of yellow rattle, each removed arisings declare that we choose **regeneration** over depletion — that we believe greater things are possible for creation.

Zone C: Trees, Hedgerows, and Woodland Edge — Care as Shelter

Jesus promises Nathanael a vision of angels ascending and descending — movement, connection, protection. Our mature trees and mixed native hedgerows offer something similar: corridors of life, places of refuge, pathways for unseen creatures.

Michael is often depicted with wings outstretched — a symbol of sheltering protection. In tending these living structures, planting native species, and preserving deadwood where safe (such as the repurposed sycamore log pile by the main gates for instance) we join in that protective work. We create spaces where life can move freely rather than be fragmented.

Zone D: Quiet Corners and Pilgrimage Spaces — Care as Contemplation

Nathanael's encounter with Jesus begins in quietness — under a fig tree, in a moment of stillness where he is seen by God. We have two fig varieties on the southwest side of our grounds, and our quieter corners echo that moment. Long grass stands until autumn; rustic seating (made from repurposed sycamore rings) invites **reflection**.

These spaces remind us that creation is not only to be used but to be revered. Michael's presence calls us to **vigilance**; Jesus' gaze calls us to attentiveness. In these meditative encounters, as we pause a while, we learn again to see the world as God sees it.

Across All Zones — Care as Witness

Our choices — no chemicals, composting green waste, scattering wood-chip and leaf mould, nurturing soil health, welcoming wildlife — are small but faithful acts of **guardianship**. They stand against the powers that degrade creation and wound the vulnerable. They proclaim, in humble yet powerful ways, the same truth Michael

proclaims in glory and Jesus reveals to Nathanael: **God's world is worth defending, and God's care is always active.**

On Michaelmas, we give thanks for the Archangel who stands as a sign of God's protection, justice, and mercy. And we give thanks for the Christ who s**ees** us, **calls** us, and **opens heaven** before us.

May our work here — in every zone and every season — join with Michael's witness and Nathanael's revelation, contributing to the flourishing of God's world.

Summary

- **Zone A:** Where people walk, grieve, and pray, we practise hospitality. Protection begins with care for people.
- **Zone B:** Our meadow stands as resistance. Every wildflower and thriving insect declares that we choose life over depletion.
- **Zone C:** Our trees and hedgerows stretch out like wings, sheltering creatures we never see.
- **Zone D:** Quiet corners invite us to slow down, listen, and remember that creation is holy ground.

Across every zone, our choices — no chemicals, composting, nurturing soil, welcoming wildlife — are small yet faithful acts of **guardianship**. They say, with Michael, that God's world is worth defending.

So, on Michaelmas, we give thanks for the archangel who stands for God's justice and mercy. And we renew our commitment to steward this ancient churchyard we have inherited with courage, tenderness, and hope.

May our work here join with Michael's witness and help creation flourish. Amen!

Fr. Mike.

(Michaelmas 2026)