



@stmikesmacclesfield



www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk



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Instagram



Rakesh & Sonia

## About Me

I will start by saying that most of you would have seen us, (my wife and I) at the service many times now. I relocated to Macclesfield some 18 months ago from Chennai, a bustling city in Southern India. The following are my reflections of Macclesfield and Chennai.

## Countryside

Firstly, I will have to confess that Macclesfield is fantastic. Being born and brought up in a metropolitan city, (call it a 'Concrete Jungle'), you hardly get to see few trees together. It's a complete contrast. Compare that with Macclesfield, a town in the countryside. It's a treat to see greenery everywhere you turn. I would definitely call this a blessing. Be it the canal, the forest or Tegg's Nose, nature is truly our God's gift and I love it. Next up, what I love about Macclesfield is the calmness about this town. Tucked away on the western fringes of the Peak District, and me being the lazy person I am, the serenity has made me love this town more. The long walks up the hill or into the forest are memories that will be etched in my heart forever. The next thing to talk about is definitely the Treacle Market. I've heard of such markets from my grand moms, but never really got a chance to experience it. These are a rarity in my part of the world. The Macclesfield Treacle Market has given me that opportunity and I must confess, it's fascinating. The stalls, the

## Macc Memoirs

*A reflection on our time in Macclesfield as we shortly leave you and head back to Chennai by Sonia & Rakesh*

food, the people and last but not least, the local produce; my goodness! It is truly an experience to cherish.

Another important point I'd like to mention is about the Town Centre. Back to comparison, the place where I come from is a Metropolitan City and it's hard to even think about having one. Here, in Macc, it's quite the opposite. The landmark Townhall, the Library, Church Street, the Marketplace, the Silk Museum and those food shops down the road gives a feeling that you can get everything you need, in just a few steps. I'm sure you'll agree with me on that.

## The Church

When talking about Macclesfield, I should mention St Michael's. In Chennai, my church St Mary Magdalene Church has some connection to the pre-independence English regime. It was built by the Church Mission of Scotland in 1819. So, I was part of a 200 hundred year tradition. Compare that with St Michael's, and I can proudly say that I've got the privilege to be part of an 800 year old tradition now.

## New Year Message from Martin, our Vicar

"Happy New Year to you all!" I hope you enjoyed some semblance of celebrating Christmas and New Year, even if so different from other years.

I want to start by thanking all the people, and you will know who you are, who helped so much during Advent and the run-up to Christmas in 'preparing the way'. I think we did remarkably well in serving our congregations and wider community, enabling at least some of our 'normal' celebrations to go ahead. Thank you to everyone who helped – it all went smoothly and was much appreciated.

I was also very pleased with take up of the Advent reading material – a number of us engaging with one or other of the four suggested books, either reading alone or sharing

*(Continued on page 3)*

# HAPPY New Year

BLESSINGS  
TO YOU  
& YOURS

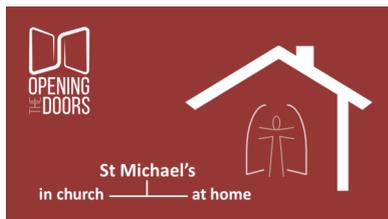
“FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU,” DECLARES THE LORD

Join us for

# Sunday Worship

St Michael's Worship 10th January 2021  
Baptism of Christ  
**ONE merged service this week at 10am:  
both from home and in church**

To join by Zoom click  
on the image or use  
Meeting ID:  
939 7279 7379  
Password: 01625



Service Leader: Heike Werner  
Talk: Barry Langman  
Reading: Mark 1.4-11

**Can't join us live either in church or on Zoom?**

Watch the recording of our morning worship service on  
Zoom at a time to suit you after Sunday lunchtime [here](#)

## No Computer? No problem!

You can still join any of these Zoom meetings and services  
with your landline phone

If phoning:

Dial 0330 088 5830.



When prompted, enter the Meeting ID  
from any of these boxes followed by #

[For Sunday's service: 939 7279 7379]

When prompted, enter #



Email any [prayer requests](#) here:

Based on this week's lectionary readings:

Resources for adults and families: click [here](#)

Resources for children: click [here](#)

(or printed with your hard copy newsletter)

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# JOIN US ON Zoom

CONNECT WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Wednesday Morning Discussion  
11.00am to 12 noon

Join Zoom meeting [here](#)

Meeting ID: 326 496 3258

Passcode: 01625



Coffee & Chat



**Monday House Group (restarts 11th January):**

When? 7.30pm til 9pm Monday evenings

Join Zoom Meeting [here](#)

Meeting ID: 910 4838 5228

Password: Monday

For more information contact Martin [by email](#) or  
01625 426110.

**Thursday Homegroup**

We meet via Zoom at 7.30pm using same details as  
before. All are welcome to join for Bible Study,  
prayer and fellowship, including by phone. Please  
contact David Mayers by [email](#) or phone 01625  
420716 or 07963 802659.

**Contemplative Prayer**

This is no longer taking place in church each  
Friday morning. We will advise when it restarts.

**DONATIONS:** Donating to the  
church for general purposes  
has been made simpler. Either  
click on the blue Donate  
button or scan the QR Code.



SCAN ME

Giving to the work and  
worship of St Michael's

Click here to donate towards our church's  
ministry



(Continued from page 1)

with others. Not least it's prompted our Wednesday Morning Discussion Group to explore more about 'end-times' teaching from the Bible! Over the next week or two you'll be able to read about people's experiences of their Advent reading groups (see page 5 for Vicky and Gordon's reflections on the book they explored).

I'm so excited when people get together to talk about faith. I hope that despite the latest lockdown, this might continue to happen – either via Zoom, using the group phone call facility we've set up, or simple 1-to-1 chats with a friend.

In fact this sort of thing is an ambition looking ahead – to encourage new 'book groups' and the like – to help us dig deeper into our faith. Recalling our Vision Day last February, we talked about where we wanted to go as a church: 'Exploring and nurturing faith' is a major focus; 'Encounter' and 'Sustainability' are the others. The Church Council will consider this further at its meeting this month.

As we start this new year, THANK YOU to the people who helped last year, in and through difficult circumstances, both to keeping 'Church' open and functioning, but also to continue to developing aspects of church life.

One person who has done so much and whose frequent input we will greatly miss is Sue Reid. As Sue prepares to step down from working in the Church Office and start a new adventure doing an amazing job in the NHS, I start 2021 with a bit of trepidation (Sue, do you know how big your shoes are to fill?) but also with excitement! When God calls people to new opportunities – or rather, when they respond to God – there is space for others to find their feet and discover their own sense of calling.

With every blessing for this year.

*Mark Stepler*

Once again David Mayers has kindly arranged for our Christmas tree to be removed by East Cheshire Hospice as part of their annual fundraising. Thank you. The planned date this weekend has now been postponed and we await a new date, so in the meantime you will see the tree lying in the churchyard awaiting collection. Thank you to Judith and the Radmall family for arranging to take the tree down.

## Do you enjoy the weekly newsletter?

Have you valued the newsletter Sue produces each week? Is this something you feel you could help with once Sue leaves.

We'd really like to keep some form of regular newsletter going as it's been so helpful in keeping us all connected.

The newsletter is currently produced using Microsoft Publisher. Ideally, you might already be familiar with Publisher, but it doesn't matter if you're not, as long as you have a willingness to learn the basics using a template. You don't need to have this on your own computer either as you could use the office laptop to produce it. If this sounds of interest to you either on a temporary, or more regular basis, please speak to Rachel Mayers in the first instance: 01625 420716 or email her [rachel.mayers@btinternet.com](mailto:rachel.mayers@btinternet.com)

## Home Congregation Zoom Hosts

We now have two people on the team. Thank you Helen, you're a star. BUT we need more so that the two people can have a break every now and then. Training is provided and you will never be left alone to get on with it. Please contact the office or Tricia or Helen if interested.

Bramley apples – from our Macclesfield garden, still available – delivery can be arranged. Contact Rachel or David Mayers (420716)



*Our socially distanced choir singing on Christmas Day 2020*

## Thank you

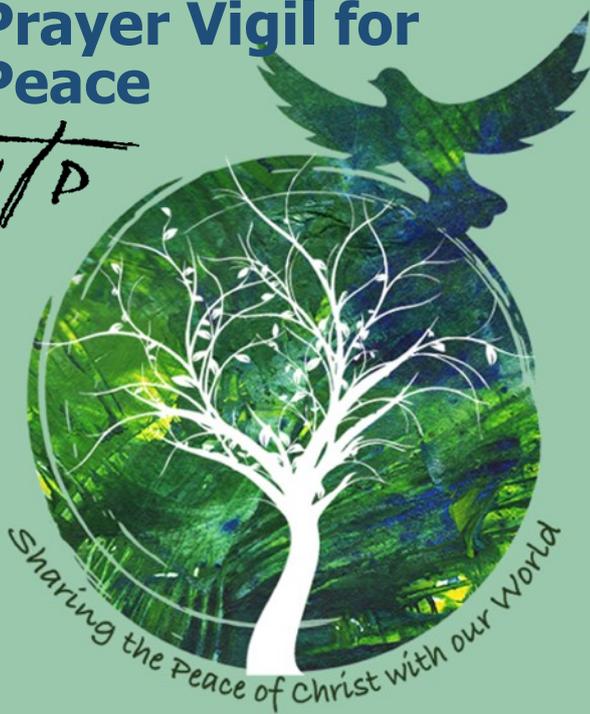
A huge THANK YOU to everyone involved in bringing us all the various Christmas Services in December which have brought comfort and joy to many.

It was also lovely to see our choir singing in the churchyard on Christmas Day.

*Photo credit: Hazel Hidden.*

# Prayer Vigil for Peace

J/P



**Saturday 16 January, 8-9 pm**

At the start of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18-25 Jan), St Alban's Justice & Peace invites you to one ZOOM hour of prayer, Taizé chants, silence and reflection on

Pope Francis' World Peace message 2021:

**A CULTURE of CARE as a PATH to PEACE**

To join us please email: [mcdavison@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mcdavison@hotmail.co.uk) and you will be sent the Prayer Vigil ZOOM meeting details

Back in late November before our own 10am service, I listened to the BBC Radio 4 Morning Service (as I have done most mornings during the pandemic). The thoughts shared by the minister, Revd Gilbert, from St Andrews, Edinburgh (and particularly his blessing) had so much meaning for me personally. He wrote:-

Until we can gather together, face to face,  
until we can sing together side by side,  
until we can recover something of our normality  
May God reveal himself to each of us  
in the love we have for one another.

And in that love, may we find freedom and peace.  
And may God bless all, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

**He also made reference to his personal feelings which I can only concur when he said:**

For me the strangest thing about this COVID pandemic has been what it has done to my understanding my own body. All my life I have understood reasonably well how to use physical gestures as expressions of love and friendship, as ways of building up the city, ways of belonging to other people. We all do this all the time.

The hug or the kiss you give in greeting or farewell. The hand-shake on being introduced to someone. The time spent sharing food or drink.

The gatherings of people in church, or mosque; in synagogue or gurdwara, in social club or night club.... singing together. Because all the things we used to do to express our love are now a threat to the people we love.

People used to kiss someone because we loved them. Now we talk to them by phone or on Zoom, because we love them. We used to shake someone's hand because we valued them and their company. And now we stand two metres away and hide behind a mask, because we value them.

We used to gather around the bedside of the dying, to touch them, to hold their hands, to say farewell. And now we gaze through a window, as brave nurses in protective equipment perform those last ministries of kindness.

Our very bodies, our gestures, have become strange to us. Un-natural. We are moving through a landscape that has been made strange by danger, so that loving one another looks and feels, physically, very different from what we are used to.

Perhaps moving our bodies through this new landscape is also a kind of pilgrimage. It's involved a kind of leave-taking, at least for the present, from our familiar world. It asks us to invent a whole new language of love, in a land made strange by a virus. In the midst of all this I try to remind myself, no matter how strange these new gestures of love may feel, no matter how frustrating it is, it is still love. It is still this love, no matter how improvised it is in our strange new circumstances, that builds the city, that makes us human.

*David Smith*

## Chester Diocesan News

#EverydayFaith across the Diocese of Chester | January 2021



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Chester

### Answering God's call



Click anywhere on image to read

Answering God's call Pg 4  
Archdeacon Mike Gilbertson Pg 2  
A Praying Man Pg 6

#### ALTERNATIVES TO HANDSHAKES, HUGS AND HIGH FIVES



THE WAVE



THE HAND ON HEART



NAMASTE



HELLO  
(INTERNATIONAL SIGN LANGUAGE)



THE 'WHAT'S UP' NOD



THE PEACE SIGN



THE BOW



THE 'WHAT A YEAR, HUH?'

# Advent Book Review

Our Home Group, ably led by David Mayers, has been reviewing the very accessible, easy to read and interesting book by Penelope Wilcock. Imagine if we could bring Jesus “the person” into our own time, what would we say to him, and more importantly what would he say to us?!

The above book itself is divided into 25 short daily chapters each taking the form of a conversation between the author and Jesus who becomes her constant companion during the period leading up to Christmas.

Through this unusual approach the author uses both her knowledge of the Bible and her own life experiences. During their quiet times together she highlights everyday topics and concerns on a number of difficult spiritual and practical issues ranging from homelessness, judgement, children and families and the events leading up to Christmas and his birth in Bethlehem.

Then waiting patiently for His response: His answers are sometimes complex, surprising and always thought provoking.

The book as mentioned is imaginative, informative and very readable and offers lively discussion. From a personal perspective we have a friend in Jesus who is with us always no matter what happens in our lives and we can continue to have conversation with him through the power of prayer.

As a Group we all thought it would be a good book to recommend to other people and we are sure that, through David Mayers, the collection of books we have can be passed on to others in order for them to delve into this rather unique book of our time.

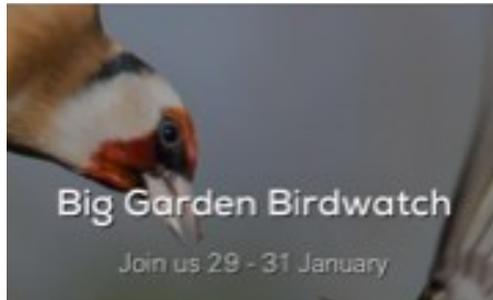
Best wishes for 2021 and happy reading!

Gordon & Vicky Darlington

# Lockdown 3

So here we are once again. The message is clear: stay home to save lives. So here are a few things to make you smile and keep you occupied whilst at home. Many of us took a lot of pleasure last Spring seeing all the wildlife in our gardens and really hearing birdsong.

The RSPB has its annual Big Garden Birdwatch over the weekend 29-31 Jan. Click [here](#) to register and get your pack. Spend an hour counting



the birds you see in your garden, then tell RSPB what you saw. It really is that simple!

Also, please don't forget to send in your news, views, stories and photos of what you're up to. It will help keep us entertained and connected to one another.



0800 804 8044

A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Professional Telephone Listening Service

The Hope Centre  
Registered Charity 1140845  
**0300 3034 566**  
**Open Every day**



READY TO LISTEN!





We are currently still open for private prayer from 11am to 1pm but this is under review in light of the new government legislation and respecting the wishes of our volunteers, so watch this space...

For some fun, why not take the quiz to find out what bird you are?

Take our quiz!

Which GARDEN BIRD are you?



I got woodpigeon!! Mmm... 'nuff said!  
Click image to take the quiz.

HOME SCHOOLING DAY 1

IF YOU SEE MY CHILDREN LOCKED OUTSIDE TODAY, MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS - WE ARE HAVING A FIRE DRILL

MoneySavingCentral

WHEN YOUR HAIR SALON IS CLOSED

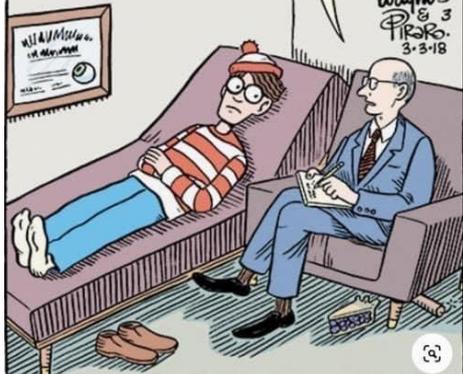


BUT YOUR DOG GROOMER HAS A CANCELLATION

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Is it possible you're really just hiding from yourself?



Wayne Piro 3-3-18