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A Splash of Words

I wonder how many of you read poetry? I wonder how many of you read poetry as a means of reflecting on God, on life, and on your own experiences and feelings? Poetry has the reputation among quite a few people of

being "hard": of requiring too much "work" and thought and effort to understand it. I remember reading a poem by Adrian Plass (a humorous Christian writer) many years ago which mocked the abstruseness, the incomprehensibility of some poems. If you read his poem straight, you could easily think, "Gosh, that's deep!" – yet he admitted that it wasn't deep at all: he had simply put together into poetry format a load of clues from the cryptic crossword in his newspaper! As someone who set herself the challenge of getting to grips with cryptic crosswords as a lockdown activity (mainly to try to keep my brain active), I can understand how an assemblage of such clues might seem to have some deep, hidden meaning. Here are some clues from a crossword I was working on recently –

"Philosopher tries a lot to be different;
Remember Thai clutching old lace collar;
Rural girl almost struggles to comprehend English, extraordinary!"

There is no meaning at all either to the separate phrases or to the whole, yet sometimes this is what poetry looks like to us.

You might remember that at the start of Advent a few discussion groups were formed to meet (on Zoom) to read and talk about a recommended book - on art, or poetry or the like. I joined one such group and we considered some of the poems from a collection edited by Janet Morley, called "Haphazard by Starlight".

We continued to meet during the Christmas and the Epiphany seasons, then suddenly we found ourselves at the start of Lent so we picked up a second Morley anthology, called "The Heart's Time" (with a Lenten theme). Easter has now come and gone, and we decided that we would continue meeting, so we are now working through an anthology edited by Mark Oakley called "The Splash of Words". I cannot recommend these books too highly for anyone who would like to try out reading poetry.

All contain full commentaries on each of the poems so that you can consider what the editor her/himself thinks of a particular poem as a starting point for your own reflections. I don't think I am breaking any confidences when I say that our discussions, triggered by a specific poem, have provided the members of our group with the opportunity to explore and to share our own life experiences, including tragedies, sorrows, loss, as well as joy, love and laughter. The poems are a starting point for a sharing of faith, experience and meaning in life.

You might ask, what is the point of using *poetry* as the vehicle for such discussions? Well, if you want a justification for poetry, you can do no better than read the introduction to the Mark Oakley anthology. I have read nothing better to explain the importance and power of poetry to express the almost inexpressible, the

mystical; to capture our own feelings in ways we could never manage ourselves in "ordinary" language. The turn of a phrase, the unlikely metaphor, the glimpses into a shared awareness of something almost indefinable - these are what poetry does.



As Oakley says in his introduction, "when we start talking about poems we are talking about a soul-language, a way of crafting our words that distils our experience into what feels like a purer truth. ... Poems bring epiphany or surprise

moments of recognition which then ask us to reimagine the world in some fresh way, our comprehension deepened."

Oakley explains that "Poetry is not an easy running river There is no one meaning to be had either Get a group of people together talking about a poem and you'll discover that very quickly". Our group has certainly done this: some of us love a particular poem: it speaks to us personally, whilst others find it does little for them. Even that difference brings new insights.

All three anthologies are edited by Christians. The poems themselves may not all have been written by practising Christians but they nonetheless speak powerfully to the human experience.

Oakley also reflects also on the poetry we encounter in the Bible: particularly in the Old Testament – not just the obvious Psalms and the Song of Songs, but in the language of the Prophets and Proverbs too. While harder to identify in the New Testament, there *is* poetry there also: consider the parables of Jesus. As Oakley comments, "Jesus was poetic. Here is something a bit shocking – the Good Samaritan never existed. Neither did the Prodigal Son. Jesus made them up... He used similes, metaphors and parabolic riddles all the time."

I love poetry but I am not like some I know in our St Mike's family – some whose knowledge is amazing, and whose insights are worth harvesting (I would encourage them to host some sessions for us all - you know who you are!) . I certainly don't sit and read poetry for relaxation! But when I take the time to read a poem out loud (that's how they're meant to be read), to savour the language, to "feel" the meaning, well - even I find the soul-language of which Oakley speaks.

Try it yourself.

13th June 2021

Second Sunday after Trinity

Sunday Morning Worship

Leader & Speaker: Rev'd Martin Stephens

Bible Reading: Mark 4:26-34



Collect for the Second Sunday after Trinity

Faithful Creator,
whose mercy never fails:
deepen our faithfulness to you
and to your living Word,
Jesus Christ our Lord.



Room for God at Home: from The Bible Society

Coming on 30 June, this full-colour, beautiful paperback resource is designed to help you find God in every one of your rooms.

Room for God provides a simple way of developing helpful spiritual habits and routines in each of your rooms around the home (as well as outdoor space).

It includes Bible texts, prayers and meditations, creative activities and ideas to support social action. There are ten-minute challenges, deeper meditations, and more – practices for any time, any place within your home.

One room at a time, and at your own pace, you can:

- listen to how God is with you throughout the day
- reflect on your concerns more freely discern some decisions more clearly try out a variety of spiritual practices value the power of silent meditation
- experience God everywhere and not just in church

So feel at home with God by [pre-ordering your copy today!](#)



Karen Brady Induction

Please pray for Karen on Sunday (13th) morning as she celebrates formally her induction as Incumbent of St Michael's, Runcorn. A party of St Michael's Macclesfield friends will be there (to give it some welly!).



Doves: Remembering Project

Over this last year many people have experienced bereavements and have not been able to share with others in their grief e.g. at a funeral service. The deaths may or may not have been caused by Covid-19 but all have been affected by it.

Now restrictions are easing and people are beginning to venture out, we would like to invite anyone in our community who has been affected to make a dove. The doves will then be displayed in church. At All Souls', Tuesday 2nd November, we will all come together in an Act of Remembrance where those named will be remembered and ashes from the doves scattered in the churchyard.

Over the next few months we would like a team of people to be available to help; to enable people by providing the paper to make the dove and a listening ear as required. St Michael's Church is at the heart of the community of Macclesfield. We need to be a living presence to give comfort after what has been an incredibly tough time.

Can you help? We will have a gazebo in the church yard, which is more visible and easily accessible to people than in the church building. We need two or three people each Saturday and Sunday to help. Even if you can only manage one day please get in touch. Training will be given in folding the doves in case people require assistance.

There will be three patterns of dove; a simple cut out shape through which to push concertina folded wings, a simple origami dove and a slightly harder origami dove. People are invited to choose which dove they would like to make, write their loved one's name and, if desired, a message on a piece of paper and fold this into a dove. Their details will be taken so we can remember their loved one and remind them of the Act of Remembrance and they will be given details of the Act of Remembrance and a prayer. The details and paper for making the doves will also be available through the week in church.

Please prayerfully consider if you can offer some time to this Christian witness. If you can, please contact Sallie or Sarah. Thank you.

salliemartin88@gmail.com

sarahwil88@hotmail.com

*... He is such a fast
God, always before us and
Leaving as we arrive.*

RS Thomas (Poet and priest)

*God is like a person hiding in the dark who occasionally
coughs and gives himself away*

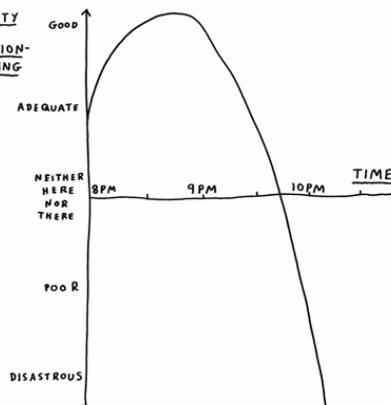
Meister Eckhardt
(Mediaeval Mystic)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Please note for our next Church Council Meeting!

IT IS POSSIBLE TO HAVE TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

QUALITY OF DECISION-MAKING



WAYS TO MAKE A MEETING END

- ① THE SUBTLE GLANCE AT THE WATCH
- ② THE CLEARING OF THE THROAT
- ③ THE LOUD PENETRATING SCREAM



Cricket News

On a perfect summer's evening (Tuesday) St Michael's and Tytherington Family Worship cricket teams played a classic, fluctuating game in front of a large crowd at Kerridge CC.

Put into bat, St Mike's reached a very challenging total of 150 for 4 in their 20 overs, with valuable contributions from Garrie Naden (27, retired), Mike Heathcote (30, retired) and Andy Mannion (23 not out). Sadly we had by this time suffered our first injury, with Jon Burr pulling up while running between the wickets – meaning that scorer/manager David Mayers now had to field and bowl, making our job of defending the target much harder.

TFW were fast out of the blocks, but an amazing spell of 1 for 0 from Russell Collins and tight bowling and tigerish fielding from the whole team brought us to relative safety with TFW needing 50 to win from the last 4 overs, with the light fading. But they got close, very close!

With one ball left and 5 needed to win, Mayers wondered briefly about bowling a “daisy-cutter”; but instead the ball was swatted to mid-wicket where Tamil made another great stop, and the batsmen scrambled a 3. So St Michael's had won by 1 run!

Sadly Russell had also been injured, gallantly leaping over the fence into the adjacent field to find the ball after yet another 6, only to land in a heap, having twisted his knee – our best wishes for a rapid recovery go to him and Jon.

We need them fit for our next fixture on Wednesday 16th June against Macc Occasionals, 6.30pm at Kerridge CC on Clarke Lane. Spectators welcome.

(That all sounds really exciting, Mr Mayers, not to mention perilous, with double injuries. I'm sure they were worth it, to beat TFW! What an un-Christian sentiment. And I would like to see your “daisy-cutter”! Ed.)



Music@Mike's

The next 2 concerts are;

Friday 11th June
Robert Marshall
 piano recital, including pieces by Stravinsky, Scriabin and Rachmaninov



Robert Marshall

Friday 18th June

Innsaei

an exciting and talented string quartet from the Royal Northern College of Music

Start time: 1.15pm

Length: approximately 45 minutes

Admission: free

Unfortunately refreshments are not possible at the moment owing to Covid restrictions.

Donations may be made to the East Cheshire Hospice and St Michael's.



Innsaei

To think about ...

“If a man hasn't discovered something that he would die for, he isn't fit to live”

Martin Luther King Jnr

A little girl had just been assured that God can do anything.

“Then, if he can do anything, can he make a stone so heavy that he can't lift it?” she asked.

“I am puzzled about which Bible people are reading when they suggest religion and politics don't mix.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu



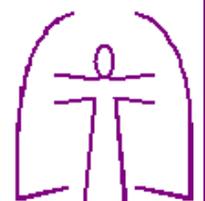
Become Part of the Team - Opening up our Building to the Community

St Michael's in the Market Place welcomes the people of Macclesfield (and elsewhere) into its community and its building. Our building has a very visible presence in the Town Centre and is increasingly being recognised as a community resource as well as a place of worship.

We currently need new people to be part of the team who make this possible.

These are paid roles.

1. Building and Bookings Assistant
 10 hours per week. (6 hours fixed, 4 hours flexible). Contact Paul Simms to obtain further details and application form.
 Tel: 07879 446906 Email: paul@lowerbeechfarm.co.uk
2. Cleaner
 4 hours per week, fixed times by agreement. Contact Chris Wightman (01625 428443) or the church office: 01625 421984 Email: office@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk



Join us for
Sunday Worship



St Michael's Worship 13th June 2021

Second Sunday after Trinity
Merged service this week at 10.00am:
live in church / from home on Zoom

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

Service Leader: Rev'd Martin Stephens
Talk: Rev'd Martin Stephens
Reading: Mark 4:26-34



Can't join us live? Watch the recording of our morning worship service on Zoom at a time to suit you after Sunday lunchtime [here](#)

Wednesday Morning Discussion
11.00am to 12 noon

Join Zoom meeting [here](#)
Meeting ID: 971 3599 5784
Passcode: 01625




Monday HomeGroup

When? 7.30pm - 9pm Monday evenings

Join Zoom Meeting [here](#)
Meeting ID: 910 4838 5228
Password: Monday

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

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 #



Thursday Homegroup 

We meet via Zoom at 7.30pm using same Here is the link to the Zoom meeting; <https://zoom.us/j/96162804573?pwd=V3Z2dWpMZIR6Mjg1eUVVQjBWbzQ4dz09>

Meeting ID: 961 6280 4573
Passcode: 838197

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. We are studying *The Prayer Course* at the moment.

 Email any [prayer requests](#) here

Compline/Night Prayer

Every Friday

Topic: Night Prayer
Time: 8.30pm every Friday (join from 8.25pm)
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?pwd=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZoVXdaZz09>
Meeting ID: 756 7694 7476
Passcode: compline



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



Giving to the work and worship of St Michael's
Click here to donate towards our church's ministry 

