



A newsletter brought to you during Covid-19

Church Together Apart



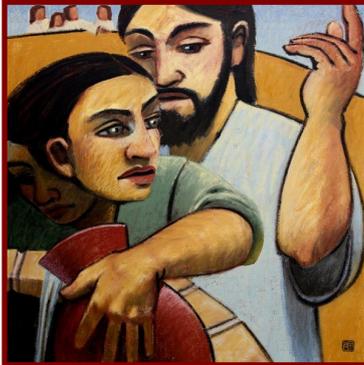
@stmikesmacclesfield



www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk



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Telling our own Story

Paul and I listen each day to the Church of England's *Live Lent* daily reflection (using the app. on my phone). We are not really very 'holy' people (as most of you know!), but we very much value this time of quiet reflection together and almost invariably find

ourselves challenged by the message.

Last week one reflection spoke to me quite pointedly. The Bible passage for the day was the story of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42), a reading with which I am very familiar and on which I have spoken at various times, drawing out different aspects on each occasion (it is wonderful how one can always gain new insights from a familiar passage).

The *Live Lent* reflection accompanying this reading referred to a *Guardian* column in the magazine each Saturday, called "Experience", which features a first-hand story from an "ordinary" person who has experienced something unusual. The accounts can be quirky, tragic, humorous, life-changing, etc - for example: "I grew up on a TV set"; "I survived a plane crash"; I almost died in a blizzard"; I lived as a wild turkey"; "I was abandoned as a baby"; "We're twins who married twins, and had twins", etc. (By the way, if you want to read any of these accounts you can find them on this link! -

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/series/experience>)

The point is that we **all** have a story to tell. Indeed, I have a few bizarre experiences myself: for example, I once witnessed an armed robbery when driving home from work, and, on another occasion, we had the dubious honour of our door being knocked on by the presenters of "The Big Breakfast" (some of you might remember this TV show) which was being screened live on TV. I could tell you about how we reacted as a family if you're interested, but don't expect it to reflect well on the Spedding family! Neither of these unusual incidents was a life-changing event for me. However, I digress...

The Samaritan woman in the Bible account met Jesus, and found that he already knew her "story" - her past life with all its mistakes - just as he already knows our own. Yet he engaged with her in a way which respected her, recognised her individuality, affirmed her importance to him, and both challenged and changed her. Jesus subverted contemporary culture by conversing as he did with this non-Jew, a woman (and possibly a woman of dubious character to boot), whilst also asking her for a favour. There are so many things to mull over in this passage in relation to myself (not the husbands bit, of course. One's enough for me!)

After speaking with him, the woman went to spread news of her encounter to her village - telling her own "new" story. And her message contained the following exhortation and challenge: "Come and see the man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?"



I'm pretty poor on overt "evangelism". But I'm absolutely hunky-dory about talking about myself! Maybe I need to take a leaf out of the Samaritan woman's book, accept that Jesus knows me through and through, and **still** wants me to tell my story to others- as long as it now includes **his** story **too** - and to do so in my daily conversations and not just

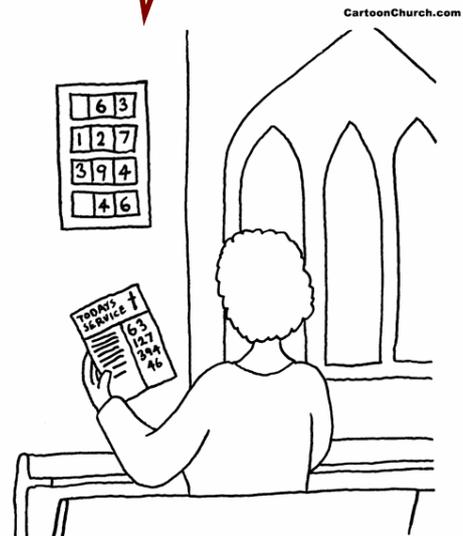
from the "pulpit".

"Come and see - could he possibly be the Messiah?"

And how about you? Do you have a story to tell? Do you have an experience you can share with us all, humorous or life-changing, quirky or profound? If you have - do send your account to

stmikesnotices@gmail.com

by June



SHE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE SHE HAD WON ON HER FIRST VISIT TO CHURCH



Life on the Front-Line

Front line worker Adrian Raducan, interviewed by Garrie Naden

9th March 2021

Adrian as he looks at work

Where do you work and how long have you worked there?

I work at Macclesfield DG Hospital on the orthopaedic ward, I have worked there since moving to Macclesfield with Garrie in October 2019.

What is your role?

I am a Health Care Assistant. I make sure patients are safe, have their medicines on time, are fed and are clean, help them with anything they need, help the nurses and the rest of the team, talk to the patients and make them happy.

What has it been like through the pandemic? Firstly at the beginning.

At first it was scary and worrying for everybody. We did not know how the virus was going to develop. We wanted to protect our patients, ourselves and our families at home. There wasn't enough PPE at first, but it improved. Everyone talked about Covid constantly, sometimes I wanted to stop the talking and just get on with my job. A difficulty for the patients was that no visitors were allowed, so I tried to make up for that a bit.

Then wave 2?

It was still a worry but we had got used to how to be safe and manage. I got used to wearing a mask all the time - as you can see from the photo (above). The orthopaedic ward wasn't a Covid ward, at the peak there were four Covid wards in the hospital plus Intensive Care. The biggest problem for me and my ward was shortages of staff at times with them going off sick with Covid or having to isolate because of Covid contact. Fortunately I have not had Covid (to my knowledge).



Adrian as he looks in church - always frighteningly smart!

What about more recently?

It is still a worry but it has helped that NHS staff have mostly had the vaccine, I had my first one at the beginning of January and the second is due at the beginning of April. We still have to do flow tests at home twice a week.

Do you enjoy your job?

I am very happy in my job. I love to make other people happy, the patients and my colleagues. I am also very happy when Garrie picks me up after a 13-hour day and I go home with him.

(Ed. – Our grateful thanks to Adrian and Garrie for this first-hand account.

If anyone else would like to tell us their story of life on the front-line, please send to stmikesnotices@gmail.com)



Tricia Atherton wants to express heartfelt thanks to friends at St Michael's for the love and support received since January.

The family were able to say goodbye to Jay, aged 31years, on Tuesday 9th March, with pink balloons and a pink coffin.

Please continue to pray for Jay's three children and her sister, Robyn.

Thankyou.

Tricia



Beautiful bark on a tree in the Bollington

rec.



Getting to net zero

As a nation, as a church, and as individuals we are all looking at our carbon footprints and asking ourselves how we can do our bit to prevent the climate emergency, which is already creating significant problems for many of the poorest people on the planet, from tipping into a full-blown disaster for the world and for God's creation.

The Church of England is running a series of webinars to help us to reach our target of being net-zero by 2030. They are open to all, and we hope that many of you will take the opportunity to join them and contribute to the work of the eco-church team here at St Michael's in working out how best to reduce our carbon emissions.

There is something for everyone: please speak to David Mayers (davidjmayers@btinternet.com 420716) for more information – and especially if you don't have access to the internet as we will be able to make recordings of the webinars:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/our-views/environment-and-climate-change/webinars-getting-net-zero-carbon#na>

Some of the webinars have already happened, but a recording can still be viewed. Indeed, this might be a preferred option for some of you?

Here are the titles and dates; all details can be found at the above link

Defining and measuring net zero	Recording
A zero carbon church building	Recording
Best heating solutions	20/4, 4/5, 18/5
Replace or not?	16/3, 27/4, 25/5
Housekeeping and quick wins	Recording
Lighting	11/3, 13/4, 11/5
Solar panels	Recording

And please, if you haven't already done so complete a quick estimate of your own carbon footprint using the WWF calculator at <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>.

Make a note of your result, and send it to David so he can include it in an analysis to be prepared very soon as part of our contribution to achieving the Church Council's Strategic Objectives for the next 5 years.



Do something positive for the environment this Lent

This week's Lenten challenge from Ian Bishop, our Archdeacon, is:

Stop food waste

David's suggestions; avoid those tempting BOGOF offers, and ignore (sensibly!) the BBE dates

More details of the Chester Diocese Lenten Journey can be found at <https://www.chester.anglican.org/Lent>



Can you identify these famous art-works in their canine manifestation?





News from Just Drop In (JDI) in Macclesfield

This year celebrates the 20th year since Just Drop In (JDI) started “Helping young people find their feet” in Macclesfield. Our own Rev’d David Wightman was very much involved and supportive of JDI in the early years, which continued until his untimely death three years ago.

Over the past three years, Vicky and I have been St Michael’s Church Representatives and attended their AGMs. Some may remember twelve months ago Steve Oliver, a Trustee of JDI came and preached at our morning service at St Michael’s, where he briefly outlined the work being undertaken from their office in Macclesfield.

In their latest Newsletter it was reported how successful JDI had been last year with another great growth of supporting 1500 young people despite having to negotiate and navigate through all the Covid -19 restrictions.

The Newsletter highlighted that the Trustees have now identified four key areas to develop over the next year:-

- Working in partnership with schools
- Reaching the most disadvantaged young people in our communities
- Working with parents
- Increased participation in the design of services by children and young people

With this ambitious programme, JDI are presently looking for volunteers to be Wellbeing Mentors to work 1 - 2 hours a week, on a 1.1 basis with young people aged 12 – 25 supporting them long term over a 12 month period to fulfil their potential and reach their goals.

For the Wellbeing Mentors there is a specifically designed eight-week training programme.

For further information **email:hello@justdropin.co.uk** or telephone **01625 665079**

Sadly, with current pressure on our finances at St Michael’s we are unable to donate any funds to JDI, but if anyone would like to invest in the future of young people, please consider:

making a one off or regular gift via their online giving <https://justdropin.enthuse.com/donate>

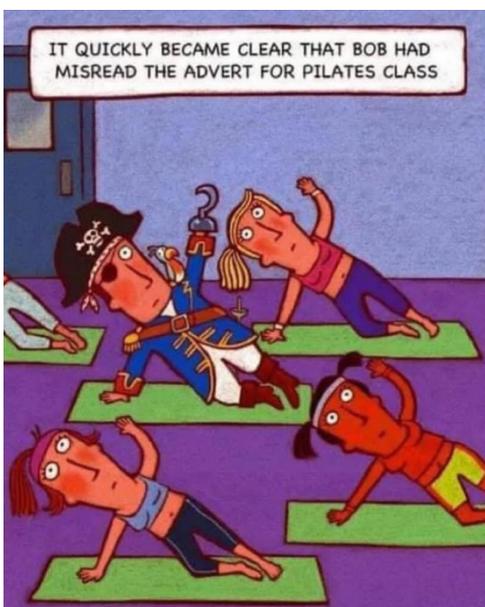
setting up a standing order to their bank account – sort code: 40-52-40/Account Code:00092873

contacting hello@justdropin.co.uk for more information on how you can help this worthy charity

And importantly, we can all add JDI to our own Prayer Lists – many thanks



Vicky and Gordon Darlington



Another contribution
from Kitey.

Keep them coming!

How to Contact the Office

Please be careful to use the correct email address for the purpose of your message.

- For the **newsletter**: stmikesnotices@gmail.com
- For **bookings, building maintenance**: office@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk
- For **service details, rotas, anything else**: clergypa@maccteam.org.uk

These email addresses will be accessed at least once per week, but not every day, so don’t expect an instant response.

The office phone will also be accessed at least once each week.



Week 2: the Munro Camellia is now starting to bloom!



Digital Traidcraft Stall

This year you can get Fairtrade items delivered to you - including Easter eggs.

Here's a link to the new Spring Traidcraft catalogue: <https://bit.ly/3pu9VOF> Or go to traidcraftshop.co.uk for a searchable catalogue.

You can email your orders to karen.downard@ntlworld.com and she will order for you and deliver to your doorstep. This will save you the delivery charge. Karen has many items in stock already.

Payment can be made through online banking or by debit / credit card using Karen's card machine.

Last week's newsletter also came with a PDF of Karen's full stock and price list.

 **THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND** Diocese of Chester
If you wish to read the latest **Diocesan e-Bulletin (4th March)** please click [here](#)



News from Foxhill

We are praying for you, your ministry, parish, school (especially as they welcome children back this week) and your community.

Prayer Opportunity Appointment of new Bishops

We are also praying for the appointment of the next Bishops of Stockport and Birkenhead.

We will be gathering on Zoom on Saturday 13th at 9.30am to pray for the appointment process. Please find attached with this newsletter an order of service for the gathering. If you are unable to join us on Zoom please use the order of service in your private prayer time. It would be great if you could join us on Saturday and if you could notify people of this gathering. You can join using the link below:

Topic: Prayer Meeting
Time: Mar 13, 2021 09:30 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87645767656?pwd=SGV2MINIUUEE3RWZzZXBCMHpyVHZWUT09>

Dial by your location
0203 901 7895 United Kingdom
Meeting ID: 876 4576 7656
Passcode: 785578

Keep safe and well,

Jonathon Green (Revd).
Director
Foxhill House and Woodlands



Daily Compline throughout Lent

From 17th February (Ash Wednesday) until 3rd April (Holy Saturday), a team of volunteers will lead Night Prayer on Zoom from 8.30pm. Do consider joining them if you can. Afterwards many people will

quietly leave, though some may wish to stay on for a brief catch-up with others, but the meeting will close automatically just after 9pm - so definitely no late-night chat!

Join Zoom Meeting by clicking on this link or copy and paste it into your web-browser

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?pwd=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZoVXdaZz09>

To join Night Prayer on Zoom:
Topic: Night Prayer
Meeting ID: 756 7694 7476
Passcode: compline

Please join a minute or two before 8.30pm for a prompt start. Your microphone will be muted on arrival; please keep it so until after Night Prayer.

Myanmar

A personal reflection from Lynne Spedding

Many of you already know that in 2013 Paul and I spent 14 weeks in Myanmar doing voluntary work in a Buddhist Monastic School in Mandalay. We found the people exceptionally lovely – warm, friendly, helpful, always smiling.



The view from our room over Mandalay at sunset

Of course, as is the case with most voluntary work, we gained far more than we gave. The experiences we enjoyed, the “different reality” of Burmese culture and lifestyle, the new perspective on our own lives – all these were very special to us.

Our students were delightful: ranging in age from about 16 to early 20s, their desire to learn, their enthusiasm, and their endless positivity were a joy. Their lives were very poor materially but their warmth, positivity and laughter shone a harsh light on our own wealthier and far more material way of living.

We were in Myanmar at a time when the country seemed to be “opening up”. Elections had been called for the following year and there was definite optimism in the air.

We had chosen to do this voluntary work in the country for two reasons: one was that our daughter had spent some time there and spoke so positively of her experience, and the other that we wanted to go somewhere which had been pretty well closed to Western culture for a long time.

We were apprehensive about the military regime and our own security but, in fact, rarely even saw a soldier. Our students were able to discuss politics with us openly and were all hopeful for and articulate about democracy. I taught our class of potential college students English, and our programme included some literature: one book we studied was Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. Imagine the discussions we had about this political satire!



I’m sure you understand why I have been motivated to write something now, given the ghastly news from Myanmar over the last few weeks and the escalating brutality of the military against its own people.

One of our students, Shar Mawe, wearing the traditional “thanaka” on her face

We know that democracy is itself a flawed political system: as Churchill commented on 11th November 1947, ‘Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time....’

No regime can possibly justify the torture and killing of its own citizens. We have no idea whether our former students are alive and well, but we do know that there are thousands upon thousands of extremely brave people in the country willing to risk their lives to defend their recently acquired relative freedom and new-found rights: rights and freedoms we really do take for granted. Would I do the same? I recognise that I am way too comfortable in my life, too complacent about my many privileges, and that I complain mainly about minor inconveniences.

So now, in Lent, in a global pandemic, and with the collapse of their hopes and aspirations, I am forced to reflect, and to pray for our former students, for the magnificent work of the school at which we worked, and for the country of Myanmar as a whole. What a broken world we live in – and yet, how resilient, brave and noble are so many.



Paul celebrates his 60th birthday with one of his classes



A History of St Michael's (cont'd)

In previous articles we have covered some of the history of the early days of St Michael's from around 1220 to around 1730. To continue...



St Michael's Font

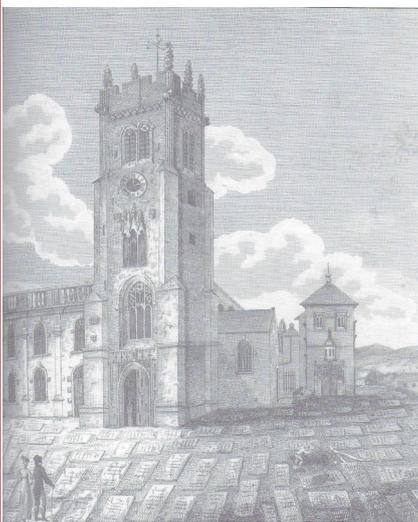
Although some internal improvements were made, for instance the construction of a new ornate font, it became clear during the 1730s that a major rebuild of the Church was necessary. The building was too small and was in increasingly bad repair.

Architectural surveys of the building were made in 1737. This led to a petition being made to Chester for the "faculty" necessary to allow major alterations to the church building – in fact this is very much the same process as would have to be carried out now!

Funding was also required and permission was granted to invite charitable support for the building work, which it was estimated would cost around £1,200.

Contributions were sought from local people, and from "well-disposed Christians" in parishes throughout England. This was not completely successful, and a loan had to be taken out so that the work could begin.

The plan was to rebuild most of the church, but shortage of funds led to some shortcuts in building methods and it was found in the nineteenth century that the pillars in the east end of the church had inadequate foundations and that the roof had been constructed out of unsatisfactory recycled materials.



St Michael's Church, with medieval pinnacles, around 1820

The spire was removed but the oldest parts of our current building, including the Savage and Legh Chapels, were not affected.

During the building work, services were held in the adjacent Town Hall, just as they were in 2003 and 2004 when the most recent reordering of the Church took place.

The new church building was in the classical style, following designs created by Christopher Wren,

and was unlike the Victorian gothic which we see today.

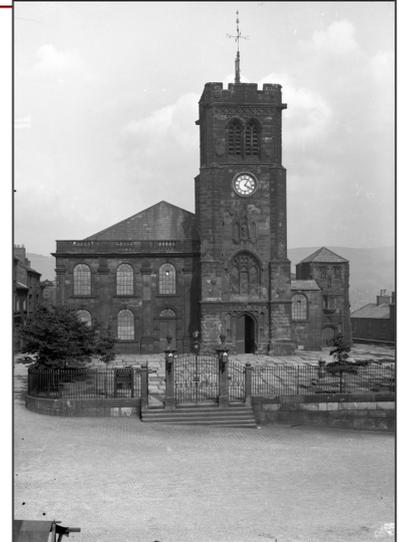
Whereas the Catholic tradition had stressed the mystical and ritual nature of the Mass, Protestantism emphasised the importance of congregation participation and teaching via sermons: the idea was to allow as many people as possible to see and hear the preacher clearly.

As many seats as possible were installed on two floors and large plain-glass windows were incorporated. The building work was completed by 1741 and the Church, known since its foundation in the 13th century as All Saints', was re-dedicated to St Michael, as is still the case today.

The reason for the choice of St Michael as patron saint is not clear, but may be linked to its lofty position overlooking the Bollin – one of St Michael's roles is as protector of high places.

Although well-received when it was constructed, the new building was not well thought of by 19th century writers and was described as a "bungling specimen of churchwardens' architecture".

Inevitably, further changes would be called for.



St Michael's Church (photograph) as it looked towards the late 1800s

This article is based on material Jane Laughton's book **The Church in the Market Place** (published 2003, ISBN 0-9544044-0-8)

Jane generously allowed us to use material from her book before her death in 2017.

St Michael's Church



Join us for
Sunday Worship



St Michael's Worship 14th March 2021

Mothering Sunday

Fourth Sunday of Lent

**ONE service this week at 10am:
from home on Zoom**

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

Service Leader: Rachel Mayers

Talk: Mike Strutt

Reading: John 3:14-21

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 House Group

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 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.

This week we have started the Bible Course.

 Email any [prayer requests](#) here

Compline in Lent

When? 8.30 pm daily, during Lent

Join Zoom Meeting [here](#)

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 