ST MIKE'S NEWS

ISSUE 40 20TH DECEMBER 2020

A newsletter brought to you during Covid-19

Church Together Apart

@stmikesmacclesfield www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk Follow us on Instagram

Open Door

FOURTH SUNDAY OF Advent

Peace HOPE LOVE Joy

Our Church School: Bollinbrook

Mary and Joseph visited our church school this week. They met Ava and Sabin, Headgirl and Headboy with class teacher Miss Corker and Headteacher, Lynne LeMarinel.

Their prayer for our town is to bring a message of hope and light this Christmas time and for the gift of Jesus to be taken into every home.

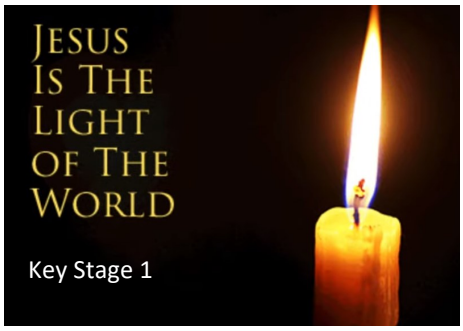
As they are unable to come into St Michael's for their Christmas service this year, they have recorded two special messages of hope and light for everyone this Christmas time. Martin has also recorded a special message for them too.

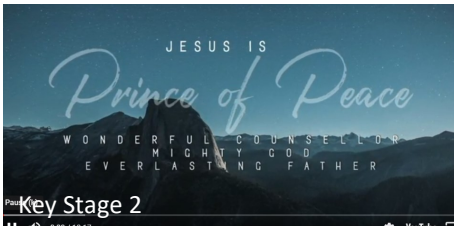
Click on the images to watch them. Each child was also given a battery operated tea light to take home and join in prayer at 7pm on Wednesday 16th December. They were encouraged to pray for their friends and family and for our town.

We pray for our whole school community. We give thanks for the commitment and dedication the staff have shown to keeping learning going in the pandemic and we pray for rest and relaxation for everyone over the holiday period.

May all your families be blessed with the light, love and hope of Jesus this Christmas time and beyond.

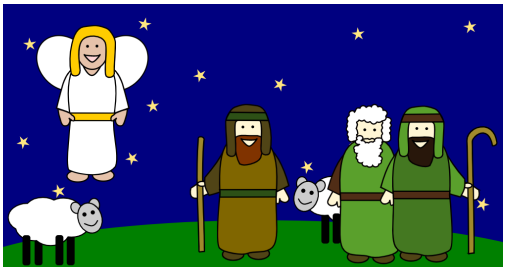
Merry Christmas from our School to your Home





This Sunday

Come dressed up as an angel or shepherd to the Virtual Nativity. This is particularly for those joining from home by Zoom who will be taking part in the Nativity story. If you are coming into church for the service you are equally welcome to 'don' your teatowel and come as a shepherd or find some tinsel and come as an angel.

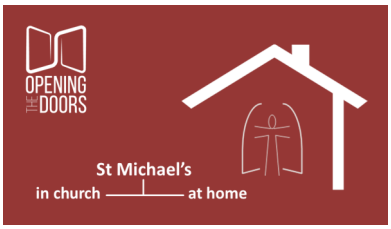


Join us for

Sunday Worship

St Michael's Worship 20th December 2020
Fourth Sunday of Advent
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: Catherine Stephens: A Virtual Nativity
Talk: Mike Strutt
Reading: Luke 1:26-38

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 and Family Time Sheet here
Resources for children: click here
(or printed with your hard copy newsletter)

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Wednesday Morning Discussion
11.00am to 12 noon

Join Zoom meeting here

Meeting ID: 326 496 3258
Passcode: 01625

Apologies to those who had problems entering last week. Please use the link here from now on. Tricia

Monday House Group:

When? 7.30pm til 9pm Monday evenings

We meet up again Monday 11th January 2021. For more information contact Martin by email or 01625 426110

Thursday Homegroup

We meet via Zoom at 7.30pm. During Advent we shall be discussing an Advent study book. 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

9.10am to 9.40am Savage Chapel every Friday.

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

DONATE

Comfort and Joy

The daily reflections for each day from Christmas Day to 2 January feature contributions from **Kate Bottley, Jonathan Bryan, Bob Chilcott, Martha Collison, Stephen Cottrell, Guli Francis-Dehqani, Chine McDonald, Sally Phillips and Justin Welby**. They will be made available freely via audio, smart speaker, as well as via app and email formats with accompanying prayer activities for children and families. Click here to sign up for the reflections.

National Online Services

- **22 December 9:00am** - Worship at Home: A service of Lessons and Carols with Christian Aid
- **24 December 11:30pm** - Worship at Home: Midnight Mass with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Dover
- **27 December 9:00am** - Worship at Home for the First Sunday of Christmas with Church Army
- **31 December 9:00am** - Worship at Home: A service with the Archbishop of York on New Year's Eve
- **3 January 9:00am** - Worship at Home for Epiphany with Embrace the Middle East

Available to view here

Newsletters & Office Over Christmas

The next newsletter will reach you by Christmas Eve. This will be a shorter than usual.

Sue is then taking a break over Christmas so the next issue will be Friday 8th Jan.

All the details for the service on 3rd January will be in the Christmas issue.

The Church Office will be manned in a very limited way between Christmas and New Year. Sue back 5th Jan.

There is no service on Sunday 27th December but church will be open for private prayer 9.45am to midday.

TV & Radio

Christmas Eve

BBC1 Midnight Mass from Clifton Cathedral (RC Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul in Bristol) 11.45pm

BBC Radio 4 11.30pm Midnight Mass from Manchester Cathedral

Christmas Day

BBC1 Christmas Day Service 10am

BBC Radio 4 Christmas Service 9am

Do you still use any of these words?

Christmas Greetings from within our Church Family

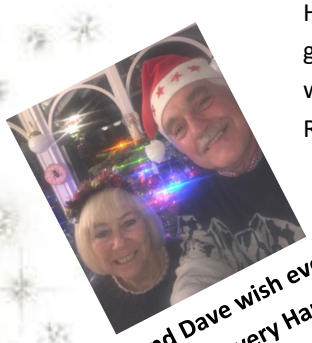
Carol, Eleanor and Dominic Riesen wish all the church family a happy and peaceful Christmas and hopefully a joyous New Year.

Wishing all our wonderful friends at St Michael's a blessed, peaceful and joyful Christmas. We look forward to seeing you all in person SOON!

To all at St Michael's Happy Christmas and good health in 2021 with love Cynthia and Ralph Cole

Garrod and Hilary Halliwell wish all our friends at church a very Happy and healthy Christmas

Greetings and Peace to all this Christmas time. Ruth Parker



Mo and Dave wish everyone at St. Mike's a very Happy Christmas!

Happy Christmas and a much better New Year to all who know me at St Michael's and beyond…

To all our Friends at St Michaels - thank you for all your love and support shown to us throughout the year and wishing you all a Peaceful and Joyful Christmas. Take care and look after yourselves! Love Vicky & Gordon

Have a peaceful Christmas and New Year. Rosemary & Bland Tomkinson

Enid and Tony wish all our friends at church a very happy Christmas and a safe and happy New Year

Merry Christmas

Wishing all the Church Family a Blessed, Happy and Healthy Christmas. Anne & Dek Kite

Our love and prayers for God's blessing this Christmas from Catherine & Martin xxx

Happy Christmas to all at St Michael's with love and best wishes from Karen & Arthur

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year to everyone Best Wishes Sandie

Christmas at St Michael's

A waiting list is now in operation for these services. If you would like to be added to the waiting list please email Paul Simms or call on 01625 422655. Or choose to watch them from home— see details below.

Livestreamed Carols by Candlelight

from 5.30pm Sunday 20th December

If you didn't manage to get tickets you can still join Carols by Candlelight live from home at 5.30pm or at a later time over the Christmas period to suit you.
Click here to view (not available until 5.30pm 20th December)

Watch the Crib Service live at 4.00pm Christmas Eve

from home or at a later time over the Christmas period to suit you.
Click here to view.

Christmas Day

On Christmas Day we will have an online gathering on Zoom leading into a 'Sharing of food and drink', **and** a separate service in the building leading into Holy Communion.

So, on Zoom we invite all participants to have something ready to eat and drink - perhaps a biscuit, or a piece of bread or toast, and a glass or mug of water, juice, tea, etc. At the relevant point the leader will recall Jesus sharing food and drink with his followers, and invite us to do the same whilst focusing on God's love for each of us.

In the building I will pray the prayer of consecration (the 'epiclesis') over Communion wafers and a chalice. The congregation will be invited to receive communion – in one kind only (ie. the wafer) – which will be distributed to people in their seats (to reduce movement of people).

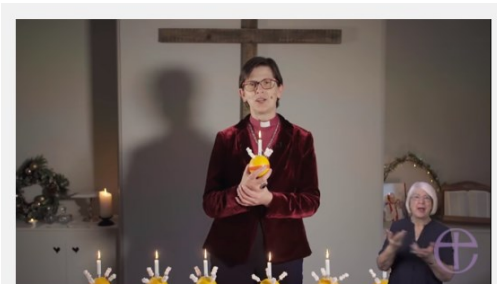
[As you can imagine there has to be strict hygiene rules regarding this:- handling of the wafers will be kept to a minimum, and hand sanitiser will be used both before and after the distribution. *We encourage congregation members to bring and use their own at this point in the service too.* Face coverings will need to be worn by both the minister and those receiving, removing the covering only after the minister has moved away.]

Whichever Christmas Day service you choose to join, I pray that your experience of sharing food and drink/Holy Communion with the church family will be special for you as we celebrate our Lord's birth.

Mark

Tickets still available for Christmas Day - click on Christmas Day image

It has been agreed that we need to maintain only **two** empty seats between ourselves/our bubble and the next person during services in church, rather than the three empty chairs we have implemented so far. The rule of three empty chairs was put in place following the first lockdown as added security for everyone, but as we are all wearing masks and not singing, two empty seats is fine.



Click on the image to view the national online Christingle Service from last Sunday 13th December

A Thought Spared?

Where do the squirrels hide when winter comes and all is cold?
A frozen lake with trees beside conceals their stores of treasured gold.
The autumn scurry long since past, each furry tail protects its host from winter storms and icy blast.
And figures passing by like ghosts in hooded coats and muffled wraps,
Are not aware of tiny forms which sleep until the winter's lapsed.
How many in the spring will wake, or being roused from sleep,
Will ventures forth, a feast to find, and having ate effect retreat?

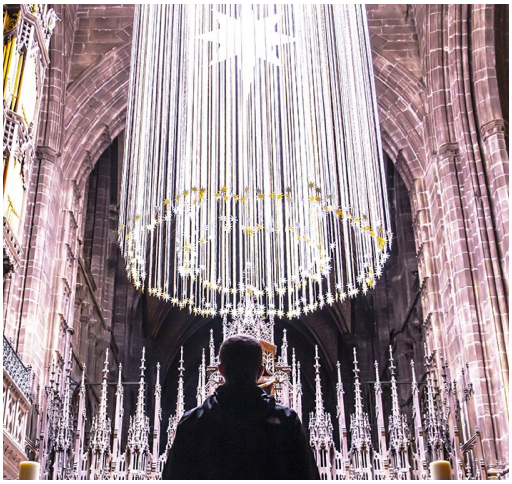
We human forms in cosy beds, that linger when the time arrives
To lift from pillow sleepy heads, give little thought to what survives.
A fearsome night, a passing gale, is often missed in dreams uncanny,
But what of those who somehow fail to find a nook or welcomed cranny?
Those on the street, or lost at sea, all anxious for a better dawn,
Whilst we all drink our cups of tea, and put on clothes that keep us warm.
So few can say they spare a thought for what survives the winter's wrath,
They've paid their fee, as least they hope, to keep them out of nature's trough.
Dorothy Bentley Smith.

An invitation to discover how you can make a difference for Christ in the everyday. Join with others for an interactive eight-session course on Zoom Tuesday evenings 7.30pm to 8.30pm starting 5th January.

You are invited to join others on an exciting adventure thinking about how God can, and does, work in and through us, in our everyday lives, Monday to Saturday as well as Sundays. Wherever you find yourself at work, rest or play: the factory or the sanctuary, the school gates or the supermarket, the boardroom or the sitting room, the coffee house or the gym, the "Fruitfulness on the Frontline" course opens up a host of possibilities to make a difference for Christ, among the people we meet in the places we find ourselves day by day.
Each of the eight sessions will include a short film, the opportunity to share encouraging conversations about our experiences and how God calls us to make a difference where we are already placed. In addition to exploring our own calling to be "fruitful", the final session will also consider how we might take our learning and this course back in our own parish

Whoever and wherever we are, we each have a unique calling to serve God in our everyday lives. Perhaps you feel called to be a teacher or a vicar; or perhaps a lay chaplain or Reader? Maybe it's none of these things.
Whatever sense of call you are experiencing, we're here to help you. Called to Serve is an invitation to explore God's call on your life. Support, guidance, and prayer are all part of the process and will be readily available to you, and asking questions, no matter how small, is encouraged.

To register for either course (both are free), click on the image.



Such a close run thing. Marek and Connor M - 30mins 10s Duncan, Connor S and James - 30mins 20s. Well done to everyone who took part and for thank s to the Youth Group Leader: Jonny, James and Catherine for organising this and all the other Youth Group activities online throughout this year.

A magnificent art installation called 'Starry Starry Night ' by Peter Walker, designed as a stunning visual interpretation of the Star of Bethlehem is now open to the public at Chester Cathedral.
The installation depicts a constellation of stars that are individually suspended from hundreds of gold and silver ribbons, creating a beautiful and moving installation within the crossing of the Cathedral.
Starry Starry Night symbolises the night sky with the one star, the star of Bethlehem, suspended in the centre of the installation as a symbol of hope and light for all to see. This is beautifully and gently lit, and can be found at the centre of the Cathedral during the Christmas Tree Festival. The central star is between hundreds of others, creating a constellation of much smaller stars around it.

Satsuki-Mei Opens New Hotel

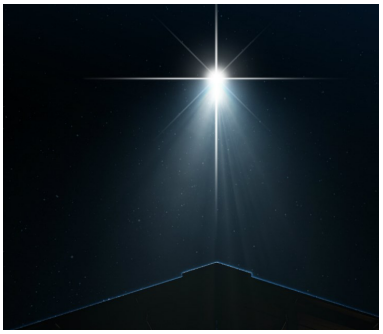
Satsuki-Mei was asked to open the new hotel at The Tytherington Club after she wrote a letter to the manager about the new venture. She told him how her and her friends have made their own hotel where they play at taking bookings, checking guests in, run a bar and spa! She was even made a hotel inspector and given her own stay so she can test out the new facilities!
Gemma

Star of Bethlehem

As 2020 comes to a close, the solar system has decided to grace us with a cosmic Christmas miracle that hasn't been witnessed in nearly 800 years. On 21 December Jupiter and Saturn will align so closely in the night sky that they'll almost appear to collide from our vantage point here on Earth, creating a radiant point of light often referred to as the "Star of Bethlehem" or the "Christmas Star."

You'd have to go all the way back to just before dawn on 4 March, 1226, to see a closer alignment between these objects visible in the night sky.

To catch a glimpse of the phenomenon for yourself, make sure you have a clear view to the southwest about 45 minutes after sunset. The planets will be at their closest on 21 December but the "Christmas Star" will be visible from anywhere on Earth for about one hour after sunset in the northern hemisphere for the entire fourth week of December. The next Great Conjunction this close won't happen until 15 March, 2080, so be sure to take a peek out your window.



Tributes left on Mill Street to John Whyte who died last week. His funeral is on 31st December.

Sue bids farewell to the Church Office

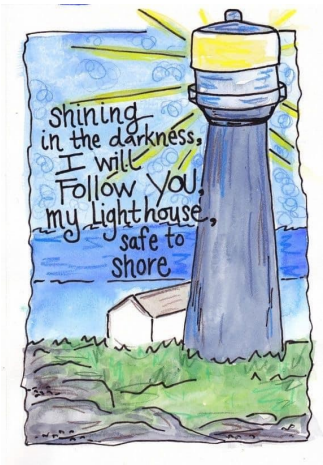
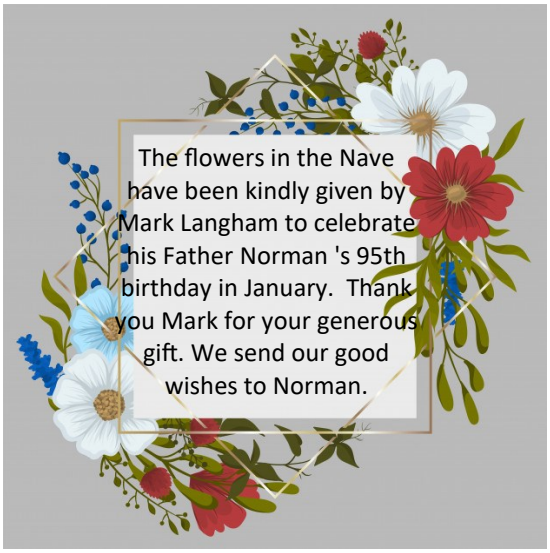
It is with much sadness that I announce today that Sue Reid will be leaving her roles with us within the Macclesfield Team – both as PA to the Clergy and as Church Co-ordinator at St Michael's. However my sadness is tempered with sheer delight that Sue has been offered a full-time position as Bereavement Officer at Wythenshawe Hospital. I am sure she will be wonderful in this new role, which she'll be taking early in the New Year.

I am sure many of you will be both surprised and sad to see Sue leave. She has been a very reliable and committed presence in the Church Office for over eleven years, and has been a great asset, not only to ourselves but to the churches in Macclesfield generally – indeed to many individuals and organisations in the town, including the Town Council and local Funeral Directors.

In her new role, which she is anticipated to start sometime in February, Sue will be providing bereavement care following the death of an adult anywhere in the hospital. As one of two full-time Bereavement Officers working alongside the Bereavement Manager and Medical Examiner, her role will also involve providing expertise on bereavement issues to clinical, clerical and managerial staff, and training nursing students on placements, medical students and junior doctors on data regarding deaths.

I trust you will join me in expressing our congratulations to Sue on her appointment and pray for her as she lets go of work in the Team office. Pray too for the 'different frontline' (see page 6) where she'll be working.

Next month we will hear more from Sue herself about what her new job entails, as well as reflections on her last 11½ years working in the Church Office, including (gulp!) those she's closely worked with.

Mark

Not quite stained glass - but the folk in our streets have set up a rota for displaying an Advent Window. Our contribution was timed for 9 December. *Ed: it's beautiful—thank you Bland & Rosemary Tomkinson*