



@stmikesmacclesfield



www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk



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Instagram



Here is part of my message from last Sunday. Its origins are in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

In these **unprecedented** times, with the experience of lockdown, physical distancing, shielding and self-isolating, employees furloughed and businesses failing, to name just a few, there are **so many** concerns overwhelming us.

SO many concerns questioning our ability to cope. Who knows what tomorrow will bring, let alone next week or next month?

When will we be able to meet up with family members once more? How will our children/grandchildren/parents have coped with the loneliness of solitary living, or the pressure of living in confined quarters with others?

International uncertainty – with Brexit for starters; as well as the ongoing concern over climate change and global warming.

And then there's the question of who is going to pay for the **unprecedented** levels of government borrowing that's keeping our nation going during the pandemic?

These may NOT be signs of the end of the age... but in some ways I wish they were! "Maranatha! – Come Lord!"

In his letter to the Christians in Thessalonica, Paul writes about the return of the Lord Jesus – what is called 'The Day of the Lord'.

If you search online you'll find it said that God is **so keen** for us **not to be afraid** that the phrases "Do not fear" or "don't be afraid" occur 365 times in the Bible – one for every day of the year!

Even if you add in phrases such as 'trust in the Lord!', I'm not sure about the exact number, but it's true there are many, many verses to encourage us. Time and again in Scripture we hear the Lord say, directly or via a messenger: Do not be afraid! Do not fear!

- To Abram, to Isaac, to Moses, to Joshua, to Elijah: "Don't be afraid; I, the Lord your God, will be with you."

- To the People of God via the prophet Isaiah: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.' [Isa.43:1]

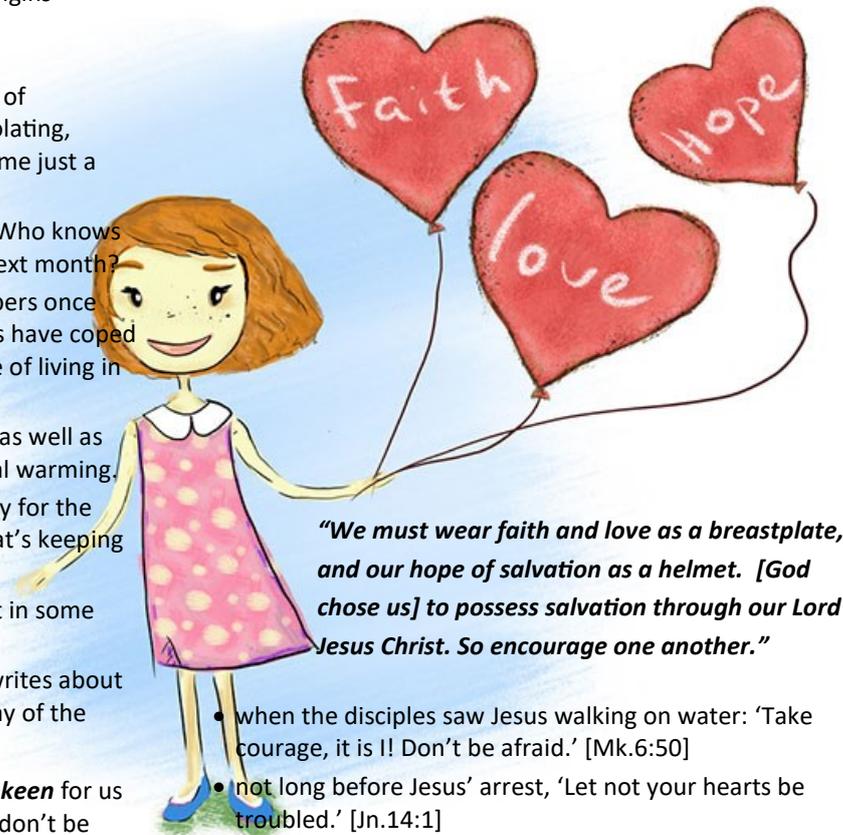
- The psalmist agrees: 'I may walk through valleys as dark as death, but I won't be afraid. Why? Because You [Lord] are with me.' [Ps.23:4], and "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?" [Ps.27:1]

Over Christmas we'll remember the words of the angel Gabriel ..

- ◆ to Mary: "Don't be afraid Mary; you have found favour with God." [Lk.1:30]
- ◆ in a dream to Joseph: "Don't be afraid to take Mary to be your wife." [Mt.1:20]
- ◆ to shepherds in the fields: "Don't be afraid. I bring good news of great joy! [Lk.2:10]

And words which Jesus himself said:

- ◆ to Simon (after the miraculous catch of fish): 'Don't be afraid Simon; from now on you will fish for people.' [Lk.5:10]



- when the disciples saw Jesus walking on water: 'Take courage, it is I! Don't be afraid.' [Mk.6:50]
- not long before Jesus' arrest, 'Let not your hearts be troubled.' [Jn.14:1]
- to the frightened women at the empty tomb: 'Don't be alarmed' [Mt.28:5]
- to the disciples in the locked room: 'Peace be with you!' [Jn.20:19 & 26]

And Paul, imprisoned for his faith, wrote 'Don't be anxious about anything, but .. present your requests to God. And the peace of God .. will guard your hearts and your minds.' [Phil.4:6-7]

It seems that freedom from fear, anxiety and worry for us is a high priority for God!

I guess in a way that's what Paul was saying when he wrote to the Church in Thessalonica.

'Look! Know whose you are!

You belong to the Lord!'

For those who have chosen to follow Jesus, .. to **you** who declare that Jesus is God, you **have** passed from darkness to light!

These Thessalonian Christians were confronted by the sort of life and death issues we too are facing. They were wondering if they (and we) would be found wanting when judgement day comes.

Paul reminds them (and us) of the three eternal anchors for the soul: Faith, Love and Hope.

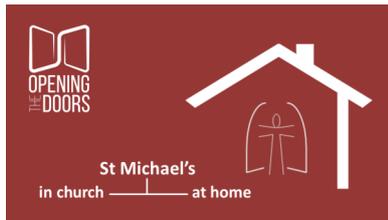
"We must wear **faith** and **love** as a breastplate, and our **hope of salvation** as a helmet." – v.11

Join us for

Sunday Worship

St Michael's Worship 22nd November 2020
First Sunday Before Advent
ONE service this week at 10am: on Zoom

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



Service Leader: Heike Werner
Talk: Lynne Spedding
Reading: Matthew 25: 31-46

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



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

HOUSE GROUPS

Monday House Group:

When? 7.30pm til 9pm Monday evenings

Join Zoom Meeting [here](#)

Meeting ID: 910 4838 5228

Password: Monday

Last session Mon 23rd Nov. Thereafter, we will be separating out to different groupings to study the various Advent books we've all chosen. 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.

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)

Faith in God is our primary form of defence and protection. Choosing to 'believe and trust in God' – even when you don't feel full of faith – is like putting on the soldier's armour.

"God, I trust in You" **is** a statement of faith. It protects us against the assault of the Enemy on our mind.

Love too! Love for God .. and love for other people.

When we're stressed, our fuse is shorter. Loving others is harder when we're anxious, isn't it? They annoy us. They say things that upset or offend us. So again, **choosing to love** is a defiant act .. if not always an easy one!

Is there someone, perhaps at church, who, deep down, you know you need to love? How can you show this person you care?

Thirdly, **Hope** .. "Wear the hope of salvation as a helmet."

Christian Hope is the confident expectation – the assurance – of God's saving power by Jesus's death and resurrection.

I don't know which word you might choose as your word of the year (ref. Collins Dictionary word of the year for 2020), but can I encourage you always to choose Faith, choose Love, and choose Hope?

And may the peace of God guard your hearts and your minds.

Bless you all.

Mark

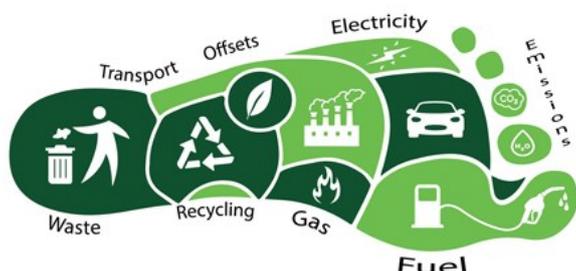
Praying for God's Creation

Please join with Tearfund, Christian Aid, and CAFOD, and Christians all over the world on Sunday 22nd November 2pm to mark a year until COP26 (the UN's climate talks in Glasgow); and to share a short online service of prayer and reflection for climate justice.

Sign up [here](#).

Have you calculated your carbon footprint yet?

And thanks to all those who have checked their carbon footprint [here](#) and let us know their results. But we need more! Please email your results to [David Mayers](#)



Baby News in the Simms Household

Ruth and Paul receive a parcel from their son Peter and his wife, Mary, in Canada which announces the happy news of a 3rd grandchild on the way.

Congratulations. Such happy news to share with us.



LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

The Church of England has published a landmark set of resources drawing together the Bible, theology, science and history with powerful real-life stories as it embarks on a [new process of discernment and decision-making](#) on questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

Watch a short clip (2 mins 20) from the Archbishop of Canterbury and York about this landmark project [here](#).

The product of three years' work by more than 40 people, *Living in Love and Faith* includes a 480-page book, a series of films and podcasts, a course and an online library of other publications in what is thought to be the most extensive work in this area by any faith group in the world.

Next steps

It is anticipated that the period of church-wide learning and engagement would take place during 2021. The House of Bishops would then bring the discernment and decision-making to a timely conclusion in 2022 which would then be put before General Synod.

The resources

[Living in Love and Faith Book](#)

[The Living in Love and Faith Learning Hub](#)



But we definitely heard shredding, not filing...

Then she said "If you mess up like this again, you'll be sacked!"

A day in the life of the Office Assistants this week



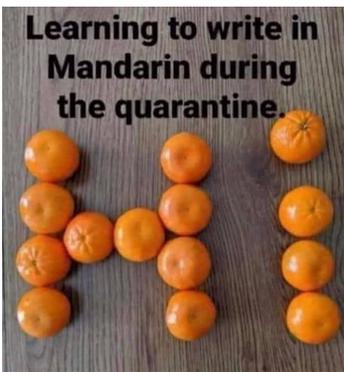
"Taking the One Ring to Mordor ain't really essential now is it?"



The dad has finally spoken!



This picture is real and was not edited, the stone is real, the trees are real, the soil is real and the sky is real. Now the only thing you have to do is to change your point of view, look at the picture upside down!



1. In which battle did Napoleon die?
His last one
2. Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?
At the bottom of the page
3. The Ravi River flows in which state?
Liquid state
4. What is the main reason for divorce?
MARRIAGE A+ for creativity

Donations to AV Project

SCAN ME



community

A big, strong circle of helping hands. There when you need to be heard, accepted, and loved.

Lockdown at the Budgetts

We retired people have to amuse ourselves somehow. We used to go out to explore places that we had not seen recently, or at all. Sadly we can't do this anymore. Who will rid us of this plague? When?

One thing that helps to pass the time is a jigsaw. As a boy David used to be given jigsaws but was never any good at them. The parents guided him through. Then he met Eve and she **loves** them. So belatedly, David had another try and *gradually* got the idea. Now sometimes we are competing: "I wanted to put that in." "Too bad, I thought of it first!" We usually do 1000 piece jigsaws. In David's family 100 was big, 1000 unimaginable. But he is learning the "tricks of the trade".

You have to be very careful with these great big puzzles, especially near the end. Recently Eve got up – and the jigsaw came up with her. Disaster!!! Fortunately it was not as bad as it looked. Not recommended though.

I wonder how much longer the jigsaw will be the most exciting part of the day?

Many thanks to Chris W, Garrod and Bernice for lending us their jigsaws.

David and Eve

Ed: And on Fridays they are busy delivering some of the newsletters for me, for which I am very grateful, along with Vicky Darlington, Ruth Parker and Cynthia & Ralph Cole. THANK YOU to our wonderful distributors.



India Direct Christmas Cards



As you may know, several members of St Michael's congregation support two children's homes in India run by India Direct. Please help to give one of the children a great Christmas. All you do is buy a Christmas card which comes with a stamped-addressed envelope. You sign it, post it and that's it. Each card costs £12 but this also pays for a present for the child, a new outfit and their special Christmas dinner – great value for your £12! Please contact Paul Spedding to buy a card(s) [Email](#) or phone 01625 614819/07747 622765). **I will deliver the card(s) to you.** You must post your card(s) by 9 December to ensure it gets to India on time. Please also gift-aid the amount if you can - forms available.

Disability & Faith



This week marks 25 years since the UK's Disability Discrimination Act was passed in parliament. To mark the occasion, the diocesan disability forum has recorded a series of interviews with disabled Christians with neuro-diverse disabilities, physical disabilities and hidden disabilities. Click on the image above to watch the first in the series.



0800 804 8044
DailyHOPE
A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers

Comfort and Joy



As first mentioned last week, we invite and encourage you to tell us what has brought you comfort and joy during the pandemic this year. We have sourced some plain white postcards, measuring 6x4" (152x102mm) for this purpose. We'd like each person in your household to respond to this in their own way. You can draw, paint, stick a photograph on, write a poem or story, express random words, write a prayer, a Bible verse... the possibilities are endless. It need only be this size as it's not intended that this should take you huge amounts of time. If you would like to make more of it than that, we will not discourage you. Please respond in a way that suits you best. All we ask it that it captures what has brought you comfort and joy in the pandemic since March.

This can be anonymous or you can put your name on the front or the back. Once complete, we would like to display them in church so if you are able to drop it off, I will leave a box in the Welcome Area for you to put them in. If you're unable to get yours to church for any reason, please get in touch via the Office and we can arrange collection from you.

PS: In true Blue Peter style,.. here's one I made earlier...!! *Sue Reid*
 Blank cards are available to collect from the counter in the Welcome Area and a blank template is attached to the email for you to cut out at home and use, or we can deliver cards to you. Contact the Office.



Advent Reading

Don't forget to take a look at the books recommended for Advent reading featured on page 8 of last week's newsletter. If you'd like the opportunity to chat with others to discuss the Advent book you've selected, please contact either Martin, Tricia, Rachel or the Office.

Karen Gedd's tall freestanding lamp by the piano is missing. Does anyone know where it might be? Thank you.

Meet Mischa

Bernice's new feline companion

David had arranged to call on Bernice to take a "purrfect" photo of the new resident.

One look at that masked and terrifying male figure had Mischa in a total panic, flying around the conservatory with Bernice in pursuit.

Thirty minutes later B. had had the perfect workout, squats, knee bends, toe touching etc. etc. and David (NOT Bailey) had these not-so-perfect pictures.

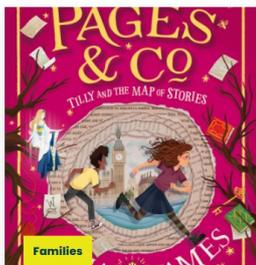
I was watching and can confirm that Mischa is an all grey beauty and wears a smart red collar. We left Bernice in a collapsed state, panting and reaching for the brandy bottle."

From our roving reporter and Pet Correspondent

Eve Budgett

Photo credit: David (not Bailey!) Budgett





Families

Fantasy Adventure Stories – and Me!

A chat and Q&A with three fabulous authors of fantasy fiction for 9+ year olds: Francesca Gibbons, Anna Janes & Dominique Valente tell us about themselves and their stories. Grab your chance to ask the authors a question! For all the family.



Performance

Winter Songs and Stories with Nick Hennessey

As the sun goes down and night falls, enjoy the music of the harp, songs and stories from the internationally acclaimed storyteller and musician



Families

Sounds of our Stories 1 with Jan Blake

You'll make the sounds that inhabit storyteller Jan Blake's magical stories in this double bill of workshop and performance.



Talk

My Self-publishing Journey: Janey de Nordwall

First-time author of a wonderful new memoir, Janey de Nordwall shares the dos and don'ts of self-publishing. Essential for anyone thinking about embarking on this exciting literary journey.



In conversation

Elizabeth Garner & Dr Tim Campbell Green Objects Tell Stories

A fascinating evening of readings, discussion and demonstration. Stories will be told and objects will be shared.

Macclesfield LIT Festival Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd November 2020



Check in at @LITmacclesfield on FaceBook for details of how to watch these events live on YouTube.

More information and the full programme can be found [here](#). Booking required for some of these.

Sat 21 Nov, 2-3pm

My Self-publishing Journey: Janey de Nordwall FREE

First-time author of a wonderful new memoir, Janey shares essential tips about how to self-publish your very own book. Essential for anyone thinking about embarking on this journey.

Sat 21 Nov, 3.30-4.30pm & Sun 22 Nov, 3-4pm

Jan Blake – Sounds of our Stories FREE

Join Jan with for a story with sounds made by a live chorus of children.

Each day there's a new story to enjoy.

Sat 21 Nov, 5-6.15pm

Objects Tell Stories Elizabeth Garner & Dr Tim Campbell Green FREE

A fascinating evening of readings, discussion and demonstration with award-winning author Elizabeth Garner and archaeologist Dr Tim Campbell Green. Stories will be told and objects will be shared.

Sun 22 Nov, 1-2pm

Fantasy Adventure Stories – and me! FREE

Three children's authors of fantasy fiction for 9+ year-olds come together for an online chat especially for LIT. Francesca Gibbons (*A Clock of Stars: The Shadow Moth*), Anna Janes (*Pages & Co*) and Dominique Valente (*Starfell*) tell us what it's like to be an author and how they get their ideas.

Post your questions today on our FaceBook page @LITmacclesfield.

Sun 22 Nov, 4.30-5.30pm

Winter Songs and Stories with Nick Hennessey FREE

Remembering Service

If you missed the opportunity to see the online Remembering Service, which went live in October, Martin has now set up a screen at the back of the Worship Area (near the hymnbook stand) to be able to watch it. It's approx. 30 minutes long. View it Monday to Saturday 11am to 1pm. It will be there for two weeks.

Advent Window Trail



Macclesfield communities come together from all quarters to celebrate the season with gorgeous shop window designs revealed daily throughout December.

Shops, bars, restaurants, community organisations, cafés, churches and other businesses will either create their own displays, or work with local schools and Macclesfield artists Jacki Clark and Ralph McGaul to create a magical trail of window

displays on the theme of 'stories'. Each afternoon through December another window will be revealed.

Take time to explore the trail and support Macclesfield town centre this Christmas. A map is available showing all locations and dates.

Our St Michael's window (large office window) is opening its doors on Saturday 5th December. Catherine Stephens and Heather Smith are working on creating this.

Message in Lights: The Macclesfield Christmas Tree, Market Place

This Christmas, send a message to a loved one through the lights on Macclesfield's Christmas tree. In previous years, the people of Macclesfield have been invited to write messages to loved ones on paper stars which are hung on the Christmas tree in Market Place. This year, because of continuing restrictions around the pandemic, Macclesfield Town Council and the organisers of LIT have commissioned an artwork from Macclesfield-based art collective, IDST!, which will display messages on the tree's lights in the form of Morse code.

When people send a text message to a special phone number, their message will be turned into Morse code and will flash on a light bulb in their chosen colour. Messages will be transmitted to the world via the same light until the tree comes down in January. And every time people text #show to the phone number, all the other lights on the tree will disappear and your light will blink their message alone.

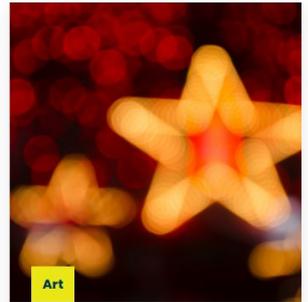
People can now send their messages to the Christmas tree by following the instructions below.

Please remember that you should only leave your house for necessary journeys or exercise. We're hoping that restrictions will be lifted on Wednesday 2 December and we can visit the Christmas tree safely again.

Your Message in Lights – a step-by-step guide

Create your message of no more than 60 characters including your name or your family name if you like.

- At the end of your message (in addition to the 60 character limit) let us know which colour of the rainbow you'd like for your light by including the colour with a hashtag e.g #red or #yellow etc.
- Send your message to **07840 148462** (*texts are charged at your standard mobile rate. Please dial carefully.)
- You'll receive a text confirming that we've received your message and that it's live on the tree going out in Morse code.
- Every time you text #show back to 07840 148462 all the other lights on the tree will extinguish and only your message will be displayed.
- You can send one message per phone, but you can change your message at any time. Just repeat the steps above.



Message in Lights – The Macclesfield Christmas Tree

Messages that celebrate and commemorate the lives and memories of our family and friends will blink out from the town's Christmas tree in this new and unique artwork.

**Friday 20th
November to
Sunday 3rd Jan
from dusk**



A Macclesfield-wide FaceBook group with over 1500 members called The Big Neighbourhood Winter Wonderland Trail in Macclesfield. Join it [here](#)

The Group's aim is to encourage people to decorate their windows this Christmas to spread some Christmas cheer. Lots of homes will no doubt have santas, reindeer and snowmen! Perhaps we could join in and help light up Macclesfield with God's LIGHT, HOPE and LOVE. You could use lights, candles, Bible verses, or anything else to share the story of Jesus' birth and God's LIGHT, HOPE and LOVE in the world. If you would like to join the Facebook group, they will then be able to upload your photos and spread the true meaning of Christmas. And don't forget to tag St Michael's FaceBook page (@stmikesmacclesfield) in your Facebook posts too, so we can share these images as well.

Pray for Our Nation during November 6pm each evening

Join with other Christians across the country to pray for our nation at 6pm throughout November. Pray for different groups each day. Below is the weekly prayer for the week ahead.

✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕
Lord Jesus Christ, in these dark and difficult days, we turn our hearts to you. In ages past, you have delivered our nation from disaster. Do it again, we pray. Give wisdom beyond human wisdom to our leaders. Give strength beyond human strength to the NHS and all our frontline workers. Give comfort beyond human comfort to the elderly and all who grieve. Lord Jesus Christ, in these dark and difficult days, turn your face towards us, have mercy upon us, and heal our land, we pray.
Amen.

PRAYER FOR OUR NATION
23-29 NOVEMBER

