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## "Going Back Better"

Sunday morning services from mid-September

A few months ago, a group of 11 people from the church family was asked to work together to look at how we might "Go Back Better" after all the pandemic restrictions on worship. It was felt that we had learned a lot over the last 18 months, and that many changes had been "forced" on us – some of which we didn't necessarily want to lose by reverting to "business as usual" when we return fully to worshipping in the building. One such benefit is that our two morning congregations (the 9.30 and 11.00 groups) have worked together well and have benefited from each other's styles and traditions.

So, the Going Back Better Group was established. Our aim was to agree a new service structure and pattern to better meet the needs of the whole church family, to be inclusive and provide an easy way in for newcomers. The GBB group is representative of the different experiences, "churchmanship" and preferences of the wider church family (see end for the \*names of those on the group). We did not always agree!

As Chair/Facilitator of this group I would like to thank every member for contributing fully, for being honest, creative, practical and most of all for being gracious in their compromises. I could say, facetiously, that everyone had to concede certain preferences and no-one got exactly what they would most like! But overall we do believe that what we have agreed is the best way forward. We sincerely hope that the wider church family will be similarly generous in their response to these changes.

Before you read on, please note that our one overriding message is that we should "taste and see" how this works in practice. None of it is set in stone and we will review and adapt as we learn what works well. We hope that you will be part of this.

Below is an outline of the service structure:

**There will be one morning service only.**

It will be called **Church Family Worship**.

Start time: **10.00**

Length: **45 minutes**

Service format

**Beforehand:** those with young children will be offered a toy bag as they come into the building and invited to sit at the front where there will be soft matting for the children and they will have a good view. There will be a designated area at the back (north side) for buggies. Music playing for 5-10 minutes before the service begins.

**10.00am:** Service starts (relaxed so that latecomers don't feel embarrassed) Worship begins with simple opening liturgy

Song/hymn

**Church family news:** people are invited to share any news they have. Items from the newsletter; celebrations; events; achievements; notices; banns.

**Church Calendar Clock** – moving the hand of the clock onto the appropriate Sunday of the liturgical year

Simple, brief liturgy

**Context setting for this service:** an activity of some kind – quiz; drama; practical activity; etc. – on the theme of the service

Collect and Lord's Prayer



Song/hymn

[**10.20:** At this point, on three Sundays per month the congregation splits and on one (or two in a five-Sunday month) it remains together (see "monthly service pattern" below). When it stays together, the service continues with appropriate liturgical language and age-inclusive talk, etc. When it divides, Roots and Godly Play participants leave for their Special Places for 25 minutes while nave worshippers hear the Word (Bible reading), and have talk/reflection, further liturgy, creed, intercessions.

**10.45** : Groups reassemble in the nave on those Sundays where the church family divides. Brief report from each group on "what we learned in our group today" – just one or two sentences]

Final hymn/song

Blessing

Tea/coffee and craft activities

Liturgy: accessible language (liturgies for the different services are being developed)



### Monthly service pattern

**1st Sunday:** Holy Communion for nave worshippers (Roots and Storytelling groups leave after 20 minutes).

**2nd Sunday:** Service of the Word. (Roots and Storytelling groups leave after 20 minutes).

**3rd Sunday:** Holy Communion – all stay together.

**4th Sunday:** Service of the Word. (Roots and Storytelling groups leave after 20 minutes).

[**5th Sunday:** Service of the Word. All stay together]

**Music** – music will be led mainly by the choir with piano/organ accompaniment, but the recently formed Church Worship Group will also sometimes lead singing (usually focusing on more contemporary songs/hymns) and of course we will continue with our wonderful Church Band on the 4th Sunday each month. We hope that other groups – for example the Youth Group – will also lead music on occasion.

The above is an abridged version of the information which has gone to the Church Council, which itself is an abridged version of our many discussions and ideas. I am sure it raises as many questions as it answers!

If you want more information or you would like to make comments or suggestions, please do so directly to Lynne Spedding (lynne.norbron@gmail.com / 01625 614819) or speak to any of the group members – names below.

There is nothing confidential about our deliberations and rationale – I just didn't want to overwhelm people with too much information here.

*\*Members of the GBB Group: Chris Bentley; Karen Gedd; Jonny Porter; Sue Reid; Gemma Shepherd-Etchells; Paul Simms; Lynne Spedding (facilitator); Martin and Catherine Stephens; Heike Werner; Judith Whittingham.*

*Lynne Spedding*

**25th July 2021**

**Eighth Sunday after Trinity**

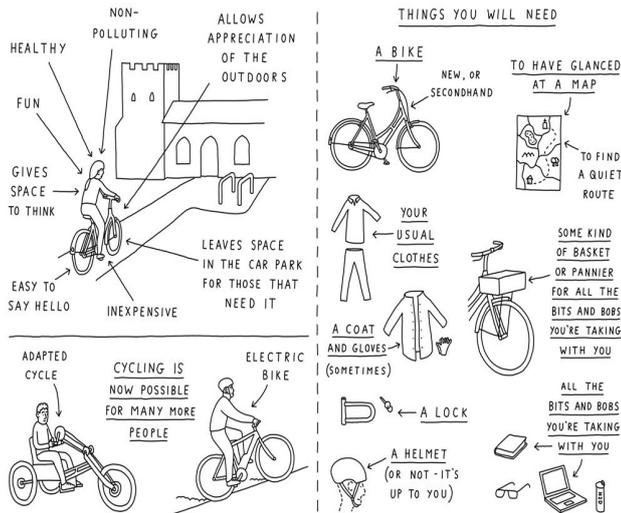
**Sunday Morning Worship**

**Leader:** Paul Simms

**Speaker:** Neil Brighton

**Bible Reading:** John 6:1-21

# CYCLING TO CHURCH



*"No one has ever become poor from giving."*

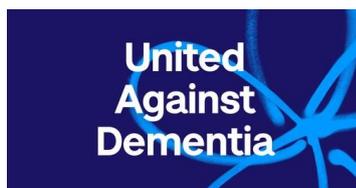
*- Anne Frank*



## Emily and Ben are taking on TREK26!

Many of you know Emily as she has grown up in the church family at St Michael's. Most of you will also be aware that she and Ben are getting married here on 4th September. Despite being in the midst of wedding preparations they are taking time out to do something for others. They are

going to be doing TREK 26 on 8th August. Please pray for them in their future life together but also in this venture and, if you feel able, support the Alzheimer's Society through the Just Giving page Emily has set up. <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/emily-bancroft...>



Those of you who know Martin and I will know of Auntie Betty who's

life was taken from her by this terrible illness and some of you have met my Dad who is also struggling with dementia and will be unable to attend the wedding. You know the love we share as a family and many of you too have been through the pain of loving someone through this disease.

So if you are able to spare a little or a lot, please donate! They are aiming to raise at least £300 each, so anything you can give will help them along the way and all money donated goes to the charity.

We know it won't instantly fix anything, but we hope the little we can do now will be a small piece of a much larger puzzle and might just make a difference to generations to come.

Thank you.

**Sallie and Martin Bancroft**

## Wednesday Morning Coffee and Chat



**Do you want to be healed? Or . Do you WANT to be healed?**

**John chapter 5. Verses 1- 18**

Well, this week's discussion really showed up the different characters in our little group. Having looked at the passage beforehand I had made up my mind about this man's character so when we started to share our thoughts it became obvious that others in the group were much more compassionate than me!! You will have to work it out for yourself, but here are a few thoughts. I have called this character Geoff – apologies to anyone reading this with the name Geoff.

Geoff had been 'paralyzed' for 38 years, was he lazy and lacking in hope or was he genuinely suffering from an awful condition? (Paralytic these days means drunk!)

Jesus spoke to Geoff and said " Do you want to be healed?" or did Jesus say" Do you WANT to be healed?", implying the opposite. Geoff answered with a tale of woe – was this just a ruse so that people would give him money? Or was Geoff genuine?

Jesus told Geoff to get up and walk and he did as he was told. Jesus didn't offer to carry him to the pool, he told the man to do it for himself, don't expect to be carried all the time. You may need it sometimes though.

Geoff didn't thank the man who had got him on his feet, he didn't even know the name of the man who had helped him Geoff, being a weak sort of person then blamed Jesus for telling him to break the law. Geoff didn't want to get into trouble with the authorities. At that point he went and found out the name of Jesus so that he could report back to the religious authorities – in other words he grassed Jesus up.

Now from the above comments you can see that I came to the conclusion that Geoff was a bit of a con artist who played on the compassion of others to help him through life. In my opinion he wasn't an honourable man and took the easy way out, using other people and blaming other people for his situation – a situation of his own making.

Of course, the lovely members of our group took the view that Geoff was in need of compassion and Jesus showed him that compassion.

In truth, we cannot know much about this actual character but what I can say is that there are nasty people around who take advantage of the goodness of others. But this doesn't stop Jesus from taking notice of them and offering a way out of their particular situation or sin. That is another thing to ponder on – what was this man's particular sin? Was it reading pornography? Frauding people out of their money? Was it sloth? We don't know. What we do know is that Jesus said if you keep on doing that thing you will make your life worse than it is now – so stop sinning.

Next week we will talk about another person who was healed by Jesus and we will see a different reaction. It is a long reading involving the whole of Chapter 9 but we will pick out the bones of it! Hope you can join us, or if you have any other reflections please contact me through the church office.

**Keep safe. Tricia Atherton**



*St Michael's Church is open daily 11am-1:00pm for private prayer*

## It's good to be back!



Martin and other local church leaders met together for the first time in ages, at the newly refurbished Hope Centre. After a superb and filling breakfast, the 15 ministers had a time of worship, prayer and sharing of news. It was good to be back!

Pictured: Pip Mosscrop, giving the ministers their instructions (some things never change!)



The first senior moment.

## The new raised bed...

The Town Centre Ministry and Eco-church teams are combining to construct a new raised bed in the churchyard for the growing of fruit, vegetables and herbs.



It will be located on the flags on the south side of the church, in the little-used area near the Youth Centre.

It is hoped that members of the St. Michael's congregation and local residents will work together to create an attractive and productive feature – as in the photo of a similar bed which has just been created at St. Alban's Church. It will increase footfall and help to meet 2 of our 3 strategic objectives in the Vision Project – providing opportunities for encounter; and contributing to greater diversity and local food production as part of our commitment to sustainability and caring for God's creation.

The dimensions of the bed will be 3.7 x 1.1 x 0.6m – high enough to allow people in wheelchairs to get involved. The construction work will be undertaken by local charity Food4macc on Friday 30th July; but they will need help in barrowing topsoil from the front of church later in the late morning/early afternoon.

The cost will be in the region of £450, which we need to raise through donations. Please pass any donations to David Mayers or Mike Strutt (via the church office if necessary); making cheques payable to St. Michael's Church; or you can pay by bank transfer using the QR code in the newsletter or the account details 16-24-32 12923915 and the reference "raised bed". If using the QR code please email or drop a note to Mike to specify the payment is for the raised bed.

## Treacle Sunday

Treacle Sunday – once again St. Michael's will be open after our morning service to welcome visitors to the church – seeking a cool respite from the heat, or more likely a dry shelter from the rain! But whatever the reason, many visitors come in each Treacle Sunday, and most are amazed at the beauty of the building and at the warm and friendly welcome they receive. Many thanks to all the stewards who make this possible.



## Cricket News

The next game for St. Michael's CC is on *Wednesday 28th July, 6pm at Kerridge CC* on Clarke Lane, against Macc Occasionals.

Spectators welcome



## Donation Requests!

The Chaplaincy at HMP Styal would be most grateful to receive any donations of the following for the women at Styal.



Colouring pencils, ones that can be re-sharpened, Felt tips and new sealed packets of ladies underwear. These donations will be greatly appreciated by the women and the Chaplaincy.

Please leave any donations in the plastic box marked Styal which is in the South Entrance near the photocopier. Thank you.

Any queries please contact *Anne Kite 01625 424531*

## The Collect for the 8th Sunday after Trinity

Lord God, your Son left the riches of heaven and became poor for our sake: when we prosper save us from pride, when we are needy save us from despair, that we may trust in you alone; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



## HOW TO SHARE YOUR FAITH

in association with Hope in NE Cheshire

WANT TO TALK TO OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT JESUS?  
DON'T QUITE KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN?  
IT CAN BE TRICKY CAN'T IT.

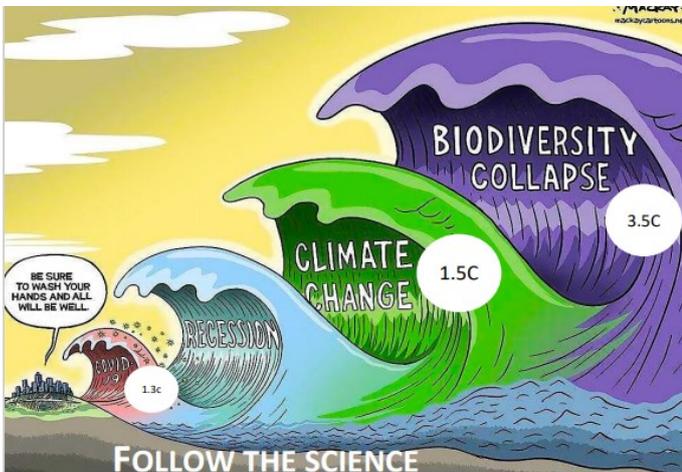
**SATURDAY 7th AUGUST, 10am - 12pm**  
**TFW CHURCH, Sandwich Drive, Tytherington**

Join us as we explore the often daunting but always rewarding challenge of witnessing to others. We'll talk about where to begin, how to listen well, what to say, what not to say, and much more.

Places are limited and need to be booked:

<https://tfw.churchsuite.co.uk/events/v6tutms0>

[if you can't make this one, we will be repeating this event at a future date]



### FOLLOW THE SCIENCE NO MORE EMPTY PROMISES

A free workshop with activists @ St Michael's Church  
Monday, 26 July 2021 at 6.45 pm

Covid is a walk in the park compared to what is coming unless the Government acts immediately.

This is an emergency!

Just as the US Civil Rights Freedom Riders brought about dramatic change, we can too. No more dithering, green-washing and lies.

In this workshop with Roger Hallam - activist, organic farmer and researcher - we'll explore the radical steps we need to take in the next few months to force the Government to decarbonise Britain.

You and I have to stand up today for everyone's future.

**Just come - it's important!!**

nb. Covid restrictions may mean space restricted to first 30.

## Hospitality and Sanctuary for All



Matthew 25; 35 "I was a stranger and you welcomed me"

Here at St.Michael's we welcome many strangers.....asylum seekers, rough-sleepers, IT consultants, those from the LGBT+ community, those seeking a place of calm and peace in their busy lives, the lonely, depressed and mentally ill, those with disabilities.....In many ways we do a great job at welcoming strangers, but could we do better?

We have all been strangers at some time, and the Church has a long tradition of offering sanctuary to all who need it. The knocker on Durham Cathedral door, and our own "open door" to the market place, remind us that the need for hospitality and sanctuary has not gone away – indeed it is perhaps more important now than ever before.

In our contemporary society there is considerable hostility towards "the stranger"; as Christians we can all take action to shift attitudes and move people towards attitudes of welcome and hospitality.

Jesus himself was a refugee, forced to flee with his family from Herod (Matthew 2; 13- 15). How would this family fare at a port of entry into Britain today? Jesus met and walked with his own friends as a "stranger" on the road to Emmaus, yet many others rejected him (John 1; 10 – 11).

The Old Testament is clear about our responsibilities (Exodus 23; 9), and the Hebrews were themselves outsiders in Egypt. Indeed the "people of God" have often through the centuries been declared "outsiders", "a threat", or "strangers". It should therefore be no surprise that the Hebrew scriptures make it very clear that strangers are to be treated well, protected from injustice, violence and harm, and have the privilege of rest and refreshment.

We learned from Karen Brady that "everyone is welcome"; but we must keep asking ourselves some key questions;

Are any of our practices creating "insiders" and "outsiders"?

Are there people we are uncomfortable eating with, or sharing Holy Communion with?

What kind of hospitality helps to build a truly inclusive community and congregation?

Should we consider taking appropriate steps to make St.Michael's a "Church of sanctuary"? Or Macclesfield a "Town of sanctuary"?

*This brief reflection was inspired by a booklet written by Inderjit Bhogal – "Hospitality and Sanctuary for All", published by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.*

**David Mayers**

Join us for  
*Sunday Worship*

**St Michael's Worship 25th July 2021**

**Eighth 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: Paul Simms

Talk: Neil Brighton

Reading: John 6:1-21



**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](#)

**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

**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?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?pwd=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZoVXdaZz09)

[pwd=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZoVXdaZz09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?pwd=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZoVXdaZz09)

Meeting ID: 756 7694 7476

Passcode: compline



**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.

**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.

**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 [→](#)

