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Open Door



One of the things I enjoyed about total lockdown was the much quieter environment: no planes in the sky, and there were so few vehicles on our road that it felt more like a country lane! Overall life seemed to slow down.

But now things have ramped up again, including the pace of life. Before, when passing others on our permitted daily exercise, we'd acknowledge the mutual desire to keep each other safe through social distancing. Now, sadly, there's more anxiety, less eye-contact and fewer smiles. What has been lost? What needs to be retained or regained?

And those questions can equally apply to church life.

Learning from Traffic Lights

If you're a road-user, I wonder how you react when approaching a set of traffic lights? For me it depends so much on my context. In a hurry I want every set on my journey to be on **green**, so I can carry on unimpeded, uninterrupted – my journey is **so** important, my time is **so** precious [sic]. If I'm less rushed I won't mind the lights turning **red** ... especially if it means I'm then at the front of the queue for pulling away the moment they change **green**!

And then there are those pedestrian crossings where I feel for the people waiting and waiting for the lights to change. I actually **want** the lights to turn **red** so these people aren't held up any longer (*in my opinion the worst crossing is the one on Cumberland Street, near the King's School exit – do you agree?*).

And then there are those journeys where **every** set of lights hold me up. The road may be clear, but as I approach, the lights turn **red**. It *feels* as though the traffic lights are intentionally thwarting me! I **know** it's irrational, but that's how it seems!

We don't have traffic lights in our building .. *and it may reassure you to know I don't propose installing any!* .. but what if **God** wanted to set some up, not in the building but in the **life** of St Michael's?

As a church community we've been on quite a journey these past 4 months haven't we? So much has changed! Please can I ask you to use these next couple of weeks or so to take stock of church life and let me know how things are for you? Imagine a set of traffic lights:

Red: What might God want us to **stop doing**?

Some activities have necessarily stopped, and you may be relieved! Perhaps with the building being closed you now recognise you were previously doing something more because it was 'a job to be done' rather than because it was something you particularly felt called to do.

Additionally, there have been some recent initiatives which, however welcome they've been, may have been right for during lockdown only but which God would no longer want us to maintain into the long-term future.

Amber: What might God want us to **be prepared for**?

Matthew 25 speaks about the wisdom of having our lamps always prepared with wicks and oil, ready for the arrival of the bridegroom (Jesus). What might be the things that are not for now but we need to be ready and waiting for when God says 'go'?

Green: What might God want us to **go full steam ahead on**?

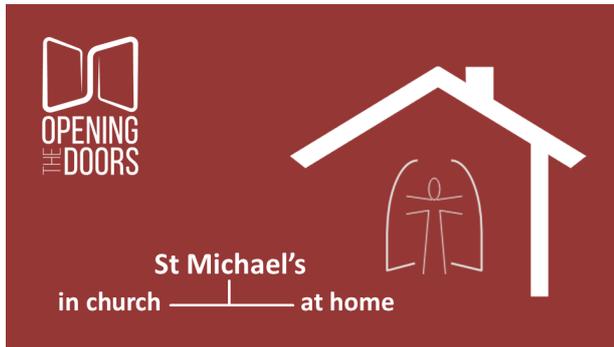
Whether some activity or initiative has continued since before March, or is something that's started during lockdown, where in the life of St Michael's is God saying 'Yes! Absolutely!?'

Individually we have all been affected in such a variety of different ways during the pandemic. Even though the church building is once more open for private prayer and public worship, things will continue to be so different for many more months to come. We will each have our own preferences and desires, but please could I ask you to pray about the above questions? Ask God what He wants us to stop, to be ready with, and to go ahead on. Next week we'll send out a survey so you can feed back on what you feel God is saying to you at this time.

Such prayer and thinking won't supersede the outcomes from our Vision Day but they may help us as we move into the next season of St Michael's life. Thank you.

Mark

St Michael's Merged Worship 26th July 2020
at 10.00am Join in person in church or by
clicking on the image below from 9.45am



Meeting ID: 939 7279 7379 Password: 01625

Service Leader: Mike Strutt
Reflection: Tricia Atherton
Reading: **Matthew 13.31-33,44-52**

You will have the opportunity to talk to a smaller group in
a break out room at the end of the service.

Can't join us live either in church or on Zoom?

Watch the recording 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: 999 6611 2203]

When prompted, enter #



Email any [prayer requests](#) here:

This week's lectionary readings:-

Resources for adults:

www.rootsontheweb.com/adultsathome26jul

Resources for families:

www.rootsontheweb.com/familiesathome26jul

JOIN US ON *Zoom*

CONNECT WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Wednesday Morning Discussion

11.00am to 12 noon

Join Zoom meeting [here](#)



Meeting ID: 982 3541 9798

Password: 382502

Hosted by Tricia & Martin

Coffee & Chat



**Please note these are NEW login
details started with effect from
21st July**

Men's Meet-up Meeting:

When? 8pm for 75 minutes on alternate
Wednesday evenings

Dates: 5th & 19th Aug

Join Zoom Meeting [here](#)



Meeting ID: 912 6715 2374

Password: 980944

*Particularly aimed at those of working age
(whether on furlough, unemployed or working flat
-out). Nothing heavy – at least not at this stage –
but just the opportunity to share life and faith
with others in a similar situation.*

Save these details for next time

Thursday Homegroup

We are meeting via Zoom at 7.30pm.

We are continuing with our study of Luke's
Gospel. Any one is welcome to join for Bible
Study, prayer and fellowship, including by phone.
For details, including the Zoom link, please
contact David Mayers by [email](#) or by phone
01625 420716 or 07963 802 659

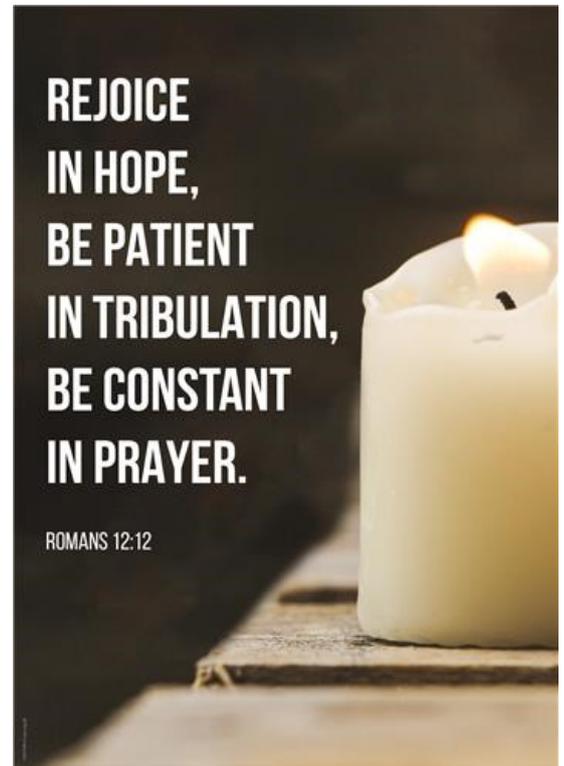
Dates

for your Diary

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



Hair we go for the shear fun of it! Before and after hair cut. 126 days 11th March to 15th July 2020. And it feels good! Anyone else feeling ready for a hair cut now the barbers and hair salons are open again. Thanks David Smith for shearing, I mean sharing! *Ed*



Life in Lockdown: your stories shared

Cheshire Archives & Local Studies are launching a project to collect images of life in Cheshire during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Life in Lockdown: your stories shared** will create a lasting memory of this unique period – a visual time capsule of everyday life.

We have a large collection of historic photographs of people, places and events which are hugely important in telling the story of our local communities. This project will ensure that life during the pandemic is recorded and preserved for future generations, and we need your help to do this. Can you contribute to the next phase of this story?

We're keen to represent the full range of different experiences from all our communities Cheshire-wide. Have you taken a photo that sums up an aspect of life in lockdown for you? 100 of these images will be added to the [Cheshire Image Bank](#) for all to see and we hope the results will be enlightening as well as inspiring.

If you'd like to share your images please complete the [donation form](#) and email it

to recordoffice@cheshiresharedservices.gov.uk along with your images. Alternatively we can receive images via We Transfer.

N.B. Please ask permission from people before taking any close ups.

This is history in the making, thank you for your contribution!

We will be collecting photographs only. However, there are two other projects we'd like to share with you.

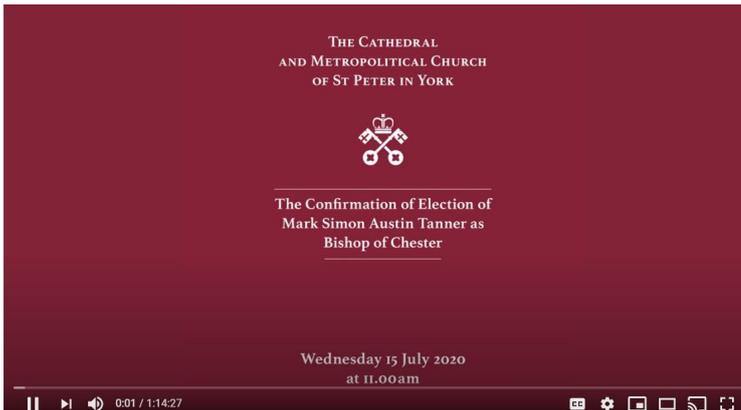
West Cheshire Museums are looking for suggestions about what kind of objects they should collect relating to COVID-19. Take a look at their [Collecting COVID project website](#) for more information.

Zengage Performing Arts would like young people aged 10-18 to submit a piece of creativity reflecting their experience of lockdown. More details can be found on their [Lockdown Life Project website](#).



Photo credit: Peter Robinson.

Mark Tanner: our new Bishop of Chester



Bishop Mark was elected to his role as Bishop of Chester in a service conducted by the newly appointed Archbishop of York in a service conducted entirely online. To watch the service click on the image above. (1hr 15mins)



The Bishop of Chester's Staff Meeting gathered at Chester Cathedral today (suitably socially distanced) for the first time since the COVID-19 lockdown, along with Bishop Mark Tanner whose election as Bishop of Chester was confirmed last week. This marks a step in Bishop Mark now beginning to pick up his new responsibilities.

The new Bishop of Chester wants to create an outward-looking Church that supports causes including Black Lives Matter.

Bishop Mark Tanner was speaking to BBC Radio Merseyside after being confirmed as Bishop of Chester in a service broadcast entirely online due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Asked what his priorities would be, Bishop Mark said: "The main headline I would have is keep us looking outward and loving and serving people – whether that's Black Lives Matter and in the Church of England we need to confess that we have not always been as good at promoting people who are UK minority ethnic or minority ethnic from any background.

"And so enabling people from that background not only to find themselves at home in church but to be able to serve in all the roles we have in Church."

There also appeared to be an oblique reference to sexual abuse allegations within the Church which has impacted the Chester Diocese. (Historic claims were made against former Bishop of Chester, the late Victor Whitsey.) While Bishop Mark's immediate predecessor Rt Rev Dr Peter Forster accepted he made a 'misjudgment' over his response to a case of child sex abuse from the 1970s involving a vicar.

Bishop Mark, who is married to Lindsay with children Jonathan and Pippa, continued: "We need to make sure we are continuing to invest in education; making schools and churches the safest places in the country they can possibly be."

A motorcycling bishop and underwater diver, Bishop Mark is moving from Northumberland where he was Bishop of Berwick in the Diocese of Newcastle, a post he had occupied since 2016.

Asked if he saw himself as an 'action man', the bishop responded: "I don't really. I just see myself as an ordinary bloke but I do like things that are exciting. I love riding motorbikes."

Bishop Mark is proud of the role played by the Church during lockdown including visiting and phoning up the lonely as well as running food banks 'changing people's lives for the better every single day'.

First Official Interview on BBC Radio Merseyside

Following the confirmation of election service earlier in the week, Bishop Mark Tanner is interviewed for the first time in his official role as the Bishop of Chester.

The interview was part of BBC Radio Merseyside's Sunday Breakfast Show, which aired at 6am on 19 July 2020.

Mark talked about his passion for motorbikes and how he rides for 'Blood Bikes'. When asked by the host of the show, Helen Jones, "What is the single most important job you have to do?" Bishop Mark begins by saying: "Keep us looking outward..."

You can hear what he went on to say in the full interview by clicking on the image.



Poetry Corner

During the pandemic, a number of clergy have turned to poetry to record their thoughts and reflections.

Speaking in May as part of [a short interview thinking about poetry and the pandemic](#), the Revd Alec Brown, Rural Dean of Great Budworth and poet, said poetry is able to capture and communicate a sense of what people are experiencing because of its immediacy and accessibility.

He said then: "In a year or 18 months' time, somebody will undoubtedly write a piece of prose about what is happening across the world at the moment. But the way in which we are looking at it now, I think, poetry is able to capture that with much more immediacy and power."

Here is Alec's latest sonnet on the current situation and the anticipation of better times to come:

Nearly there!

*Slowly but surely, and carefully, we're getting there,
though I know that for some it's taking too long
while over the road at the Pub
they're worried the punters might break into song;
and for us with no singing or choir it won't be the same,
but once through the door you'll be glad you came,
after carefully cleansing your hands and following the directions
and signs
you're back in the place where you've spent so much time,
which for so many people means so very much
and where for almost a thousand years
prayer has been offered in good times and bad,
in happiness and sorrow, in laughter and tears;
and yes, it will be different
but God remains constant and will banish our fears.*

© The Revd Alec Brown
Great Budworth Church 12 July, 2020.



Who would like to talk to on this bench?

If you could choose just one person to come and sit next to you on this bench and talk to, or pray with... who would you choose?

Don't forget to use our prayer request email - details on page 2 of the newsletter.



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers



The countries most affected by the coronavirus are the USA, Brazil, Russia, Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy, and France.



India

Here are the images of their leaders.

The countries that are recognized as having managed the crisis best are Germany, Taiwan, New Zealand, Iceland, Finland, Norway, and Denmark.



My dear Friend. Now , you know why you have to listen to your wife 😂

Water you doing this week? How a-boat this?

Here church member, Garrie Naden, tells us all about the trip he is making in his canal boat along with Adrian and some other friends, who are joining him on the way...

The Return of Dame Wanda

Chapter 1 - St Pancras Basin to Apsley Marina 16th to 17th July 2020, 36miles 6.5furlongs, 26 locks, 19 hours

Dame Wanda has started her epic journey from London to Macclesfield so that she can be moored near to home. The first stage took in the Regent's Canal, the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union and the Grand Union itself. On board Garrie and Adrian. The window of opportunity for this trip came about as Adrian had three consecutive days off and a (final) dental appointment in London on Wednesday afternoon. We drove to Apsley (near Hemel Hempstead), got the train to London and cruised back to Apsley. A Friday afternoon drive back up the M1 and M6, even in semi lock down, did not fill me with optimism for a speedy run, so we decided to 'go for it' on the Thursday, which in cruising terms does not mean putting your foot down, but continuing for as long as possible. This we took to extreme by setting off at 6.20am and mooring up in Kings Langley at 10pm, over 15.5 hours later, without a stop. Adrian did all the locks (18), meals, snacks and cups of tea whilst I was at the helm (loo just before leaving a lock!). Only 3.25 hours and 8 locks on Friday meant we got away by 10.45am and home by 2.30pm.

The cruising was pleasant in good weather. Not many boats out, but plenty of live-aboards moored up, I had forgotten how many there were along this stretch of the GU, it felt ridiculous and as the day wore on, my



slowing down to pass moored boats got faster and faster.

One bit of luck, this morning I got a Canal & River Trust alert to say that a lock we passed through in Kings Langley yesterday had been closed due to a 'structural failure', a day earlier and we'd have been stuck.

Only 175 miles and 120 locks to go...

Look out for chapter 2 next week, Apsley to Braunston.

Garrie

I went to the chemist earlier to see if they had any face masks, they said they were sold out and said I should try Boots



I've been in A&E for 40 minutes & I know it's the doctors I can hear laughing 😊

Fortunately, you don't have to rush to Boots (other chemists are available) because the lovely Chris Wightman has informed me reliably that she can make face coverings. She has already made about 30. If anyone is finding it hard to get hold of face coverings which are mandatory in shops from this week, please do get in touch with Chris or via the Church Office.

Light a candle. By lighting a virtual candle, you're making space to pray. You can light a candle online to pray for yourself, for a loved one or for a situation. Whatever is going on, make space to pray in your life. Click on the image below to light a virtual, candle for someone.

LIGHT A CANDLE

A warm welcome. Lighting a candle can be a helpful way to pray. You can do this here online.

Follow each step to light a candle now.



CONTINUE >



Here is Eleanor from the 9.30 service at St Michael's on her last day at Bollinbrook receiving her Bible from the Governors.

And Jay and Millie-Ann pictured with Martin. Good luck for High School



You may recall Martin telling us all one Sunday that a number of church members had kindly volunteered to bake something to give to our church families with young children who are finding life a bit tough right now juggling the demands of work with homeschooling etc. I share here two of the lovely thank yous from recipients Rosie (via Facebook) and Olivia (via email). Thank you to all those who baked and delivered. Your kindness and thoughtfulness really mattered to those who received your gift.

thank you



Vacancy for Caretaker:



Bollinbrook School Abbey Road, Macclesfield SK10 3AT
 Permanent – 15 Hours per week flexible.
 Grade:3 – Annual salary £17,711 – £18,426 per annum pro rata. Actual £7,180 – £7,470.
 We are looking to appoint a knowledgeable, enthusiastic and hardworking caretaker who will become a member of our dedicated school team.
 Click [here](#) for more details
 Closing date: Thursday 30th July at 12 noon. Interviews: Monday 3rd August

Dear Sue,
 Thank you so much to whoever baked the lovely flapjack which was waiting when we arrived home from visiting my parents last week. It was such a nice surprise, and delicious. We are looking forward to meeting up with you in person again soon.
 Best wishes,
 Olivia, Tom and Dorothea

OPEN
for private prayer
 Monday to Saturday 11am to 1.00pm (from 27th July)

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

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We're
OPEN
 FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP



So we met again for a merged worship on Sunday 19th July with some of us in church and some of us at home, and others still, watching the recording at a time to suit them later in the day or week.

Did you join us?

What did you think?

What works best for you: home or church? You choose

However you choose to connect with us for our worship, we will continue to strive to refine and improve the worship to continue to make it as accessible as possible. It was encouraging that we had one church member, Jason, join us by phone for the first time. Welcome Jason. I hope you enjoyed your experience and really lovely to have you with us

We will continue to 'do' Sunday worship in this format for the coming weeks. So this Sunday 26th July, we invite you to join us from home by phone or electronic device on Zoom from 9.45am, or in the church building. Please do arrive in plenty of time to get seated and go through all the precautions required as you enter the building.

And for those without devices, please remember you can join any of our Zoom meetings advertised in the newsletter by simply entering the meeting ID when prompted. See page 2.

