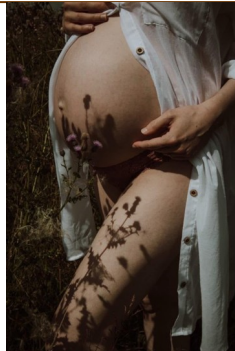




A pregnant pause for thought...

Please forgive the question but, are you pregnant?

Advent is the time when we prepare for Christmas. Mary is pregnant, with child, with Jesus our Saviour and travels, with Joseph, to Bethlehem where she gives birth.



The angel said to Mary, "Do not be afraid; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Joseph went to Bethlehem with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. (Paraphrase Luke 1:30-38 and Luke 2: 5-7)

Pregnant also means significant, full of meaning. I would suggest that there are three pregnancies in our lives. We are the pregnancy awaiting new life.

Each of us is born into this world. We have the time, like Jesus, cosseted in our mother's womb. The mother, as well as others, await the birth of the baby. They are preparing physically: getting provisions, preparing room, the mother's body changing for birth, and mentally/emotionally; wondering how life will change, excitement and, perhaps, some anxiety. Is there a spiritual change, a soul created by God? I would argue that there must be:



For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Psalm 139:13-14)

This pregnancy is usually about nine months. There is some understanding of what will be. We are here and have been

through this pregnancy to arrive where we are today.

The second pregnancy is the significant, meaningful time of us becoming a Christian. Just as with the birth of a baby, someone has planted a seed of faith and people can help the seed mature to fruition. As the new Christian arrives there is excitement and adjustment to new life. There is definitely physical, emotional/mental and spiritual change. This pregnancy varies in length. With some people it may be a sudden revelation and a life is transformed by Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. For others it may be a gradual process of realising that there is more to life, that something is missing. It may be that we have grown up in a Christian home and the new birth has been gently stirring within us until we say "Yes, Lord". However and whenever we come to believe, giving ourselves, body, mind and spirit, to Jesus, it is a new birth:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The final pregnancy, again varies in length and can often be very long, in my Dad's case at least 80 years. This is the earthly preparation for eternal life. Are we living significant, meaningful lives as Christians? We are promised that in having faith we will have eternal life:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to life". (John 5:24-25, 28-29)

For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thessalonians 4:14, 17)

At a funeral for a lady we visited with Home Communion someone said to me, "I wish I had the certainty that she had." I replied that she could. "O no, it's not for me." Sadly, she moved away and the conversation couldn't be continued. God chooses everyone. It is whether we choose God.

It may be that you are in the second pregnancy and have not accepted Jesus as your Saviour; that your belief has not yet sprung to new life. If so, please speak with one of the clergy or a trusted Christian friend. Ask Jesus in prayer, using whatever words come to mind, to give you new life, e.g.

"Lord Jesus, I am sorry I have done wrong. Please forgive me. I believe you are the Son of God, that you died for me, and I ask you to be my Saviour. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. I give my life to you. Amen".

Are you pregnant? Are we ready for that day, however challenging, when we die to this life on earth and are born to eternal life? Are we ready to go home, to that room prepared for us by Jesus?

"I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." John 14:3

Can we say like Paul that:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

Sallie

Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent

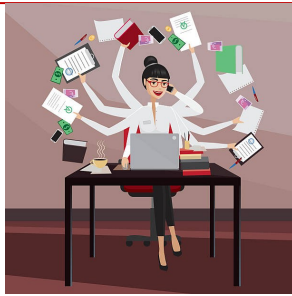
Almighty God,
purify our hearts and minds,
that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge
and saviour
we may be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our God.

Reminders

The Church Office

Please help our office staff to work without interruptions!

The office at St Michael's is a busy place, and Isobel and Elaine work hard to keep everything running smoothly. It would be a great help if church members could keep the following in mind:



Please don't expect an immediate reply to emails (and no need to follow up with a call). Both staff members juggle many responsibilities.

- * Try to contact the right person on their working days (see back page of Bulletin).
- * **Elaine:** room bookings, maintenance, setting heating, ordering supplies, setting up meeting rooms, maintenance of building, invoicing hirers...etc
- * **Isobel:** supporting clergy, church services, church family admin, life events, church communication, posters, printing...etc. **If possible, avoid interrupting Isobel on Fridays.**
- * **(NEW!)** - Please try and keep phone calls and drop-ins to 11.00am–12noon, this will help them focus on essential tasks.
- * If you're just dropping something off, please use the St Michael's box outside the office which will be regularly checked.
- * For in-person conversations, making an appointment helps ensure a time that works for everyone.

Thank you for your support.

Save the Dates

In the cold winter months let's celebrate

* **Sunday January 18th:**

THE BIG THANKYOU party in church:
12.30-3.00pm (see also p.3)

* **Saturday 7th February:**

Pancake Party and Quiz Night: 6.00-9.00pm

Put these dates into your diary now!



Sound of Silence (Contemplative Prayer)



Please note that there will be **no** Sound of Silence (aka Contemplative Prayer) on **Friday 12th** or **Friday 26th December**

Nativity



If you would like a part in this year's Nativity (21st Dec. 10.00am) let Lynne know as soon as possible!

Christmas Celebrations in Macclesfield Market Place



It would be great to have a strong turnout for these two Christmas celebrations to show to the community that there's a wonderful Christian Unity in our town. Please come along if you can, and feel free to bring friends and neighbours - everybody is welcome! Stay for as long or as little as you wish.

- ♦ **Carols around the Crib: Saturday Dec. 6th, 1.15pm.**
Organised by St Alban's Church.
- ♦ **Treacle Market Shoppers' Carol Service, Sun Dec. 21st, 1.00pm & 2.00** (20 minutes each time)
To be held in the grounds of St Michael's Church.

Forthcoming Concerts at St Michael's



* **Saturday 13th December 7.30pm**
KEMS Christmas Concert with Choir and Concert Band

* **Friday 19th December 8.00pm**
Silk Brass Christmas Concert

St Michael's Building for Hire

Do you need to hire a space?

St Michael's has meeting rooms of various sizes to meet your needs, and our large Worship Area with its giant screen and AV system is suitable for presentations, concerts, etc.

Email Elaine: bookings@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk

Tel: 01625 421984

Christmas Services St Michael & All Angels. Macclesfield

Sunday 7th December

10am Church Family Worship

Thursday 25th December

10am Church Family
Christmas Communion

Sunday 14th December

10am Family Communion

Sunday 28th December

10am Service of the Word

Thursday 18th December

7pm Town Carol Service

Sunday 21st December

10am Nativity Service
6:30pm Carols by Candlelight



Wednesday 24th December

4pm Crib Service
11:30pm Midnight Communion

We warmly invite
you to join us



Christmas Cards

Christian Aid cards will be available to buy this Sunday morning (7th December) after the service – **CASH only!**

Plant (and scarf) stall

I'm pleased to announce that my *ad hoc* houseplant stall raised £130 which will go into our eco-pot to be used for replenishing planters, raised beds, etc.



I also managed to sell about 20 more of the scarves left over from our scarf project of last year! The remaining scarves (about 40-50) are now on their way to Ukraine where we hope they will not only prove useful, but - being handknitted - will offer some personal comfort to the recipients.

Lynne

CAFOD's Christmas Fun Run

Saturday 27th December at 11.00am, starting from the Middlewood Way by St Gregory's Church, Bollington.



You can walk, jog or run.

Last year the Fun Run raised in excess of £3,000 thanks to everyone's incredible efforts and, since 2011, the Fun Run has raised in excess of £50,000.

Further info is available in the attached flyer and also at: [Bollington CAFOD Fun Run](#).

Reverse Advent Calendar

Thank you to all those who responded to the Silklife Foodbank Christmas appeal this year.

We have been able to put together two full hampers of items as requested and as you can see there were lots of spare items to help restock the Foodbank's larder for the coming weeks.



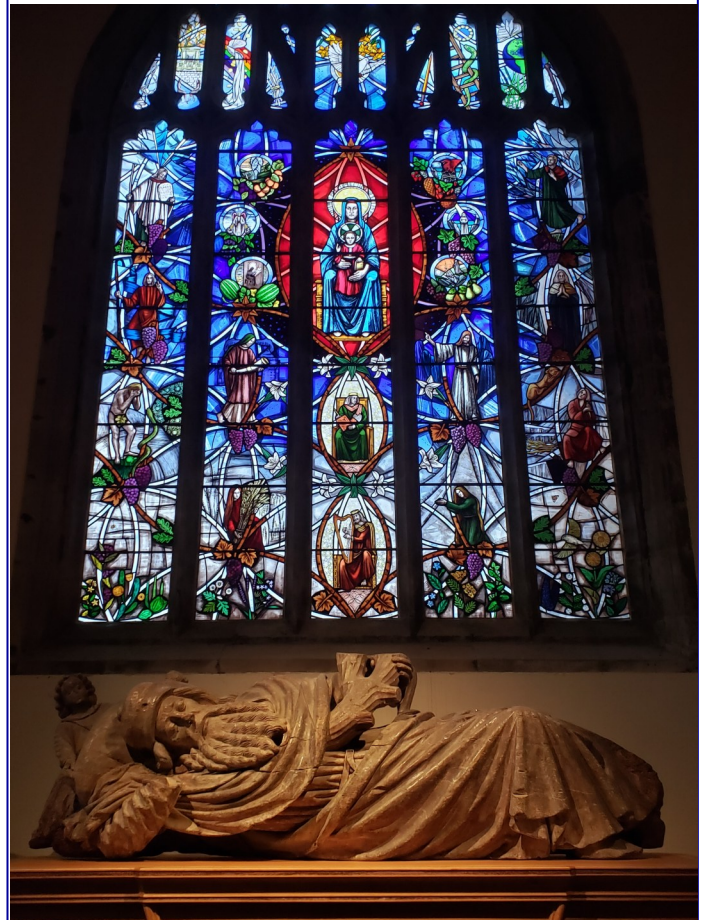
Mary's Song of Praise

Mary said:
With all my heart
I praise the Lord,
and I am glad
because of God my Saviour.
God cares for me,
his humble servant.
From now on,
all people will say
God has blessed me

Jesse

"A shoot will arise from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a branch will bear fruit"

Isaiah 11:1



Here is Jesse.

He lies, larger than life size, in the priory church of St. Mary in Abergavenny. He was carved in the 15th century from a single piece of oak and originally from his side sprouted a Jesse tree, a depiction of his descendants from King David culminating at the top with the Virgin Mary and the Christ child. It was huge; probably between twenty and thirty feet tall and highly coloured (traces of the paint still remain). The shoot from which the tree sprang can be seen in Jesse's side but sadly the tree itself was destroyed, along with so much other great English medieval art, by Cromwell's troops in 1646 during the Civil War.

Jesse trees in stained glass or stone are not uncommon but this wooden Jesse is unique in the UK and possibly in the world.

In a happy stroke of imagination ten years or so ago Jesse's tree was re-created in stained glass and he now lies at the foot of a new window in the north aisle, reunited with his family.

If you are in Abergavenny, do visit Jesse.

And the Tithe Barn cafe next door is good too.

Kevin

'Step into Christmas'

St Michael's was busy on Saturday 29th November!

The Town Council had organised 'Step Into Christmas' - a programme of exciting events in the Market Place. There was a craft workshop for younger children in the Youth Centre.

Unfortunately the weather was awful, but we were pleased to be able to offer emergency shelter for Macclesfield Youth Brass Band so they didn't have to play outside in the rain and wind.

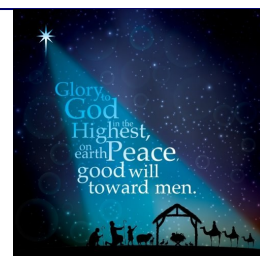
The café was very busy - many thanks to the additional volunteers who stepped in to help out.



Christmas card display.

Save paper (and effort!) - send one Christmas card to all your friends at St Michael's.

Pin it on the board at the back of church, and don't forget to look at the cards others have sent!



Carols in the Park

Sunday 14th December

12noon - 1.00pm in West Park!

Join the Friends of West Park in singing carols with the local community, and sharing some of the joy of a traditional Christmas.

All welcome.

Come to the playground near the café.



Twilight Market

On Thursday 11th December, 2.00 - 8.00pm there will be evening shopping in the marketplace and town centre

St Michael's will be open until 8.00pm to welcome and warm visitors - and of course to offer the use of our toilets.



The Caravannettes - an all female choir singing lots of our favourite Christmas songs - will be performing from 7.00 - 8.00pm.

Free entry, donations welcomed.

All are warmly invited to come along!

Eco-tip

Look after your garden mini-beasts.

Many of the animals which keep our garden soils healthy and fertile, and which pollinate our flowers and blossom - bees, snails, centipedes etc - hibernate in the winter, so don't keep your gardens too tidy.

They need piles of twigs, leaves and decaying branches to shelter in.

Even better, build a simple bug hotel - see the photo below of those created by Roots members in one of our raised beds.



Christmas Tree Needs a Good Home

Would you like a 7ft artificial Christmas tree?

The church has one which is surplus to our needs, free to a good home.

If you would like it, or know someone who would, please collect it from the flower vestry (but check that you take the correct one - there is also one which belongs to the Homemakers!).



This isn't a picture of the actual tree!

Rachel

The BIG THANK-YOU PARTY!

Everyone who does anything to help at St Michael's is warmly invited to the big thank-you party on Sunday 18th January, 1.00-3.00pm at church.

Do come along!



Join us for *Worship*



Sunday Worship

7th December 2025

Second Sunday of Advent

10:00am: Church Family Worship
with Roots & Storytelling Groups for children

Leader: Mike Strutt (LLM)
Speaker: Revd Martin Stephens
Bible Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

Please use the link below to stream this
(and previous services) on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/@stmikesmacclesfield>

Start the Week

Every Monday from 7.30am in church
Morning Prayer at 8.30 am in church and also on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/stmikesmacclesfield>

Wednesday Morning Prayer Group

Alternate Wednesdays at 10:30 am in the Savage Chapel
lasting 30-40 minutes.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 10th December

Thursday Morning Worship 10:30am (35-40 mins)

Our midweek services follow the order from
the Book of Common Prayer (traditional language) and
alternate between Morning Prayer and Holy Communion

11th December: Morning Prayer
18th December: Holy Communion

Thursday Homegroup

Meeting for Bible study and prayer –
morning and evening groups
Please contact Eve & David Budgett (431606)
or David Mayers (420716) for more information



Sound of Silence (Contemplative Prayer)

Friday mornings from 9.20-9.50.
An opportunity for quiet prayer followed by a cuppa and chat.

Compline/Night Prayer

Every Friday

Topic: Night Prayer | Time: 8.30 pm
Join Zoom Meeting; [https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?pwd=R2twT2pQbTFZUGR5bk1reDZoVXdZz09)

[us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?pwd=R2twT2pQbTFZUGR5bk1reDZoVXdZz09)

Meeting ID: 756 7694 7476 Passcode: compline



Share your Photos with St Mike's Church Family



If you have any photographs of recent activities you have been involved in which you would like including in the weekly bulletin/newsletter or in the Church Family News slot in Sunday services, please use this number to WhatsApp them to the relevant people:

+44 7579 820265

You can, of course, also email pictures and text to
stmikesnotices@gmail.com

How to contact the office...



Phone: Landline: 01625 421984

Email addresses:

- **Isobel** clergypa@maccteam.org.uk for ministry issues
- **Elaine** bookings@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk for bookings and building matters
- **Bulletin/Newsletter** stmikesnotices@gmail.com
- **Printing** maccteamprinting@gmail.com
- **Safeguarding** see box below

Postal Address: The Office, St Michael's Church, Market Place, Macclesfield, SK10 1DY

Elaine's office hours are *usually* Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9:30am – 1:30 pm

Isobel's Office hours are *usually* Monday & Wednesday 9.00-2.45; and Thursday 9.00 - 1.00 & Friday 8.30 - 1.00

Safeguarding Contact Information



If you have any safeguarding concerns, please contact the St Michael's Safeguarding Officer, Katie Wilcock:

Phone: 07435 568 729

Email: safeguarding@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk



SCAN ME

Donating to St Michael's is easy!

Scan this QR Code or use
the **contactless donation**
point in the Welcome Area



Email any prayer requests to:

prayer@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk

Your request will be circulated confidentially to
a limited group of people who will pray for you.

