

**APCM April 2020**

## **Report on the Life of St Michael and All Angels' Church April 2019-April 2020**

This is an overarching report covering the ministry, life and fellowship of St Michael's Church over the 12 months April 2019-April 2020.

As I collate individual contributions, we are all in "lock-down", and the question we were asked to consider on our February Vision Day: "What would St Michael's look like without a building?" has in one way become a reality.

It is not the purpose of this report to cover how we are currently supporting each other, maintaining worship / spiritual input, and keeping in touch generally during this strange period of social isolation, but at the moment I am pretty sure we are holding together, being creative and looking for (and finding) the positives to uphold our present and inform our future. We are still St Michael's Church, and through prayer, reflection, imagination and necessity we are being transformed.

When we do meet for our APCM - which we can defer until October if necessary - we will have much to ponder from the preceding months, and much to look forward to with our Vision Day priorities; but, for now, here is a summary of our life together over the last 12 months.

I have covered groups and events in alphabetical order (contents list on page 2). If any groups have been omitted, that is my fault – but I do hope this report gives a taste of the breadth and richness of our life and fellowship together.

Lynne Spedding (Lay Chair, Church Council)  
21 April 2020



## **Electoral Roll**



There were 138 people on the list as presented last year. One person has since died.

As at 24 March 2020, 8 people have been added: a total of 145.

David Budgett (Electoral Roll Officer)

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# Bellringers

Obviously, with the closing of the church due to Covid-19 restrictions there has been no ringing. However, **until that point we continued to announce to the outside world all Sunday services and special services as** requested including amongst others Confirmation, Remembering Service, all Choral Evensong services and weddings. While we are still at the limit regarding numbers, with regular help from our friends from other churches we have managed to ring all 12 bells on a good number of occasions. We are also teaching a few new recruits which happily include some young people.



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About this time last year saw the installation of a number of swift boxes just below the clock. A loudspeaker was fitted to broadcast a recording of swift calls to attract the attention of any passing birds although this was rather unreliable and needed frequent attention. Birds were seen around the tower frequently but as they are faithful to their nest sites this was mostly for the benefit of the next generation of swifts in the hope they will be attracted in future years. While the boxes are still in place it seems unlikely that we will be able to provide any of the audible inducements of last year.

Apart from taking part in a number of ringing competitions around the country, the band worked extremely hard when hosting the North West 12 Bell Striking Competition this year. Installing a live sound feed to the Savage Chapel tower to help the judges pick out the faults, catering for over 80 people, stocking and manning a bar and clearing up afterwards required long planning and dedicated effort from our ringers and our friends from nearby towers. All this on top of learning and practising a very challenging piece of ringing over many weeks and entering two bands. While on the subject of competitions it should be mentioned that, at the local ringers' branch quiz which attracted 105 participants this year, the winning team was from St Michael's



We are asked for this year's report to focus on the future, which from this point seems very uncertain. We look forward to the day when we can proclaim to the world that St Michael's is again open for services. Undoubtedly, the first ringing that we undertake will be a great celebration of the passing of this insidious plague and to recognize all those whose many selfless acts and sacrifices made in service of their neighbour have brought us to that point.

It has to be admitted that generally the ringers are an ageing population so hopefully, if the lock down is not very prolonged, we will still have the strength in numbers to continue to perform at the level to which we have been accustomed in the past. We urgently need to recruit new younger ringers if we are to pass on our skills to future generations.

We are just starting to turn our attention to 2023 when we would like to host many events to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our fantastic bells and now is the time we need to start teaching new people to make this a success.

The project to raise funds to cast the bells and their installation involved not just the congregation at St Michael's but the whole town. Perhaps we can inspire the same enthusiasm for the centenary.  
Kevin Rogers



Arrival of the bells 1923



## Bollinbrook School

Our Church school, Bollinbrook Primary, is well-served with Foundation Governors from St Michael's and other local churches. The school has been progressing well under the headship of Miss Le Marinel (appointed Sept 2018). Developments have included making greater use of St Michael's. Pupils now visit the church as part of their curriculum, engaging with the Christian faith as well as the building.

Ofsted undertook a short inspection in April 2019, and a full inspection of the school in January 2020. Although the most recent assessment was 'Requires improvement', this was not a surprise. The staff and governors were disappointed that there was not sufficient time between inspections for developments to become established, and the inspectors did acknowledge there are many areas deemed as 'Good'.

I and a few others continue to start each week praying for the school community; this is a privilege to do, and I invite others to join us on Monday mornings.

Martin Stephens



## Building

As Gordon Darlington is still recuperating from surgery, the following report is a quick summary of items which have been reported to the Church Council over the last 12 months:

- Re-roofing the Savage Chapel (£6,172)
- Repairs to the roof alarm carried out
- First floor room: lighting system improved
- Swift boxes installed in the Clock Tower
- Fire alarm testing and recording—implemented as required
- Church spring and autumn cleans carried out—thanks to those who volunteered
- Water ingress around Queen Victoria stained glass window (west end) - estimates for repair could be in the region of £15,000. Further advice is being sought
- Stannah lift: maintained
- Glass doors into the nave: problems with opening. Doors "lifted" but the problem is not fully resolved. The situation is under review
- General maintenance: jet-rodding of external manholes; gutters cleaned; servicing of organ humidifier; cleaning of churchyard paving.
- Repairs to the main roof remain outstanding: the costs are significant and external assistance with funding will be essential for this work to be completed.



## Choir

St Michael's has a thriving choir, comprising 25 adults and 12 children. It is a "robed choir" singing predominantly but not exclusively traditional church music, in four-part harmony.

Children meet to practise every Wednesday 6.30-8.30pm, and adults join them at 7.30pm. There is also a quick warm-up practice at 10.30 on Sunday mornings, prior to the main service.

Once a month, the choir leads traditional Choral Evensong, a service which is much valued by many. This is a reflective service, where music is predominant, with an introit, anthem, psalm, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis all sung by the choir.

The big festivals of the church year are wonderful choral occasions, with the Christmas Carols by Candlelight Service seeing a packed church building and a wonderful atmosphere. The Advent Carol Service, another major choral service, is well-attended although to a lesser degree than the Christmas Service. Good Friday and Easter Sunday are also days where music plays an important part in worship,

but sadly in 2020 the normal Good Friday/Easter tide services in church did not take place.

One special event in September 2019 was the choir singing Choral Evensong at Shrewsbury Abbey, which would have led to a joint Evensong at St Michael's in May 2020, had circumstances not prevented it. In addition, the church hosted two Civic Services in 2019, at which the choir sang.

The choir is an unusual organisation in church as it includes members of all ages from around 6 to – well, who knows how old?! Practices are fun and busy, with much music to learn in a fairly short time. Children (and adults!) benefit from a wonderful music education, learning how to read music and sing in harmony.



St Michael's Choir at Shrewsbury Abbey, Sept 2019

The types of music sung by the choir span five centuries, typically classical in style but with some lighter and more modern anthems (Rutter and Chilcott, for example), plus hymns, worship songs (with harmonies where possible), descants, and typically in four parts, but sometimes dividing into two choirs and therefore eight parts.

Karen Gedde & Lynne Spedding



## Church Council

The Church Council met immediately after last year's APCM on 24th March, then on six more occasions in April, July, October, November, January and March. There were 19 members plus two co-opted members. One member resigned during the year.

Paul Spedding, Church Council Secretary

## Contemplative Prayer



Friday morning CP meetings in the Savage Chapel continued throughout the year. Although most of those attending were from the Team Parish, others came from outside the Team, including Holy Trinity Hurdfield and St Albans. Usually, there were between 8-12 of us. Coffee and chat, following the quiet times, was also well attended. An evening CP time was also held on the first Tuesday of each month at the house of Bernice Jones.

Evening meetings on the third Sunday of each month were varied in content and increasingly well attended. This is something of a challenge for us, as on occasions around 16-18 people were crammed into someone's lounge. The 'homely' nature of the meetings would be lost if we had to use an external meeting room. For our July meeting, 21 people attended a session led by an elder of the Frandley Quaker meeting. We will need to keep the choice of venue under review, once we resume meetings, hopefully later in 2020.

Frandle Quaker Meeting House was again the venue for one of our occasional retreats, in September. Graham Turner returned to lead the meeting on the topic 'Contemplation – it's simple but not easy'. We were blessed with the good weather we've always had for these events (it has to change some time though!). In between the formal sessions, we were able to wander in the surrounding countryside, pondering peacefully on the topic. Twenty of us attended the retreat (pictured).

Owing to current events, it will not be possible to hold another such gathering in 2020 – hopefully next year though.

Dave Black



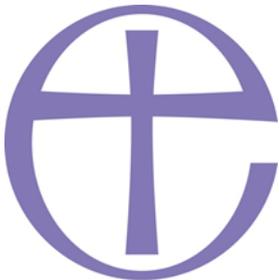
## Cricket

2019 was another successful and enjoyable season for the cricket team based in the 4 churches of the Team Parish, but usually known as St Michael's for ease and convenience. We played 9 games, winning 4 and losing 5; including our first ever international match against a strong Indian side; but forget the results - the most important thing has been the fun and fellowship enjoyed by all, young and old, of all abilities. We have enjoyed another season of exciting cricket and sociable chat at the bar.



This year the team has included players from All Saints', St Peter's, and St Michael's, as well as friends and family, with ages from 15 to 76. We welcome interest from anyone with a love of cricket; you don't have to play, we always need scorers, umpires and most of all supporters.

This year it looks very likely that the start of the season will be delayed; but we hope and pray that we will get some cricket in due course. Keep an eye out for notices; and speak to David Mayers (07963802659 [davidjmayers@btinternet.com](mailto:davidjmayers@btinternet.com)) for the latest news.



## Deanery Synod 2019 Annual Review of Macclesfield Deanery Synod

THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

The Macclesfield Deanery Synod met formally on three occasions during 2019 and these are detailed below. During the year the Rural Dean and Lay Chair have continued to support the work of the Macclesfield Archidiaconal Mission and Pastoral Committee, the Diocesan Synod and on behalf of the synod have been involved in the farewell to and welcoming of any clergy moves in the deanery. Synod members responded to the diocese's proposal on length of terms of service on the synod and this issue has gone into a discussion phase at diocesan level.

The Revd Canon Veronica Hydon completed her five year term as Rural Dean at the end of August and a small presentation was made to her in her church of St Oswald's Bollington to thank her for her commitment and enthusiasm. At the same time the Deanery Secretary Julie Brunt retired and was thanked for her work. The post remained unfilled for the rest of 2019 but has now been filled.

The Deanery welcomed the new Rural Dean Revd Dr John Harries from St James's Sutton and the Peak Parishes at his Service of Commissioning on 10 September. This was possibly Bishop Peter's last official duty as Bishop of Chester before his retirement. Following Bishop William Pwaisiho's retirement from Gawsworth and North Rode, we welcomed Revd Colin Wilson to his new parishes on 10 October. We said goodbye to Revd Rob Wardle as his ministry took him to Anglesey, and St John's and St Thomas's came into vacancy as Revd Tim and Revd Norma Robinson prepared to move to Tilston.

On 25 February the Synod met at Hurdsfield to hear a stimulating and highly thought-provoking talk by Professor Sir Robert Boyd concerning end of life as viewed from the standpoint and experience of both a Christian and a retired NHS consultant. On a pleasant summer's evening in June nearly 20 members enjoyed a walk around Ridgeway Reservoir before adjourning to the local pub for refreshments and sandwiches. Finally on 23 September at St Oswald's Bollington, we heard from the Dean of Chester Cathedral, the Very Revd Dr Tim Stratford, about the work going on in the Cathedral to do with mission. All three meetings were well attended and produced good feedback.

At the end of October, the Synod facilitated a meeting on behalf of the Archdeacon to introduce the High Sheriff of Cheshire, Mr Mark Mitchell, to the area. This took place at St Michael's in Macclesfield and had a missional objective.

The current synod comes to the end of its 3-year cycle in 2020 and at each parish APCM new members of the House of Laity will be elected. The new representation numbers were agreed at a recent diocesan synod and are as in this table:

Richard Raymond (Deanery Lay Chair)  
February 2020

Report submitted by Vicky and Gordon Darlington

Number on Electoral Roll	Number of representatives on Deanery Synod
Less than 50	1
51 to 150	2
151 to 250	3
251 to 400	4
401 to 750	5
751 or more	6



## Eco-Church Group

At St Michael's we are trying to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. This is reflected in 5 different areas of our life and work:

### Worship and teaching

- 2 or 3 themed services a year
- More frequent prayer and worship on a creation theme
- Sustainable and low-carbon lunches
- Choice of "Saying Yes to Life" as a Lent book

### Management of church buildings

- Supporting efforts to make the building more energy efficient; eg LED light bulbs
- Facilitating recycling
- Working towards sourcing energy from entirely renewable sources
- Planning for eventual replacement of the boiler
- Working on achieving the goal set by the C of E to be carbon-neutral by 2025

### Management of church land

- Greening of the churchyard continues
- Bees on the roof

### Community and global engagement

- Engaging with politicians locally and nationally to support environmental initiatives; eg improved cycling and walking infrastructure
- Supporting our neighbours in the developing south who are already suffering from the effects of climate change
- Supporting Macctastic and Schoolstrike4climate

### Lifestyle

- Regular eco-tips and articles on living more sustainably



The bay trees outside the west door flowering profusely in April

We hope to apply for the eco-church silver award in autumn 2020.

David Mayers

## Film Nights



January/February saw our second season of Film Evenings take place. These are not "religious" films (although they often raise interesting religious /spiritual ideas). The main aim is to offer some comfortable socialising opportunities at a dark time of year, with tea and cake provided (of course) at the beginning and again at the end, plus an opportunity to discuss the film.

The 2020 "season" comprised "The Ladykillers", "La Vita e Bella" ("Life is Beautiful" – Italian) and "Witness", three very different films. It must be said that public opinion seems to favour the old Ealing Comedies, but we shall continue to provide an eclectic mix as we plan the 2021 season!

It has been suggested that we could offer film evenings for children, which is something to explore for next year.

Lynne Spedding

## Flower Ministry

I would like to thank all members of the Flower Ministry Team; namely Bernice Jones, Audrey Evans, Sandie Bevan, Sue Henderson, Sue and Izzy Reid and Katy Wardle. They give their skills, time and flowers to decorate the church throughout the year. The church building would not have weekly flowers without the generosity of the church family who graciously donate funds for flowers in memory of loved ones or in celebration of an event. So we look forward prayerfully to worshipping together in a changed world and meanwhile we celebrate the wonder of springtime in all its glory.

Anne Kite



## Football Team

The Macclesfield team ministry runs two adult sides in the South Manchester and Cheshire Christian Football League; Macclesfield Parish FC and Macclesfield Parish St Peter's FC. We play our home games at "The Tip" on Windmill St, and use St Peter's for changing and refreshments – for which we are very grateful.

Few of our players are Christians, but all of them realise and appreciate that our football is different, played in an honest and sporting manner and usually very enjoyable as a result. They all join in a prayer before the game, and occasionally we have the opportunity to share our faith in more depth. It is a very important outreach to young men who would otherwise have no contact with church or Christianity.

This season has been marked by two shocking events: first the death to cancer of our long-time friend and inspiration Col Smith, who attended Bollington Life Church but was for 12 years a stalwart of our club; and secondly the sudden end of the season due to corona-virus. We look forward to a less eventful but equally successful season in 20-21. Please speak to Jonny Porter, David Mayers or James Booth if you would like to know more about your football team.

## Home Communion



This report finds us in strange circumstances. As a Home Communion team we are used to taking "church" out of the building into someone's home. We are "doing church differently" by telephoning instead. Some of those we visit have requested more frequent telephone contact during this time of isolation, which we are providing.

We currently have eight people we visit on a monthly basis, all of whom live alone. This last year has seen changes with us attending a few funerals but also having new names added to the list. If you know anyone who needs home communion please let Sallie Bancroft know.

Our team has changed. Karen has stepped down from the team as she prepares to go to Runcorn. We have been joined by Alison and Pete McKenzie. Here is our team:



Martin Stephens  
Rector



Sallie Bancroft



Rachel Mayers



Michael Wootton



Peter Johnston



Alison and Pete  
Mckenzie

Report compiled by Sallie Bancroft



## Homegroup (Monday Evening)

This past year we have had a very interesting range of subject matter to study and discuss. We engaged with The Prayer Course, from Pete Greig and the 24/7 prayer movement. We learnt a lot about deepening and widening our experiences of prayer. Then we all studied the Bible Course from Bible Society. In seven weeks we had a whole overview of the Bible in a way that we can remember, hopefully enabling us to build our knowledge and appreciation of it.

We have welcomed several new members to the group and are more than happy to have others join us.

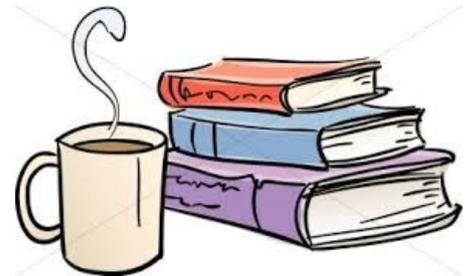
Catherine Stephens

## Homegroup (Thursday Evening)

Between 8 and 12 of us meet regularly on 1st and 3rd Thursday evenings for Bible study, prayer and fellowship. It is a long-established group, but very caring and welcoming and we would love to have more people join us.

We learn so much about ourselves and our faith by sharing our ideas and understanding of the Bible passages. You'd be amazed how often we disagree – but carry on loving each other and learning from each other all the same.

This year we are studying the gospel of Luke, with the help of Bishop Tom Wright; but have taken a break during Lent to study the Lent book "Saying Yes to Life" by Ruth Valerio. The last 2 meetings have been held via the internet – we never thought we would become Zoomers.



David Mayers



## Homemakers

Homemakers is a group of around 12 who meet fortnightly for a brief talk/theme and socialising. This is a long-standing group, whose name has changed several times over the years, and many have been members for a long time, offering and receiving support and friendship through good times and bad. The membership currently comprises women, but men are welcome to come along!

Topics which have formed part of the programme in 2019-202 have been:

- Press review
- "Finding my Roots"
- Quiz evening
- Christmas decorations
- Advent
- Games evening
- DVD evening
- Talk on Canada
- Talk on Learning Disabilities

Meetings have obviously been suspended during the COVID-19 situation but we hope that things will be up-and-running once isolation requirements are relaxed.

For further information, please contact Enid Skirvin or Grace Edgar



## Hospital Services

We have continued to hold regular services in St Luke's Chapel at Macclesfield DGH on the second and fifth Sunday in the month, until the recent lock-down due to Coronavirus.

This year we have had three new volunteers joined the Team: John Griffiths, Margaret Linney and Chris Wilcock, and we are very grateful to have them on board and sharing in this important ministry.

Our sincere thanks again to all the people involved in both leading our services, playing the organ and, of course, going around the wards and both inviting and bringing patients down to the Chapel.

Gordon and Vicky Darlington

## Nativity

We wouldn't normally have a report on a specific service but, as collator of this document *and* producer of the annual Nativity, I'm getting power-mad.

The Nativity Service is intended:

- to tell the Christmas story in an accessible and memorable way
- to be both entertaining and thought-provoking for the congregation
- to highlight some new understandings of what this event might mean to us
- to be completely inclusive – people of all ages are encouraged to participate, including members of the congregation (who are urged to dress as characters from the nativity story and take part in relevant scenes)
- to be family fun for everyone
- to be a foil to the wonderful and entirely different Carols by Candlelight Service – usually in the evening of the same day



2019 saw 26 people take part, playing characters as diverse as Mary, Joseph, and the usual cast plus Holly, Christmas Tree, Christmas Cracker, etc. Who would have thought it?! The miracle was that the script was written before actors (I use the term loosely) were recruited – 26 parts emerged in the script and precisely 26 volunteers came forward. It must have been "meant".

Lynne Spedding



## Open the Book

Within the Team Ministry there are three Open the Book groups which visit local primary schools on a rolling programme, bringing Bible stories to life through drama. This brief report is from Team 2.

Another enjoyable year for OTB Team 2, performing stories from the Old and New Testaments. The picture show Dek Kite as Peter, denying any knowledge of Jesus (Jenny Whitten), on three occasions.

Unfortunately, we have been unable this year to complete all the visits to our five schools, due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Mo Black





## Pastoral Network

As members of the congregation live in all parts of Macclesfield, St Michael's Pastoral Care Network has been divided into areas, with a Pastoral Network Coordinator in each area to keep in touch and befriend all our church members. These Coordinators are also a good point of contact for new people and the clergy. The Pastoral Coordinators are committed volunteers who also keep in touch with those in their areas who are no longer able to get to church.

Because the Home Communion Team's work also includes pastoral care to the housebound, we decided this year to look again at the Pastoral Coordinator's role, to perhaps better coordinate our respective roles.

The Pastoral Coordinators have had 2 meetings during the past year with Martin Stephens. Paul Spedding also attended to raise awareness about church safeguarding issues

There are 12 Pastoral Coordinators at present with 3 vacancies in the South Macclesfield, Kennedy Ave. and Buxton Rd areas.

### Future developments:

- Using the church's new data base system, we are developing a more reliable way to identify new church members so they can be promptly matched to their respective Pastoral Coordinator.
- At our next meeting we will be exploring the idea of developing the Pastoral Coordinator role further so that new people and church members can meet and be welcomed by their own Pastoral Coordinator whenever they come to church. The Pastoral Coordinator could also, for example, introduce people living in their area to each other and invite them to church activities.
- We require 3 volunteers for the vacant areas
- The need for a review of the current Bereavement Service has recently been identified.

We would like to thank everyone who has given their time and support to the Pastoral Network, especially in recent weeks since the coronavirus outbreak. It is much appreciated.

Hazel Hidden and Vicky Darlington



## Safeguarding Report

As members of this church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially young people and vulnerable adults. Our two safeguarding officers, Paul Spedding and Chris Bentley, together with Sue Reid, have attempted to follow all the guidelines from the Church of England centrally and from the Diocese.

We have recently complied with the national requirements on Past Case Review (PCR2).

Paul Spedding, Safeguarding Officer

## Scouts and Guides

Growing the movement. The Scout and Guide group continues to grow its membership and has done for the last 4 successive years. We are looking forward to continuing to deliver safe, fun adventure for 5 to 100+ year olds. In particular this year we are aiming to start a new project to refurbish the rear rooms of the hut to provide more useable storage and meeting spaces. Above all we need to solve the leaky roof! We are building teams focused on building maintenance, fund-raising and community engagement. Anyone interested in joining please contact [enquiries@mpcsg.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@mpcsg.co.uk)

Mike Brown



## Social Committee

Prior to the enforced lock down created by the Coronavirus Epidemic the Social Committee has continued to lead, support and encourage people to attend a number of Church family events. During the last twelve months we have been involved with various church groups in arranging and supporting the following events:-



- Our monthly Treacle Market – helping with serving refreshments and stewarding the church after our morning Treacle Service
- Food & Hygiene Course
- Joyce Millard's Coffee Morning to raise funds for the church
- Theatre Trip to New Vic in Newcastle-Under-Lyne.
- Christmas Afternoon Tea
- Visit to Lovell Quinta Arboretum
- Two Family Walks along the River Bollin and Afternoon Tea at Prestbury Parish Church
- Film Nights arranged by Lynne & Paul Spedding
- Also supporting : Remembering Service; Music @ Mike's Lunchtime Concerts; Town Carol Service; Confirmation Service; Heritage Weekend; MacMillan Coffee Morning
- And finally - we mustn't forget our regular Kitchen Clean!!

Sadly, Lynne has stepped down from being a Member of the Committee, but we have been very grateful for all the contributions Lynne has made over several years supporting our many activities and in particular the Film Evenings. Hopefully, these will continue in the New Year. Thank you again Lynne for all your encouragement and suggesting new ideas for putting on events. Carol Riesen recently joined our Committee and it's great to have someone who is positive and bringing along ideas to the Team and helping to keep our Church Family together. The Team have many great ideas for the future, when life gets back to "normal". My sincere thanks again to all the volunteers on the Social Committee and other members from our congregation who have helped and supported our many and varied activities throughout the year.

Vicky Darlington



### Start The Week

Start The Week is part of the Open Door ministry provided by our church. It has a focus on prayer and listening. It has been running for over a year and has grown to be more than imagined.

What a privilege it is to be part of this team of nine people and serve our community. Through listening, praying and active support we have helped people:-

- find jobs
- find accommodation
- start on the path of recovery from addiction
- find peace of mind
- renew faith
- join a home group
- enjoy food and refreshment

We have some regulars who visit on their way to work or town, some who come in to pray and be quiet, some who come for a listening ear and some who join us for Morning Prayer.

While we are closed we are continuing with the prayers from our own homes. For those for whom we have contact details, we are keeping in touch.

If you feel this is something you wish to be part of please get in touch. Never underestimate the power of prayer.

Sallie Bancroft





## Strategy (Leadership) Team

Members of this group were appointed by the Church Council, after recommendation by a Church Council subcommittee; they would normally include clergy and one churchwarden, and be a total of 8 members. Remaining members in 2019 were: Martin Stephens, Karen Brady, Paul Simms, Tricia Atherton, Sue Reid and Rachel Mayers. Sue Reid stood down in August, and she and other members who had resigned have not been replaced since no nominations were received. Other people are invited to the meetings depending on the subjects being discussed.

The role is to support the Church Council by

- maintaining an overview of the church's mission and ministry and recommending areas for development (strategy).
- taking time for deeper research, reflection both on personal experience and Biblical teaching and discussion on issues that are raised by the Council
- being responsive to the Church Council, not, per se, a decision-making or "task-oriented" group.

The Leadership Team has continued to meet once per month in 2019/20; it was renamed the Strategy Team during 2019.

Consideration of both development of the building and stewardship highlighted the need for the church to have a clear, shared vision of its mission and ministry as a Town Centre Church. To that end, a major activity this year has been planning the Vision Day which was held on 29<sup>th</sup> February. Members of the team visited three other town centre churches in the Diocese to find out more about their roles as town centre churches and whether ministers would be inspiring speakers at the Vision Day.

Most meetings featured a major group or activity, to encourage and support, considering:

- What is unclear? What could be improved
- What do you need support with?
- 

Such activities were:

- A review of the 9.30 congregation (not the form of worship) with representatives led to a renewal of the 9.30 coordinating group who oversee volunteers, pastoral and social activities.
- Review of Pastoral Networks and welcoming.
- Town Centre Ministry: this highlighted some unclear boundaries, and the need for us to be better at talking about our faith.
- Forward planning – an attempt to have a forward plan to avoid too many simultaneous or last-minute initiatives
- Nurture & discipleship activities: list developed but discussion to be continued.
- Worship review (we asked where has it got to?)

In addition,

- Tricia prepared a summary of roles and responsibilities
- Sue prepared a booklet advertising children & young people's activities.

The various committees supporting the church are now being reviewed, and the role of this group is likely to be covered elsewhere.

Rachel Mayers



Mosaic of St Michael, chancel floor,  
St Michael's Church



## Team Rector's Report

Amidst the general busyness and challenges of church life, 2019 was a year where several things have begun to be implemented to help St Michael's work and ministry function well.

In the office Sue Reid undertook aspects of the Church Co-ordinator role (in addition to being Clergy PA). This has been made possible by a number of people also stepping in to assist with tasks such as printing, counting money and arranging the Home Communion, and I'm grateful to them. The IT systems have been overhauled to make it more efficient for shared working (something we are now definitely benefiting from), and we have subscribed to a data management system which will further help us keep in touch with people, both core members and those more on the fringe of our church community.

I am delighted that we have additional new Chalice Assistants trained and now offering to administer in the services. Thank you to them, and to Karen for preparing them.

A small group met to review our Sunday Worship and see how things might develop, with over 100 people contributing. A major outcome was the realisation that this went bigger and deeper than a questionnaire and although there hasn't been major change the group's work has contributed to wider thinking, including towards our Vision Day.

In addition to the regular house-/fellowship-groups, we promoted wide take up of and engagement with the Church of England's discipleship materials. The Lent and Easter Pilgrim booklets were supplemented with small discussion groups, and we gave away many #FollowTheStar booklets to enquirers at our main Christmas services.

### The future?

I'm excited and upbeat about this year and into the future. For those who prefer a fully mapped out route I'm not certain you'll get this, sorry. However, the key to our journey is "Is the Lord with us or not?" (Ex.17:7). There are three concurrent, separate-but-related conversations taking place at the moment.

### Urban Macclesfield

The archdeacon has appointed a consultant, Dave King, to undertake a review of the Anglican Church in 'urban Macclesfield'. The simple fact is that the Church of England is not as strong as it might be in what could be considered its classic Christian demographic – a majority-white, middle-class, prosperous, Cheshire market town. Whatever the outcome of Dave King's work, I welcome the fact that the Church of England is seeking to be proactive, possibly discerning new ways of being Church, rather than piecemeal tinkering about the edges of church life and parish boundaries.

### St Michael's Leadership Structures

A number of us have sensed that our leadership structures (Church Council, Standing Committee, Strategy Team, Team Council and the number of *ad hoc* groups and committees) are not working as best they might. Using an external consultant, we'll be reviewing this and considering new ways forward for our church's shared leadership.

### Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Conversations

I'm grateful that so many of you have joined in with the 'Open hearts' meetings in February and March. Although a key instigator was the budgeted deficit (of over £40k across the four churches of the Macclesfield Team), I'm heartened by the fact that the key question has been about purpose: what is it we as Christians and as Christian churches are called to be? Getting our finances right is essential of course, but our calling as Christians and as a church community is fundamental.

As I said earlier, I'm upbeat about this coming year. Wherever these three paths lead, it's important that we face them without fear. Fear arises when we imagine that everything depends on us. But this is about God working among us for His kingdom and His purposes. And that's exciting!

Martin Stephens  
Team Rector



## Toddler Group

Toddler Group runs from 10.00.a.m. to 11.30.a.m. every Thursday during term time and we charge £1.00. per family. Five of us run the Toddler Group: Catherine Stephens, Alexa Stenhouse, Norma Stanway, Linda Houghton, and myself.

We are grateful to Leah - one of the Mums - who plays the keyboard. We are also very grateful to Alan Wootton who helps put everything away at the end of the session.

We have, on average, between 15 and 25 families attend each week - including mums, dads, grandparents and carers. We have a time to play, then move into the Youth Centre for drinks and biscuits and a singing session. We have a prayer together before the children play on the big toys.

We all enjoy our time together chatting and playing with the children.

Ruth Parker



## Town Centre Ministry

### 1. Planning events within and outside church to engage with a wider audience

- Music@Mike's; 24 concerts, about 1000 visitors
- Town Carol Service; about 400 visitors
- Planning more opportunities for prayer; both in church and in the churchyard.
- Supporting Start the Week



### 2. Supporting and encouraging social action initiatives

- WHAM
- ROAR
- Street Angels
- Silklife foodbank



### 3. Extending church opening hours and stewarding for town-wide events

- Treacle Market
- Christmas light switch-on
- Election hustings
- Working with the Town Council

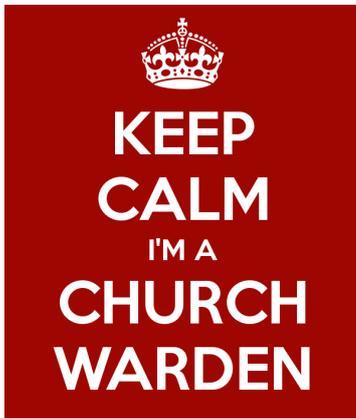


### 4. Prisons ministry – supporting Yvonne and the chaplaincy team at Styal

- Prison Sunday and prayer
- Diocesan Criminal Justice Committee (Anne and Lynne are members)
- Collecting clothes and gifts



David Mayers



## Wardens' Report

- Along with all places of worship, the church was closed on 23rd March. We do not know when we will be able to reopen.
- The church property at 7 Brocklehurst Way has been sold. Negotiations to purchase a new property, more in keeping with our needs and resources, are currently underway.
- A highly successful Vision Day was held on 29th February. Outline findings are being circulated.

- Rev Karen Brady will be leaving us at the end of April to become vicar of St Michael's, Runcorn.
- Minor works and routine maintenance have been undertaken throughout the year. Our thanks go to the Building Committee and all the volunteers who give their time and expertise; to Alexa, and Enid for keeping the church clean and tidy; to Karen for the music; to Sue in the office and especially to all those who help to keep our church open and welcoming to visitors.

Paul Simms and Tricia Atherton



## WHAM (Nightshelter)

The WHAM (Winter Hope Accommodation in Macclesfield) weekend nightshelter took place over fifteen weekends this winter. Six churches (Elim Pentecostal, Macclesfield Methodists, Salvation Army, St Alban's, St Michael's and the United Reformed Church) each offered the use of their building for two or three weekends. The period covered weekends from 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019 to 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

The shelter operated in St Michael's building on two weekends (the third one was moved because of the COVID-19 crisis). 24 members of St Michael's volunteered for at least one shift, and some were among our most frequent volunteers. Weekends at St Michael's are usually staffed by a majority of St Michael's people but many also volunteer elsewhere via a central booking system. Activities at St Michael's are coordinated by Rachel Mayers, assisted by Matt Lewis. Ruth Thompson supports the project with medical and contextual expertise.

Volunteering, especially doing shifts at other venues, is a great opportunity to get to know members of other churches, as well as to improve our understanding of people whose life and experience can be very different from our own. It is almost always an enjoyable experience.

### ***Below is our formal full report for the year:***

During the shelter period:

WHAM operated on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights; additional nights were hosted on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> December to avoid guests being on the streets on a Bank Holiday but we were unable to staff the extra days around Christmas. An evening meal was available each night.

Equipment was transported weekly between venues by Cre8, who also provided a supply of frozen meals made from surplus food by the Hope Centre.

### **Guests:**

- 30 different guests were given at least one night's shelter; 134 nights' accommodation was provided in total. This is an increase from previous years where the figures were 20 guests and approximately 100 nights (over 14 or 15 weekends).
- For the first time we accepted female guests (5 of the 30) – no problems were specifically associated with this.
- Most guests stayed 2 or 3 nights over a weekend. Some used WHAM on only one weekend, but several were regular visitors; having left or been asked to leave a hostel was a frequent reason for asking for shelter. We had two or three "regulars" who were unable or unwilling to access alternative accommodation. We suspected or knew about drug-related activity among our guests (though not

actually at the shelter); a pattern that emerged was arriving to claim a bed then disappearing until about 11pm.

- Few guests asked for support from Citizens Advice this year.
- As often observed, there were low numbers of guests at the start but 6-8 each night for a period at the end of January/early February. We did not see particularly high numbers at Christmas and New Year.
- We had a greater number of challenging incidents this year than in previous years, but increasing experience among our volunteers and an excellent response from Emergency Services when they were called (four times) meant that these were dealt with effectively.

#### **Volunteers:**

- 129 Volunteers have helped staff the Shelter. They represent many HOPE in NEC churches, with particularly good numbers from Macclesfield Methodists, St Albans, Salvation Army and St Michael's. We also have volunteers without known church connections.
- Although sometimes late in the week, we have filled all shifts except for the ones in Christmas week. This tendency for volunteers to leave it late before committing can make it stressful for the coordinator.
- Training sessions are provided for volunteers, with additional training for shift leaders (who must be members of a HOPE church), and in Emergency First Aid. All were given a Volunteer Handbook with key aspects of the Policies and Procedures.
- This year we contacted all volunteers on our list to confirm their commitment and GDPR permission. A recruitment effort in the autumn resulted in a good number of new recruits, so we had a working list of 160 volunteers.

#### **Links with Cheshire East:**

- There have been good relationships and communication with the Rough Sleepers Initiative team at Macclesfield Town Hall.
- We had plans in place, and an arrangement with Cheshire East, to provide Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP), when Cheshire East options were full. Hilda Gaddum has joined the team to coordinate this. The offer was only called upon once and was in fact called off after a change in weather forecast.

#### **Finance:**

- Thanks to a grant from Macclesfield Town Council of almost £2000, and some generous donations from churches and individuals, WHAM was able to cover running costs.
- Running costs amount to about £2500 per year including transport of equipment by Cre8, storage, printing, and replacement of some equipment. We also hold a stock of fresh underwear and socks to offer to guests. We have made a one-off donation to hosting churches towards heating, lighting and lost booking revenue.

**COVID-19 crisis:** when the crisis became apparent we moved the shelter from St Michael's Youth Centre to the URC to enable better distancing. Since many volunteers are over 70 or are caring for elderly relatives or themselves at risk, we ran overnight shifts only to minimise the number of volunteers required. The final (sixteenth) weekend was cancelled upon Government advice but guests who arrived on Friday were advised to contact Cheshire East support.

WHAM continues to be an example of Macclesfield's Churches working together to help with a problem which symbolises the broken makeup of much of our society.

Rachel Mayers



#### **Women with Cake**

We continue to meet monthly alternating Tuesday and Thursday, and usually on the 2nd week of the month, for fellowship, prayer, support and surprise, surprise cake!

One person hosts; another leads a discussion, craft or whatever they fancy; and cake (homemade or bought) arrives ad-hoc without fail or planning!  
All women welcome.

Judith Whittingham



## Youth Group

The Youth Group continues to offer a space for teenagers to gather, have a laugh with friends, socialise and explore their faith. We led the Treacle Service in February. This took quite a few weeks to get together, especially the band practices. However, on the day we were very proud of the young people. They are a talented bunch with lots to give to the church. Many people gave encouraging feedback.

We have joined in with the wider Macclesfield youth praise events called "Amplified". Two of our members were confirmed last autumn.

Please pray for the young people, this long break from school and college is very disruptive to their education and may well be hard for them socially.

We hope to restart in September.

Jonny, James and Catherine