

@stmikesmacclesfield



www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk

Advent

Sally Bancroft

Perhaps I should start by saying, "Happy New Year" because Advent is the start of the Christian year. During this time we reflect on the arrival of Jesus, remembering his birth as God in human form, which we celebrate at Christmas. It is a time of preparation as we consider the second coming; are we ready to meet Jesus? And it is a time to renew our hope.



Advent is also a time of waiting. What is waiting?

- It is allowing time to pass, often staying in one place, doing very little. This time of year is not, generally, an easy time to wait as there is so much to do!
- It is a watchful activity. We have to be present and pay attention. If we are not alert we might miss that for which we are waiting. You might say, "How can you miss Christmas?" But are we alert to Jesus? (NB Matthew 24:42-44)
- It can also be considered as service as in waiting on, being a waiter.

In today's society, which promotes activity and instant gratification, we have forgotten how to wait and how to be present. There is a lack of attention as we are distracted by what we see on screens, thoughts about what is happening in the world, bombarded by our "to do" lists, and many other things that keep us from being present. Sometimes, especially as we age, we can spend a lot of time on our own. This time doesn't always translate into being able to be present in the waiting. We can still be overtaken by worries and concerns including about our health and abilities and how we are going to manage. We also get impatient, stressing about wanting to "hurry up".



*Pobull Fhinn, Langaig, Outer Hebrides
Be still and know that I am God Psalm 46:10*

Being present takes practice. How often are we fully present? Do we notice creation, the smell of the air after a frost, shafts of light through the clouds, bird song? Do we savour our food? Do we notice a smile or frown on the faces of people around us? How often in conversation are we really listening; or are we thinking about what to say or how to escape as we have "things to do"? Do we truly come to God in prayer, fully attending to the breath of the Holy Spirit within?

It is easy not to notice the good, God in our lives, particularly with all that is in the news at the moment. Throughout time there have always been challenges in life which, if we are not careful, can distract us from a life with God. Being present and attentive in prayer and in life need practice. It is not a case of emptying the mind, we are not zombies. We need to stop, note the ground beneath our feet, the seat upon which we rest and be aware of where we are; don't "shut down". In activity notice what we are doing, don't go on auto pilot. Realise that God's Holy Spirit is present and take time to be and be patient. Be alive to the living presence of God in each of us and in the world around us.

At a new year we often make a commitment, new year resolutions. This Advent can we make a resolution to wait on our Lord, to be fully attentive and present with God, bringing our whole selves, body, mind and soul? And in life notice the people and world around us so that we can serve God more fully? If we are alert to the presence of the Holy Spirit within us we can hold onto hope and share it with others. May we learn to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone (George Fox, Quaker).

Next week: 22nd Dec.

10.00 - Nativity Service

Come and enjoy a light-hearted re-telling of the Christmas narrative next Sunday, wearing suitably themed headgear (halo, tea-towel or crown) at the very least! Actors of all ages and abilities are participating.



6.30 - Carols by Candlelight

One of the treats of our church year: the Christmas narrative in its traditional form, with carols sung by the choir plus some congregational singing, all in candlelight.




See attached posters

The Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist
to prepare the way of your Son:
give us courage to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice,
and to suffer for the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congratulations!

to Izzi!



... on passing her driving test at the first attempt!

Well done, Izzi!

Revealed

A Poem by Dorothy Bentley-Smith

I draw back my curtains, and to my surprise,
 a thick greyish blanket is blocking my view.
 Yet the light is so bright, where is the sunrise?
 Where are the hills and the park? But through
 the thick veil, a shaft of bright light, gives
 hope for the morning by sending this clue.
 And slowly but surely the clouds drift up high;
 then I know that later the thing I must do,
 is put on my coat and my hat and my gloves,
 and walk by the pool on the grass touched with dew.

Open-air Carols

The Friends of **West Park** are bringing Christmas to the park **this Sunday (15th December)**, 12 noon - 1.00pm in the playground. All welcome!



PLEASE NOTE!

KEMS Concert Band is leading carols at **Holy Trinity Hurdfield on Friday 20th December at 7.00pm**, not at Victoria Park Bandstand as previously advertised, as the bandstand is currently under repair,

RHS Bridgewater 'Glow' Event



Hil, Bernice, Paul and Lynne braved the wind and rain to visit the 'Glow' Experience at RHS Bridgewater last week.

The light effects were stunning - and we managed to warm up with a nice cup of tea in the café afterwards!



Cows in church!

Our daughter asked her six-year-old the other day whether anything special was happening the next day at school (she already knew there was).

"Yes," he replied, "Cows, in church"

Lynne

(he obviously meant "carols" - and yes, this is a space-filler!)



ADVENT CONTROVERSIES

WHO WILL LIGHT THE CANDLES ON THE ADVENT WREATH?

SHOULD THE WREATH HAVE ONE PINK CANDLE?

WHETHER TO PREACH ON CHALLENGING ADVENT THEMES

WHO COULD HAVE EATEN THE VESTRY ADVENT CALENDAR CHOCOLATES?

CartoonChurch.com

KEMS Macclesfield Singers Symphony Orchestra

Christmas Concert

A joint Christmas Concert will be held featuring Macclesfield Symphony Orchestra and Macclesfield Singers (King Edward Musical Society)

Saturday 14th December 7.30pm

St Michael's Church.

Tickets: £15. Under-18s free

Available via <https://kems.yapsody.com/>, or through the Tourist Information Office & Margin Music, or pay on the door.

Fragments of Saxon Crosses?



Long hidden in the Savage Chapel behind the heavy and mysterious chest in the alcove next to the far door (see above) are these "lumps" of stone. However long you have been coming to St Michael's you are unlikely to have seen them.



But what are they?



About 6 months ago a chatty, energetic lady turned up at AAMT and demanded to see the stones – she had photographs of them – but no-one recognised them.



These are clearly not in the Savage Chapel but in West Park!

Margaret - her name it transpired was Margaret Clarke, a hydrologist and historian – was frustrated, as she had to leave soon to visit a farm in the hills for work purposes.

But she agreed to leave the photos to see if anyone else could recognise them.

Rachel, our church warden who has delved into most of the dark and gloomy corners in the church, came up trumps.

A month later Margaret returned, we found and removed the stones from their hiding place, and she was delighted.

She was fairly sure they were remnants of boundary markers of the 10th century Danelaw; and it turns out that Macclesfield was close to the boundary between the Danelaw and the Kingdom of Mercia.

This is Margaret's theory, for it's hard to be certain, of how the stones came to St Michael's;

Broken Cross

Once there was a handsome carved cross standing at the site of the toll-house for the turnpike to Chester, but it was broken. At least ten similar crosses, three pairs and four singles, formed three sides of a rectangle, north, west and south around the settlement of Macclesfield.

When the crosses were erected about 970 CE the inhabitants had strong Scandinavian connections, following the Viking invasions between 835 and c. 944 CE. They used the word 'gata' for street (Jordangate, Chestergate, Wallgate etc.) and dug for peat at a 'mos' or bog (Danes Moss). But above all they followed their own legal system, later called the Danelaw.

These crosses got broken - by weather and by deliberate attacks by Parliamentarians (Roundheads), by recycling for gate-posts or building stones and by removal to other sites for collectors' trophies or garden ornaments.

Three are now at West Park and two at Adlington Hall. One, Upton, has been slightly re-sited for road-works. Fragments of carvings were brought to St Michael's for safe keeping.

It is therefore probable that at least one of these pieces came originally from the 'broken cross'.

Christingle Service

Last week we held our Christingle Service and, despite the weather being very grim, those who made it to church enjoyed a lovely time of worship together.

Here are some photographs:



Waiting for *all* the lights to be turned off



Posada: the journey continues for Mary and Joseph



Watched over by Alice and Jack



At Tony and Enid's house



At the Christingle Service



Visiting Marion Athorne last week, in her care-home.



Mary and Joseph by Lynne and Paul's Advent Pagoda, with its sails gently powered by the heat from the candles below, and the Nativity scenes rotating above them



Christmas Events around the Town



- **Thursday 12th December, 2.00 - 8.00pm.**

Twilight market: the town centre will be busy and we will be keeping the church open until 8.00pm to offer a warm welcome, a quiet space, and of course our toilets. In addition there will be musical entertainment in church provided by the Caravannettes choir, 7.00 - 7.45pm.

- **14th December at 12:30pm - 1.15pm**

Lunchtime recital by Macclesfield Brass at Macclesfield URC on in aid of Silklife Foodbank. With refreshments.

- **Sunday 15th December at 2:30pm**

Concert of Christmas Music by Macclesfield Brass at St John the Evangelist on . With refreshments. Money raised will go to buying a defibrillator for the local community.

- **East Cheshire Hospice Christmas Tree Collection**

This is the 25th year of collecting Christmas trees and arranging for their responsible, eco-friendly disposal. Volunteers will be out in their vans on the weekend of **11/12 January 2025** to do this. Register your tree for collection at echtrees.org.uk and take the opportunity to give a donation to our local hospice. Further info: 01625 708939.



Why Go to Church?

This is an amusing interchange, and perhaps reassuring to those of us who regularly preach in church - if you can ignore the blatant sexism in the story!

A churchgoer wrote a letter to his local newspaper complaining that it made no sense to go to church every week.

"I've gone for 30 years now and in that time I've heard about 3,000 sermons but, for the life of me, I can't remember a single one. So I think I'm wasting my time, and the ministers and preachers are certainly wasting theirs!"

This started an ongoing controversy on the 'Letters to the Editor' page, until someone wrote in thus:

"I've been married for some 30 years and in that time my wife has cooked about 32,000 meals, yet for the life of me I can't remember the menu for a single one of those meals.

But I do know this. They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife hadn't given me those meals, I'd be physically dead today. Likewise, if I hadn't gone to church, I'd be spiritually dead today.



Mary, Joseph and the donkey surveying the winter wonderland at the Bradbury house.

Christmas Eco Tips

1. Look into alternative Christmas trees – rent, or turn your houseplant into a tree!



[Forestry England have some great tips](#) on making sure your Christmas tree is as sustainable as can be. They include, if you choose a real tree, making sure it is Grown-in-Britain certified, opting for a potted tree (which can last a lifetime, not just Christmas!), and recycling your tree after you've used it. If you're opting for a fake tree, it's estimated to take 10 years to make it environmentally worthwhile, so make sure you love it.



2. Switch to LED lights, which use up to 80% less energy

Christmas lights are a delight that are hard to get bored of, but they're even more of a delight when they're LEDs and use 80% less energy – happy family, happy wallet!



3. Send e-cards or plantable Christmas cards

Firstly, nobody needs the mass sending of Christmas cards with only 'Happy Christmas' written in them. This year, challenge yourself to only send a card if it's got a personal message inside. If you want to still send a card but without the waste, opt for e-cards. If you want the real card, choose ones made with recycled card, ones with the FSC or PEFC logo to ensure it comes from well managed forests that support local people, or at least cards free of glitter so they can be recycled.



4. Go meat free, and cut food (and packaging) waste

A scary amount of food waste is created at Christmas, equivalent to

4.2 million plates of Christmas dinner going straight into the bin! Take steps to reduce your food waste by planning your food carefully, freezing leftovers and only buying what will be eaten. At the same time, consider reducing meat consumption, and your carbon footprint, with a tasty nut roast or veggie alternative.

5. Re-wear your Christmas jumper

The crazier the better!

6. Choose one big present

We all know that Secret Santa gift we get and then forget about, shoved to the back of the cupboard, until we move. This year, avoid the tiny presents with no impact and consider choosing one gift for the whole family, or friendship group, that everyone can enjoy together.



7. Enjoy time together!

Overall, nothing is more important at Christmas than the people we spend it with. Consider how you can support people in the local community to [combat loneliness](#), and enjoy rest, some wonderful walks in nature and quality time with loved ones this Christmas.



Light Up St Michael's - update

At last!!! This exciting project will see us improving our failing lighting, so Lynne can read her music and the building is generally less gloomy (*comment from Lynne: excellent news, but now she'll have no excuse for singing the wrong notes!*).

It will be lit more sensitively, with flexible settings for different situations, for worship and community events.

This also forms part of our Net Zero plan to become more energy-efficient as all lights will be LED. It's absolutely essential work if we are to keep our building as a focus for the community - a building which is unlit is pretty useless to anyone!

We now have a **start date of 13th January** and we will let you know before then how we will manage while the work is going on. Please note that, although the contractors will do a lot of furniture moving and protecting, we need to clear non-essential stuff out of the Worship Area, and store it safely elsewhere in church. We will be asking for help over the weekend 11th-12th January.

Most importantly - the fundraising is progressing. We will give you a detailed update soon, but in the meantime please continue to consider donating (mark your donation "Lights" if you make a transfer to the Building Fund).

Perhaps you have friends or business contacts who value the building as a community space or who would like to contribute to the community in this way. The extra money will ensure that we can highlight our heritage items, including re-lighting the Savage Chapel, and to make this a truly atmospheric building for the community of Macclesfield. We will still accept donations after Christmas so don't worry if you are too busy or too short of cash just now.

Pick up a leaflet from the welcome area for more information.

HELP
LIGHT UP
ST MICHAEL'S

Support the New Lighting Project for
St. Michael & All Angels, Macclesfield.

THE NEED FOR
NEW LIGHTING

- efficiency
- safety
- aesthetics

HOW TO **DONATE**

Visit: stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk

Bank Transfer:
A/C: St. Michael & All Angels Church
Sort Code: 16-24-32 A/C no: 12923915

Worship, Events, and Our Community.

Christmas Services at
St Michael's

- * Town Carol Service: Thursday 19th Dec. at 7.00pm
- * Crib Service: Tuesday 24th Dec. at 4.00pm

Posters attached with this newsletter

Join us for *Worship*



Sunday Worship

15th December 2024
Third Sunday of Advent

10:00am: Church Family Holy Communion

Bible Reading: Zephaniah 3.14-20
Leader: Martin Bancroft (Reader in Training)
Speaker and Celebrant: Revd Martin Stephens

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 taking place on ?? (*Ed. Sorry—no-one's told me!*)

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

19th December: Holy Communion
2nd January: 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



Contemplative Prayer

Every Friday at 9:20am in the Savage Chapel, lasting half an
hour. An opportunity for quiet prayer followed by a short 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=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZoVXdaZz09)
[pwd=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZoVXdaZz09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?pwd=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZoVXdaZz09)

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** office@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
9.00-3.00; and Thursday & Friday 9.00 - 1.00

Safeguarding Contact Information



If you have any safeguarding concerns,
please contact the St Michael's
Safeguarding Officer, Katie Wilcock:
Phone: 07438 807213
Email: safeguarding@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk



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 [here](#)

(your request will be circulated
confidentially to a limited group of people
who will pray for you)

