

@stmikesmacclesfield



www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk

Contemplating Lent

Lent is a 40 day period (not including Sundays) in the Christian calendar. In the Bible, 40 is a number often associated with times of trial and transformation. Specifically Lent is linked with Jesus who, following his baptism, spent 40 days and nights in the desert fasting and being tempted by the devil (see Mark 1:9-13 and parallels)



Are we in a desert?

This question can apply to us as individuals as with Jesus. It can also apply to groups of people (the Israelites after their escape from Egypt). Deserts can be physical places but they also refer to a spiritual state. Feeling lost, spiritual dryness, struggling to connect with God, know His direction or feel His presence is something many Christians encounter. The desert is a place of challenge, even desolation, where God can teach us something; a time where we can be laid bare, to know ourselves and God more fully.

How have we arrived in the desert?

In some ways this doesn't matter; whether we have strayed from 'The Way' or been led there by God. What does matter is opening ourselves to recognise where we are and to learn from it. It may be that we are stuck in our habits of turning up physically to church or meeting with other Christians, e.g. home Communion, home groups, prayer meetings. It may be that we have **habits** of prayer but have forgotten to be fully present in body, mind and spirit. We can be busy doing, 'being' Christians, without being in the presence of God.

What do we do if lost in the desert?

Don't panic! Running round like the proverbial headless chicken in the dark will not help, physically or metaphorically.

1. Remember God's promises e.g. 'He will never leave you, nor forsake you' (Deuteronomy 31:6, repeated in Hebrews 13:5). This desert experience is temporary. It is not a sign of abandonment. God is present in the desert even though sometimes we are not aware of His presence. We are here because we need Spiritual learning. God may be leading us through a desert to purify our hearts, test our faith, or prepare us for something greater.
2. When lost we need to stop and get our bearings. We need to know where we are and then follow the map God provides. As humans we have tendencies to over-use our heads, to be super-logical in our thinking, or to over-focus on our feelings. Our thinking can be faulty and our feelings can fluctuate, but God is truth and constant.
3. Don't give up! Ignore the emptiness, endure the heat (change often involves going through heat/fire), face "wild beasts", the things that get between us and God

e.g. ambition, relationships, possessions, knowing that, even though there may be a 'battle', God will help us. Continue to trust in God and focus on Him. Remember past experiences of God working in our lives and have faith.

4. Where do we find our water and food? God is our oasis. Walk with Jesus. Be led by the Holy Spirit. Through prayer and bible reading we find our sustenance, our companion and guide. Don't just go through the motions but take time, listen and encounter the living word that God is giving.
5. A desert can be a lonely place. We need to be alone with God in prayer and bible reading for Him to reveal to us what we need to know. Only we can encounter Him face to face. Meeting with other Christians (maybe you have a trusted Christian friend with whom to share your struggles?) can help us to walk our path. They may receive a special word for us, to encourage us or shed light on something that needs to change.

May we use Lent, whether in a desert or not, as a time of Spiritual learning and renewal, encountering God and know our true selves revealed to us in the light and love of Christ. May we be transformed by God's grace. As we emerge at Easter, may we join together in Resurrection living.



Sallie Bancroft

Church Flowers

The beautiful flowers in the Worship Area have been graciously given and arranged by Sandie Bevan in loving memory of her parents.

Thank you, Sandie.

The pink Chancel Table flowers were graciously given by Audrey and Helen Evans in loving memory of their beloved Jane, so sadly missed. Pink was Jane's favourite colour.

Thank you Audrey and Helen.

(and our thanks to the Flower Ministry Team for their dedication and creativity)

The Collect for the Second Sunday of Lent

Almighty God,
by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,
and by following in his Way
come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord

Recycle-Reuse Stall

St Michael's next Treacle Market Recycle-Reuse Stall will be on 27th April. Proceeds will go to our church eco-projects.

If you are having a spring clear-out please save your good quality pre-loved items for the stall. Books, toys and household items in good condition are very welcome. (NO CLOTHES please).

There is a box at the back of church for your donations. If you have difficulty bringing items in, please contact Anne Radmall (anne@radmall.co.uk / 07714 234624) to arrange a pick-up.

If you can help on the day to set up before church or run the stall, please contact Anne, Martin B., Lynne or Anne Kite (from the Social Action and Wider World Team)

(Any surplus items at the end of the day will be donated to charity)

Our last such stall raised quite a significant sum, which has allowed us to make donations to A Rocha, pay for the replanting of the containers outside church and for the lovely sign in one of the raised beds advertising our desire to preserve God's creation.



Harriet

This week we have had Women's International Day and also the celebration of the life and faith of Harriet Tubman, truly inspiring. I thoroughly recommend the film about her life, available on some streaming channels, e.g. Netflix.



I also recommend an App called Lectio 365 (<https://lectio365.24-7prayer.com/share/devotionals/2025-03-10/morning?locale=en>).

On this app, on Monday 10th March there was a meditation on Harriet's life and faith.

She was born and raised a slave. She had an extraordinary prophetic gift and was warned not to take notice of the white preachers who taught that enslaved people should accept their lot in life. She escaped and eventually led many other slaves to freedom.

She was named 'Moses' by the slave owners who put a price on her head. She consulted with God about what she should do **"I always told him, I trust you, I don't know where to go or what to do, but I expect you to lead me. And he always did"** (Robert C Plumb – *The Better Angels, five women who changed civil war in America- Potomac Books Inc, 2020 p.158*)

As Paul said when he was imprisoned:

'It is for freedom that Christ has set me free. I will stand firm, then, and won't let myself be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.'

Galatians 5.1

There are still millions of enslaved people around the world and I think of enslaved women in particular. There are many ways of being enslaved, it may be by state rule, or trafficking of humans or it may be by addiction or by past hurts. What is it that can set my Spirit free in the face of human slavery? For me, it is only Christ who can do that, and having been set free to live a life of fulness, I work hard not to be bound again.

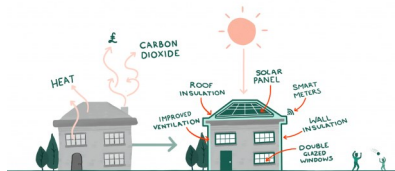
During this season of Lent I will be examining what in my life is keeping me bound so that I am not able to fully be free to walk this faith journey that I have chosen. And like Harriet I will echo her prayer.

I trust you, I don't know where to go or what to do, but I expect you to lead me.

Tricia Atherton

A Beginner's Guide to Retrofit

On Tuesday 25th March at 7.00pm an organisation called People Powered Retrofit will be coming to St Michael's Church.



PPR are independent, not-for-profit and unrivalled experts in training contractors and advising households.

This short, **free** session covers the basic concepts, helping you get to grips with how you might reduce energy bills, improve your home and make it a little bit greener.

As well as the presentation, there'll be time for small group discussions and questions and answers.

There'll be householders who've already improved their homes to talk about their experiences.

Please use this link to read more and to book your free ticket.

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/macstasticeconetwork/1553300>

Music@Mike's

Hurray! Music@Mike's is back!

With the completion of the lighting project, our first concert since before Christmas takes place on **Friday 21st March** and features **Julian Davis piano and Simon Evans violin.**

Concerts begin at 1.15 and last around 45 minutes

Entry is free with voluntary donations in aid of the East Cheshire Hospice and St Michael's.

The Angel at my Table café is open for refreshments before and after.



KEMS Concert

See the poster on the right for information about the next KEMS concert in St Michael's

(5th April at 7.30)

Tickets also available from Paul Spedding

Eternal Light

MORTEN LAURIDSEN Lux Aeterna

BACH O Jesu Christ Mein Lebens Licht

BACH Jesu Joy of Man's desiring

BENJAMIN BRITTEN Rejoice in the Lamb

Conductor – Mark McCombs

Saturday 5th April 2025 7.30pm

St Michael's Church, Macclesfield SK10 1DY

Macclesfield Singers Symphony Orchestra



TICKETS Adult £15 – Under 18 Free Macclesfield Visitor Information Centre Congleton Tourist Information Centre Margin Music, Macclesfield Online at kems.yapsody.com

Registered Charity No. 517554

St Michael's Hospitality 2024 in numbers



In 2024 Angel at my Table provided over 570 free meals to guests who were unable to pay. The Monday to Saturday café (both Open Door and Angel at my Table) gave away around 400 snacks (toast, cakes, tea cakes or pastries) and over 760 drinks. This hospitality is worth around £4,900.

10 Foodie Friday events were held with 226 guests attending.

Angel at my Table made a contribution to church funds of £4,200 after covering all direct costs including salary, equipment costs and food/drinks/other costs.

The increase in the price of drinks has made an impact on takings this year, in February Angel at my Table took £1004 in one week – it did include a Foodie Friday with 31 people attending – so not all was due to mugs of tea or coffee!

LET'S: 16th March

Don't forget that **Let's Eat Together Sunday** is this week, **16th March**
Don't eat alone on Sunday - bring some food and eat with others, maybe sharing if you wish.

Newcomers especially welcome: don't worry if you haven't any food - there's usually plenty.



Mothering Sunday

Photo Call



Don't forget to email a picture of your mum to clergypa@maccteam.org.uk or bring in a hard copy for Sue which she scan and return to you.

These are for a collage of photos of mums for Mothering Sunday.

The picture doesn't need to be recent: I have sent a photo of my mum as a teenager in the 1930s! Others have sent recent images. All that's needed is your mum's face - not full family groups, etc. If you only have pictures which include others, these can be cropped, so don't make that an excuse not to send yours in!

Food Waste Awareness

On Monday 17th March the Co-op are hosting a food waste awareness event at St Michael's Church from 12:30-16:00.

Representatives from the charities and groups who are involved in using and redistributing food waste in Macclesfield will be there advertising what they do.



The event is open to all, come and find out how you could get involved and how you can prevent food waste, including where you can get free or cheap food.

Free soup made from surplus food by Angel at my Table will be available and the cafe will be open for drinks and snacks.

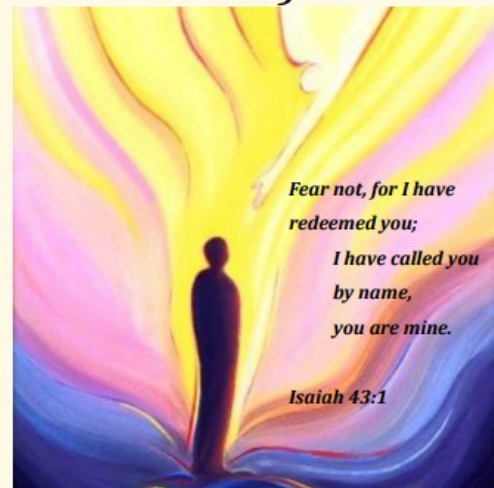
There will also be a Ready, Steady, Cook challenge: what can Ali Griffen make out a bag of surplus food? Come and find out!

Healing Service

Don't forget that our next Service of Prayer for Healing & Wholeness is on Friday 21st March: see poster below

Services of Prayer for Healing and Wholeness

2025



Fear not, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

Isaiah 43:1

Friday, 21st March, 11am

Friday, 27th June, 11am

Friday, 12th September, 11am

Friday, 28th November, 11am

Savage Chapel

St Michael and All Angels Church, Macclesfield

The service will last approx. 30min



**SAVE MONEY,
SAVE THE PLANET,
PREVENT FOOD
WASTE**

Co-op Members asked us to help them save money and reduce their impact on the environment by helping them to prevent food waste.

Join us at our local community event as part of National Food Waste Action Week 2025.

Food Waste Action Live Macclesfield

17th March 2025 12:30pm - 4pm
St Michael & All Angels, Macc'
Stuart Mackay 07866 177789



Electric cars – probably good for the environment?

We've had an electric car since March 2021 and we're delighted with it, but it's probably sensible to look into all the pros and cons before buying one!

Electric cars are certainly not cheap to buy - maybe £5,000 (new) more than the equivalent internal combustion (IC - petrol or diesel) car.

However, manufacturers have to try to price them competitively as they are required by the UK government to sell an increasing number of electric cars each year (28% of sales in 2025, 33% in 2026 etc).

On the other hand, they are very cheap to run, as long as you charge them at home overnight using cheap electricity - we reckon it costs less than 2p a mile for fuel rather than 15p or more for an IC car.

(Of course, if you've installed solar panels it might even be free!)

You currently pay no road tax or congestion charges, though road tax is going to be charged from later this year.

Most electric cars are great to drive. They are quiet and have loads of power with no flat spots. They don't have a gear box, so you can think of them as "automatic".

One major concern people have, of course, is "range anxiety". Our daughter Ruth lives 220 miles from us in Dorset and we wanted to be able to travel to her without recharging, and we can do that as the car's range is, in theory, 284 miles. In fact, we can easily do this much of the year but not when it's cold as the battery is less efficient and also because the heater comes straight off the battery, unlike waste heat used by internal combustion engine cars.

However, we usually want a break anyway and charging points at motorway services are now pretty good (and certainly better than they were in 2021!) The charging is fast - you can add 50 miles of range in just a few minutes - but they are much more expensive than charging at home. Nearly all chargers in the UK accept contactless cards, though when we went to France in 2022 things were not so easy and you needed to have special card or app - this may have improved by now.

Of course there are other concerns with electric cars. There are no emissions from the car and none if the electricity used to charge it is itself green. However, the components of the battery include some rare metals and there are ethical and geo-political as well as environmental concerns. Batteries can be recycled when they have reached the end of their lives (8-10 years) but this is not yet widespread.

One final thought – some people prefer a hybrid car as the IC engine removes any range anxiety. However, this does mean there are five heavy components in the car: engine, fuel tank, generator, electric motor and battery! Some companies also buy hybrid vehicles so they can "greenwash" by pretending to be eco-friendly but in fact using the IC engine.



Paul Spedding



Eco-tips for Lent (2)

The Lenten 40-day period before Easter gives us the opportunity to reflect on the practice of fasting and commit to giving up something that brings a real benefit to nature and helps address climate change. Below are some changes you could make that will help the environment. Take time to pray, reflect and consider these options.

- 1. Change your method of transport.** How about [walking or cycling for repeated errands](#), choosing one day a week to walk, cycle or take public transport to work where you are able to. Read about how Paul and his wife, Tara are changing the way they travel (and more!) [here](#).
- 2. Take a step to save energy in your home.** From draught-proofing windows and doors to swapping your bath for a shower, [here's](#) a list of quick tips. You might be surprised at how many of these changes you've already made!
- 3. Move your money.** Could you divest from fossil fuels and support a bank which invests in renewables? 'Good with Money' recommends some ethical choices [here](#) or for pension investments that help achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN in 2015 there's '[Make my Money Matter](#)'.
- 4. Spend more time in nature.** With weekly themes, [these 'Get Outside in Lent' outdoor resources](#) profiled in our Eco Church resources will help you connect with God as Creator and celebrate his creation in different ways over the Lenten period.
- 5. Invite wildlife into your garden or church green space (with permission!).** Read John's tips on greening our gardens for nature's benefit [here](#). Where possible, invite and encourage others in your church community to be part of the journey, for example, planting seeds as part of the children's ministry or getting your church youth group to help build and stock up a hedgehog home.
- 6. Try a plant-based recipe or diet.** Start by cooking yourself vegan or plant-based meals once a week and take it from there. As time goes on, cook more vegan/vegetarian meals and try to eliminate as many animal products from your diet as you can. Explore tasty recipes with [Meat Free Monday](#) or read about Kayleigh's veganuary experience [here](#).
- 7. Grow your own.** Whether you have a garden or sunny windowsill, find out what you can sow and grow on a month-to-month basis [here](#). Read how Vishadhi is using her home-grown food to bless her local community and food bank [here](#).



God bless the NHS!

A message from Jane, Archdeacon of Macclesfield

I was surprised when the little box with the NHS logo on it dropped through my letterbox. Had it really been two years since I last did the screening? I'd changed roles and moved house since then, but the system had obviously worked. So in early November 2024 I sent off a tiny poo sample, expecting to receive the all clear.

Two weeks later I opened a letter telling me that blood had been found in the sample and inviting me to hospital for a colonoscopy. I was surprised, as I didn't think I had any symptoms, and so embarked on the experience fully anticipating a negative result.

Being able to watch the progress of the little camera through your own intestines is fascinating but it was also very clear to me when the picture changed from healthy bowel to unhealthy. I remember commenting 'That doesn't look too good' and hearing the gentle sympathy in the nurse's voice as she said, 'No, that looks like you may have cancer'.

Biopsies and surgery followed swiftly after that, and through all that time I have continued to give thanks for the NHS screening programme that found a tumour I had no idea was there. Without it things would have been very different. My surgeon was able to remove the tumour before it perforated my bowel, saving me from an emergency that would have had devastating consequences.

Although I was in blissful ignorance, God knew. The words of Psalm 139 took on a new meaning for me, 'O Lord, you have searched me and know me...for it was you who formed my inmost parts...even darkness is no darkness to you.' I continually thank God for the care and compassion of the medical profession which drives those who train to become nurses and doctors, radiologists and specialists in all manner of disease. For their God-given dedication and vocation and for the way in which God's light shines through them onto the darkest of situations.

I decided very early in the process that I wanted to be open about what was happening to me. I knew that I needed prayer and the support and fellowship of the family of God to help me through. Knowing that people and congregations, colleagues and friends, are praying for me has given me incredible peace and joy. There have been low moments, but they have been thankfully few, and the cards and messages I have received have lifted me and comforted me. Jesus has assured us all that if we believe in him, our life will be eternal. I know that God is good and that ultimately all will be well, and so I face whatever is to come with faith and hope.

I'm facing more treatment now and I'm grateful for your continued prayers. I can think of no greater encouragement than that which I have through faith, and I feel such sadness for those who go through this not understanding how much God loves them. Believing in Jesus is never a guarantee that nothing bad will happen to us, it's not a bargaining chip to be played when we are in danger or distress. What I do know though, is that even in the darkest night of the soul, I am never alone. God is faithful and Jesus walks the path I must take with me. I hope that, if you're having a hard time of it, if life is difficult and you find yourself alone or frightened, you know that you can lean on Him, God will never let you down.

So, if that little box drops through your door, or the letter for prostate/breast/cervical etc. screening comes to invite you for a check, don't ignore it. It's a little bit of love on your doormat, a message that says, 'We care about your health'. It really might be a lifesaver.

Jane

The Venerable Jane Proudfoot, Archdeacon of Macclesfield



Rare photo of a young Ent, joyfully running down to the surf....



Holy Week Services at St Michael's

Maundy Thursday (17th April)

Washing of Feet Service with Agape Meal

7.00pm in the Savage Chapel.

It would be good to have some idea of attendance in advance so please let Lynne, Barbara or Heike know of your interest.



Good Friday (18th April)

10.30am Good Friday Service: speaker Marion Tugwood

2.00-4.00pm: Good Friday Contemplative Service in the Savage

Chapel (broken into 4x25 minute slots so people can arrive or leave as is convenient). This service will comprise Bible readings, poetry, music and silence.

Join us for *Worship*



Sunday Worship

16th March 2025
Second Sunday of Lent

10:00am: Church Family Communion

Bible Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

Leader, Speaker and Celebrant: Canon Vivien Gisby

Theme: Nicene Creed - We believe in Jesus Christ

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 Wednesday 19th March

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

20th March: Morning Prayer
27th March: 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

Fridays, 9.20-9.50 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?pwd=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZ0VXdaZz09>

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 9.00-3.00; 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: 07435 568 729

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 to:

prayer@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk

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

