



@stmikesmacclesfield



www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk

Advent... Christmas is Coming!

Tricia Atherton

Now, before we get into the madness of preparations for Christmas let's spend a few moments considering what it is all about. This year Advent Sunday falls on December 1st and marks the beginning of the church year. According to the Church of England website "It is a time for reflection in darkness, for renewal of hope and for movement towards a beginning."



St Michael's is always a busy place with so much going on but this time of year is especially hectic. There will be times of lovely celebrations, Carol Services, the Nativity, Crib service, the Town Carol Service, Silk Brass and many more events. So, for some it may seem a long way from the "time for reflection in darkness, for renewal of hope...". This is where, as Christians, we need to stop and think. We need to be determined to make time for reflecting and sharing the hopeful message of

Christmas with our friends and family, either at church or home. One way of doing this is to host the family of Mary, Joseph and the donkey as they travel on their journey to Bethlehem. Noooo, not the real Mary, Joseph and donkey, but the wooden cut-outs – the **Posada**

Posada, in slang, means "a place to crash/ spend the night". In Spanish in means inn or lodging. In some Spanish-speaking countries there is a Posada festival (Las Posadas) which goes over nine days from 16th December – 24th December, the 9 days represent the 9 months of Mary's pregnancy. The tradition originated in Mexico and spread to mainly South American countries. It involves a procession going to various people's houses and asking for shelter. They are refused shelter until the visitors sing a requested song and then they are admitted into the household. Maybe we could try that this year (or maybe not!).

Hosting Mary, Joseph and the donkey at your house overnight can be a way of reminding us that Christmas is about the birth of Christ. It can give us at least a few minutes of "time for reflection in darkness, for renewal of hope and for movement towards a beginning."

In many households, preparations for Christmas can be madly frantic with all sorts of food, presents, decorations and plans. If you also have children in school there will be school plays, Christmas Fairs and even trips to the Pantos. All this - and working too. It can be a crazy time... and stressful. The opportunity to share a quiet evening with a visiting Christian friend could be a welcome break. This year I am suggesting something a little different which I hope may help lessen the stress of this time of year. Those of us who have fewer calls upon our time and mental energy could be the ones to transport the Posada from house to house and could carry out a short quiet activity with a prayer and candle. So, this year you can opt in to do it yourself or opt in to do it for someone else. Does that make sense?



As they travelled to Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph were constantly turned away from entering people's house. There are many ways of being turned away or being refused admittance, being rejected.

You can be

- Turned away for wearing the wrong clothes
- Turned away for being gay, trans, non-binary
- Turned away for being the wrong colour, the wrong faith
- Turned away for not having enough money
- Turned away for being the wrong gender
- Refugees, Asylum Seekers are turned away constantly

But how wonderful when you are finally admitted.

The instruction from the Good Book is to:

"... above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."
1 Peter 4.8-10

Please sign up for the Posada and indicate whether you are able to transport Mary, Joseph and the donkey on behalf of someone else who may be housebound or busy with family and work commitments.

Contact Tricia Atherton, or the office and Isobel will forward messages to Tricia.

**Lord Jesus, Light of light,
you have come among us.
Help us who live by your light
to shine as lights in your world.
Glory to God in the highest.
Amen.**

Resignation of Justin Welby,

Archbishop of Canterbury

Following Martin's forwarding of a letter from Bishop Mark (in the wake of the Archbishop of Canterbury's resignation on Tuesday) please pray for all who are personally affected by this very difficult and distressing situation: for victims and survivors of Smyth's and other abuses, for their families and friends; also for Archbishop Justin, his wife Caroline and children, and for all who seek to improve the culture of the Church in protecting all who are vulnerable, including here at St Michael's. Thank you.

The Collect for the Second Sunday before Advent

Heavenly Lord, you long for the world's salvation:
stir us from apathy,
restrain us from excess
and revive in us new hope
that all creation will one day be healed
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Tony Cookson
Service of Thanksgiving

This service will take place on Monday 2nd December, 12.30 at St Michael's. The private Committal service will have taken place at the Crematorium before this church service

There will be a reception afterwards at The Ryles Arms. All are warmly invited to come along .

The family would like an idea of numbers, so **please either sign the list at the back of church or tell Chris Wightman or Vicky Darlington if you would like to come.**

Please also indicate whether you need a lift to the Ryles Arms (and back again!)

Charities Bazaar

We had a hugely successful day at the Charities Bazaar. As a result of to your support and generosity, we raised £400 Thank-you, everyone

Jenny and Hil



Gill and Hil ready for their first customers!

And Jesus said unto the theologians,
"Who do you say that I am?"
They replied, "You are the
eschatological manifestation of the
ground of our being, the kerygma of
which we find the ultimate meaning in
our interpersonal relationships."
And Jesus said "...What?"



Prayer Opportunities and Initiatives

Barbara Taylor

At significant and challenging times in life, knowing you are being remembered in prayer can give much needed support and strength.

I remember prayers I learned in childhood, and I'm sure I'm not alone in this. For me these have been "anchors" in very dark times, giving me comfort and assuring me of God's protection. At the same time, God can speak to us when we least expect it. We need to be open to new paths to prayer, hearing and learning from others.

At St Michael's we are privileged to meet in prayer throughout the week; our Church family draws together all ages. Details of these opportunities for prayer are found in the newsletter and bulletin.



Sometimes our own needs may vary, depending on what is happening in life or even just on how we feel. We are able to come into Church every day, to sit quietly in our beautiful building and step back from our busy lives. This same offer applies to the people of our town, and visitors from far and wide.

We coped with the challenges of meeting for worship during lockdown. In some ways this changed our approach to meeting online. The need for all members of our Church family to feel included and supported in prayer extends to those not physically present in Church. Sunday services are streamed and available on YouTube.

The beautiful service of Compline - Night Prayer - continues to meet online (via Zoom) every Friday evening. The joys of technology!



We reach out from the Church building, taking Home Communion, meeting in homes and sometimes in the open air. There are so many ways to share prayer and fellowship.

On Friday, 29th November, we will be holding a service of Healing and Wholeness in the Savage Chapel. This will be an opportunity for quiet reflection and prayer for healing. The annual Remembering Service, held recently, offered a reassurance of God's comfort in bereavement and continuing prayer from others in the Church family.



Prayers can also be requested via the prayer chain, from the link in the newsletter and bulletin.

A small group meets to offer prayer before each Sunday service, and we are looking to offer individual prayer after the service for those who request it. Praying with a prayer partner, one named person, is something which can also encourage and support.

The table in the Savage Chapel is usually filled with cards requesting prayer. It makes me realise how much people value the opportunity to come in and leave their thoughts for loved ones, perhaps light a candle as they sit and reflect. We pray over the cards in services during the week.

God's love is always with us and we are not alone. Our Church family members remember us and others in prayer, at times when we need this most. Our challenge is to draw on the things we do well, be open to what comes next, and to reach out to those in need of the power of prayer.





The Meaning of Life

Vivien Gisby

I have family in Vancouver so my sister and I spent three weeks there in the summer. We had a great time doing all sorts of touristy things, the highlight being bouncing across the ocean in a tourist boat to watch humpback whales feeding in the distance. We were mostly there though simply to spend time with the family. So, there was a lot of just hanging round and generally catching up, sharing meals together; chatting and laughing. You know the sort of thing.

We found ourselves one day though having a serious discussion and asking what is the meaning of life. Quite how we got onto such a subject I can't think, but it's certainly one of life's big questions. We might not consciously ask it very often, perhaps at times of serious illness (as I did myself) or bereavement or other traumatic event, but it's a question that hovers in the background of our lives and can only be answered (I would say) by theology or philosophy.

One of my family concluded that there is no point to human life. No meaning. We just 'are', he confidently proclaimed, and the thing is to make the most of the time we have. That leads onto



the further question of just exactly we make the most of the time we have. Some ancient Greeks saw the pursuit of pleasure as the greatest good: "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die." Sounds great doesn't it? I enjoy a nice meal and the occasional glass of Merlot myself! I'm not sure how our Canadian

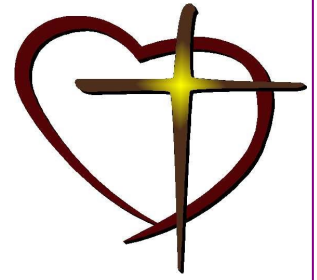
discussion ended. I think we summoned an Uber and went out for something to eat!

Going back to that original question though, we can certainly find meaning in the sense of a good deal of satisfaction and fulfilment through our work, our friendships; caring for our families; our hobbies and interests. Yet, none of these things lasts. I realise that's rather a blunt statement and you might look round at your very satisfactory life and gulp a bit - but think for a moment.

Our work changes, there might be new colleagues, new projects and what we once found deeply rewarding suddenly isn't anymore. Our hobby, all-consuming at one time, gets rather dull as we've done it all before. Even our family relationships and our friendships change over the years. What I'm talking about (what our discussion in Canada was about) is *ultimate* meaning, something which underpins the changes and chances of whatever happens to us in our life's journeys; a rock-solid foundation which never gives way even as our interests and enthusiasms (and even our relationships) wax and wane; even as we move from one stage of life to another.



Well surely that rock-solid foundation is God's love. A verse which has struck me as I've been reflecting on this is Hosea 11:4: 'I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks.' That's really beautiful don't you think? God is to his people like those who lift infants to their cheeks.



The last time we were in Canada, I found myself lifting my Canadian great-nephew Jack to my cheeks in just that way when I was briefly left in charge of him. He was two at the time and the cutest little chap; and we bonded really well. You've probably lifted a small child of your own in just such a way. There is real delight and tenderness in such a hug and for us to know deep down that we are loved by God so tenderly and with such delight is a real game-changer. We see that love let loose in the world most clearly of course in and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

God's love is always there but we will probably all know particular moments of God's nearer presence, his 'hug' as it were, in moments of sheer wonder or joy or peace. These might be during worship or prayer or when we're out and about in this beautiful world of ours (and we are privileged to live in a particularly beautiful part of the world).

Such deeply spiritual moments resource and encourage us in our faith, but to know God's love is not simply to keep it to ourselves and to marvel at it. It's about allowing that love to shape and change us. It's about coming to be, 'set on fire by the love of the one by whom we were first loved' (Augustine of Hippo).



The thing is, God's love is transformative, it changes the way we look at things, the way we think; the way we act, and it requires that we strive to reflect that love into the part of the world where we live and where we have the opportunity to do a bit of good.

So, to tackle that big question of what is life's ultimate meaning in the few words of this short article is perhaps rather ridiculous. Except maybe it isn't. Perhaps we can simply say that the meaning of life is wrapped up in knowing that we are loved by God and that he wants us to reflect that love to others in order to make our little corner of the world a better place in some way great or small. And when you stop to think about it, what did Jesus say the two greatest commandments were? To love God and neighbour, something we remember at our services of Holy Communion.

Advent Calendars

Last call for orders!

Sunday 17th is the deadline for ordering your Advent Calendar. A few extras will be printed but, if you want to be sure of a copy, sign the list at the back of church or email me on lynne.norbron@gmail.com

I intend to have distributed them all by Sunday 24th!



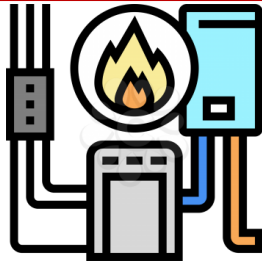
Heating Update

Our heating

As part of the next phase of our Net Zero Plan, a new heating controller was installed last week. This enables us to separate the underfloor heating in the café from heating the rest of the west end. Before, whenever the café was open, the meeting rooms above were heated to the same temperature, regardless of whether they were in use or not, which is very wasteful of energy.

Please note that the first and second floor (choir) meeting rooms, in fact anywhere at the west end with a radiator (including the office, stairwells, vestry and mezzanine), **will now only be heated if the space is booked in the church calendar.**

Elaine does this on a Monday, so if at all possible please remember to book the space before Monday morning to avoid extra trips to the boiler house.



- Consider if you could make a one-off donation towards this work, or pledge to give over several months. If you are particularly keen to see one of the omitted items included, please tell us (we can't promise though).
- Make sure your donation is marked "lights", and let us know if we can claim GiftAid. Use the QR code here: or by transfer to the Church account: St Michael and All Angels PCC Sort code 16-24-32 a/c no 12923915
- Could you make some cash available as a loan to make sure we do as much of the work as possible now? Contact Laura, our treasurer. (treasurer@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk) or Isobel in the office.
- Talk to others: friends and colleagues, business connections about the project and encourage them to donate.



Light Up St Michael's

We have all been waiting for the lighting in the worship area to improve.... In fact you have probably noticed that it got worse a few months ago when the chancel lights failed completely – we are grateful to KEMS for letting us use their lights for a few months so that the choir can actually read their music.



As you know we have been planning to renew the entire lighting for some years and have engaged CBG Consultants (Light Perceptions) to come up with a design and to manage the project. The agreed design is an exciting one and will enable us not only to read, but also to provide good lighting for concert performers, and emergency lighting, thereby enhancing the building's use as a community venue. We would also be able to highlight our building's architecture without awkward light flares from the spots (those that still work anyway!) and accent our magnificent collection of pre-reformation alabaster tombs. The new lighting will use LEDs and is also part of our Net Zero plan to reduce our energy use.

How will this be paid for?

We have received a very generous legacy from the late John Edwards which has enabled us to progress this far with the project and we thought this would be sufficient.

Unfortunately, the lowest tender for the work came in at £25,000 more than the legacy amount. The Building Team have looked carefully at the details, but even cutting out all "nice-to-have" items we still have a shortfall of £10,000. We will proceed with the minimum scheme on this basis.

It is disappointing to have to cut out accent to our magnificent mediaeval tombs, and renewal of the Savage Chapel lighting; these items could be added in later but at a considerably greater cost than installing at the same time as everything else. To find out more detail of these specific items, look at the leaflet we have produced, or ask a member of the Building Team.

So what would we like you to do?

- Please pray for: wise decision-making and stewardship of our resources; for good planning, for patience and tolerance while the work is ongoing, and safety of the workers.

Cont'd in next column

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

WAYS TO DONATE

A generous legacy has provided most of the funds already - £10,000 more will allow us to do the bare minimum, but we'd love to do more. So every gift helps!

Current lighting is gloomy and insufficient: but see insets for how special accent lighting will transform our space

HELP LIGHT UP ST MICHAEL'S
Support the New Lighting Project for St. Michael & All Angels, Macclesfield.

SPONSOR A LIGHT!
CONTACT US

St Michael & All Angels' Church Macclesfield
Charity No. 1146048

THE NEED FOR NEW LIGHTING

- efficiency
- safety
- aesthetics

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

Businesses or individuals can sponsor specific lighting elements. Contact us for more information.

For more details, or to discuss donation options:
clergypa@macteam.org.uk ☎ 01625 421984
www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk

Ensuring a Brighter Future for Worship, Events, and Our Community.

Illuminating St Michael's
St. Michael's Church is more than just a place of worship. It's an architectural gem and an important venue for a variety of community events:

Worship and Private Prayer
The church is used daily for services and quiet reflection. Better lighting will enhance the sacred atmosphere and improve the experience for the congregation.

Concerts and Events
As a popular venue for concerts, exhibitions, and civic events, adaptable lighting will cater to these diverse uses. Whether hosting local choirs, classical music, or school events, this improvement will make St. Michael's a premier venue.

Heritage Connections
Connections with the **Savage family** go back to about 1500, with a dedicated chapel and five magnificent pre-reformation alabaster memorials. **£5,500** more would light up the tombs in the chancel including **John Savage 4th** and his wife **Katharine Stanley**; this liaison was key to the defeat of King Richard III in 1485. **£1,700** would light up the Savage tombs in the nave. **£7,700** would sensitively light the Savage Chapel.

Concert lighting

Tombs with accent lighting

Our Grade II* listed building stands as a beacon of community life in Macclesfield. Over the centuries, it has been a space for worship, community events, concerts, and family milestones.

However, the church's current lighting system, installed decades ago, is now in urgent need of replacement:

Poor Efficiency
The lighting is outdated, failing, inefficient, and costly to maintain. The control system has failed limiting energy-saving opportunities.

Aesthetic Concerns
The current system does not do justice to the church's stunning architecture, creating awkward light flares. Our unique collection of mediaeval Savage family tombs is in shadow.

Safety:
We need improved lighting for emergency situations.

A new lighting system will improve energy efficiency, highlight architectural features, and provide flexibility for worship, concerts, and community events. It will also allow us to better support concerts, exhibitions, and public gatherings in this cherished space.

We invite everyone - whether you're a local business, event organiser, or have a personal connection with the church - to help make this vision a reality.

Ensuring a Brighter Future for Worship, Events, and Our Community.

Indian Banquet

This is now FULL!

The banquet takes place on Sunday 17th in the evening, at church.

Thanks to all those who have bought tickets. There is no more space now available.

Please note that soft drinks will be provided but, if you wish to drink something alcoholic, please bring your own.



Christmas Card Exchange

From the Start of Advent:
1st December

As usual you are invited to save on postage costs (now considerable!) and bring your cards for members of the church family to leave in the appropriately labelled plastic wallets on the table at the back of church.

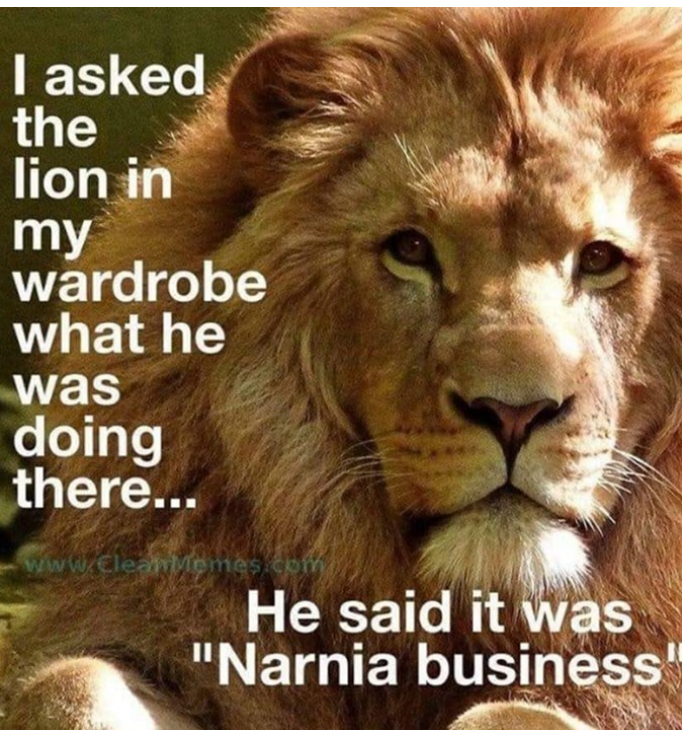
Alternatively, you might like to pin just one card, for everyone here, to the noticeboard at the back of church - and thus be a little more environmentally aware.



Can you spot Liz and Steve in the picture above - taken at Gleneagles.
(Look to the left of the group!)



Thank you from the Homemakers Group to David Mayers, for an interesting and informative talk on Getting to Net Zero, which he gave on 31st October.



Music@Mike's

The final 2 concerts of this term's programme are:

- **Friday 22nd November**

John Sabar (piano) playing works by Mendelssohn, Haydn and Ravel

- **Thursday 28th November**

Kell Wind Trio playing pieces by Haydn, Gounod, Grainger and Strauss

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.



Eco-church Meeting

Tuesday 19th Nov
7.30pm in church

All are welcome to join our regular meeting to celebrate and pray for God's creation and plan how we can better care for our planet here at St Michael's.

Alternatively come at 7.00pm to join a Zoom meeting with other churches from across the diocese before we have our own meeting



ORDINATION



NOW, AT LAST, THEY ARE FULLY QUALIFIED TO SERVE THE CHURCH

CartoonChurch.com

Eco-tip

Use bar shampoos and soaps instead of squeeze bottles.

The carbon footprint of liquid soap is 25% more than bars, on a per wash basis. It requires 5 times more energy to produce and is heavier to transport.

By using bars you'll be reducing plastic and emissions. Available from Scoop and Scales.



Join us for *Worship*



Sunday 17th November 2024

2nd Sunday before Advent

10.00am Family Communion

Service Leader & Speaker: Revd Martin Stephens

Bible Reading: 1. Samuel 1:4-20

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

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

Start the Week ...

... Every Monday from 7.30 am in church
Morning Prayer at 8.30 am in church and also on Face-
book

<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 27th November

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

21st November Holy Communion
28th November: Morning Prayer

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

Compline/Night Prayer

Every Friday

Topic: Night Prayer | Time: 8.30 pm Join
Zoom Meeting;

[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?
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**

Contemplative Prayer

Every **Friday at 9:20am in the Savage Chapel** lasting
half an hour. An opportunity for quiet prayer usually
followed by coffee/tea and a chat.



SCAN ME

**Donating to St
Michael's**

has become easier!

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)

