

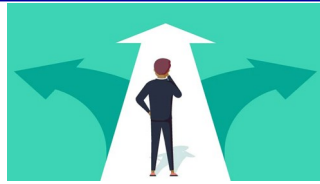


@stmikesmacclesfield



www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk

St Michael's Priorities



At Choral Evensong last Sunday, the Old Testament reading was Exodus 14:5-31 – the account of Moses and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, fleeing enslavement from Egypt.

I used the occasion to speak about NOT hankering after the *status quo* – where things just continue “as they were, are now, and forever shall be”!

In our day, a distressing illustration of this are the sobering statistics from several parishes in the nation which, without a miracle, will surely close in the not-too-distant future without new people to take up the mission there. Some people, it seems, just want their churches to stay the same.

How do we in Macclesfield, and especially at St Michael's, avoid being like them?

As part of our longer-term strategy, our Church Council recently adopted the following three priorities, to help focus collectively our minds and energies for the next 18 months or so.

Growing Younger – Growing Deeper – Growing Stronger

The Church Council Teams will use these priorities to guide their discussions, helping ensure each Team's activities contribute positively to at least one of these areas.

• Growing Younger

I've suggested we aim to lower the average age of the worshipping community by 5 years. Not knowing everyone's age I don't know exactly what that figure is, but you get the idea.

And it's not just about children and young families but the whole age range.

If visitors (older and younger) were to encounter God through St Michael's, what change of mindset do you need to help them choose to worship regularly with us and decide to belong?

• Growing Deeper

By my reckoning, in the past year, fewer than a quarter of our church membership (*defined as the Electoral Roll*) has attended anything beyond regular worship with the specific intention of developing their faith. Okay, maybe there are more of you who do – just that I'm not aware of who you are.

Growing deeper is about each of us taking a level of responsibility for our own faith development AND it's about St Michael's increasing the opportunities for people to do this.

Specifically, at Church Family Worship this Sunday, the 'Connecting People' Team will talk about opportunities to join a housegroup; and this week marks the start of the latest Alpha Course being led by Sue & Kev, and the Romans Course, being led by Mike and Lynne. Maybe you just need a nudge to join them, bring a friend.



• Growing Stronger

We have a visiting guest preacher at the end of the month, when we'll hear more about the precious opportunities of being a Town Centre Church. We know St Michael's is an impressive yet busy church. We have finite resources (of people, time and money) and we have many existing demands – several relating to the building, unfortunately.



Growing Stronger is about seeking to ensure we have sufficient resources (of people, time and money) to do all we want to, as well as all we need to (pages 2 & 3 of this newsletter highlight this). Please consider your part in helping St Michael's be a stronger church.

I'm aware this is such a fleeting overview for what are serious considerations. I'm also aware not everyone will relate to some of the references; take a look at the peach-coloured '*Welcome to all*' leaflet and the little tri-fold '*Our focus for the future*' leaflet – both available in the Welcome Area.

I hope you can agree that having these priorities will help us to focus and plan for the coming 18 months. Please share your thoughts and ideas with me and Church Council members; we're in this together as one Church Family.

Mark

Revd Martin Stephens

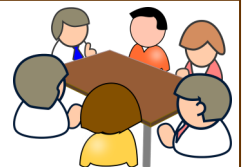
Church Flowers

Thank-you to John (Wood) for the gift of beautiful flowers given in loving memory of his mother, and arranged beautifully by Greeba.

Also thank-you to Enid (Evans) for her gracious gift of flowers in lovely autumnal colours.

Church Council Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5th September are attached with this newsletter (or look at p.5 for a graphic representation!)



The Collect for the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Lord of creation,
whose glory is around and within us:
open our eyes to your wonders,
that we may serve you with reverence
and know your peace at our lives' end,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Our Church Kitchen

St Michaels Church Kitchen is more than just a normal Church Kitchen. It is more... SOOO much more.



The food it serves is not just food, it is 'Saving the Planet' food. And sometimes 'Saving the soul' food. For some people it is literally 'keeping them alive' food.

The church building is open every day and so are the Cafes which are staffed almost exclusively by volunteers. We have five different offerings of the café experience at various times of the week, so a massive thankyou to all the volunteers and to Ali, our kitchen manager for making this happen.

The After Sunday-Service Café



This has been happening for many years. It is an essential offering to foster conversation and friendship, especially for visitors who are not sure what to do with themselves. Tea, coffee, biscuits - simple and quick (very important!) – and, like the other offerings, short of volunteers. Two are needed each Sunday, prepared to set up beforehand, leave the service early and stay afterwards

to clear up. **Mark Langham** (pictured) manages the rota for this; please speak to him if you'd like to get involved.

The Treacle Sunday café



This is open after the church service on Treacle Sunday morning until 3.00pm, serving tea, coffee and biscuits. Several hundred visitors, including people who visit from far afield, come through our doors to experience the hospitality and the history. You'd be surprised at how many of them have never been inside a church before even though they may have lived in Macclesfield all their lives. They are greeted by friendly smiles and a shelter from the

rain or busyness of the market. Throughout the day we need a minimum of 10 volunteers, four for the café and six for the tour guides. Contact **Vicky Darlington** (pictured) for more information.

The Open Door Café



This is from Monday to Wednesday from 10.00am – 12.00 midday, serving tea, coffee, toast, teacakes and biscuits at very reasonable prices. We need a minimum of six volunteers every week and six more on the list to cover absences or emergencies. Contact **Eve Budgett** (pictured) if you want more information. It is an easy-going, non-pressurised volunteering experience. We need people who are friendly and willing to spend time listening to and chatting with visitors at tables.

The Angel at my Table Café .

Angel
at my Table

From Thursday to Saturday we have a **Surplus Food**

Café which is open from 10.00am – 3.00pm, serving lunches, tea, coffee, sandwiches toast and delicious home-made cakes. This is a completely different volunteering experience because it can be very busy, especially if there is an event on in the Market Place or in the church itself. If you are able to volunteer for this you need to be prepared for cheeky banter and to be able to work under pressure, taking instructions from the kitchen manager (who may be doing five things at once), without taking offence. The bonus is that it is a great training experience for working in a professional kitchen. Ideally, we need three shifts of two volunteers for each shift (three shifts) and more on busy days. So, a list of people that can be relied upon to attend at a regular time each week is vitally important, and so is another list of folks who can be called upon at short notice. Contact **Ali Griffen** (Kitchen Manager) for more information.

Foodie Friday

Foodie Friday is connected to Angel at my Table and is a special event held once a month on Friday evening. The guests arrive between 6.00-6.30 for a three-course meal, with all dietary requirements considered. It is a very popular event and it is almost always fully booked. For this to happen, volunteers are needed who will help prepare the food such as chopping vegetables, making cakes, following instructions from the Kitchen Manager. Other volunteers needed are front of house: their task is to set up the tables, take orders from the guests and wait on at tables. Again, anyone volunteering for this needs to be prepared to work under pressure and be prepared for friendly banter and even some singing. To make this happen we need at least two volunteers to help with preparation of food as soon as the cafe closes at 3.00pm and two to help with front of house, from 4.00pm. We usually leave the building about 9.30pm on Foodie Fridays. Money raised from this event goes towards covering the cost of providing free meals during the week. Contact **Ali Griffen** (Kitchen Manager) for more information.

Why do we do this?

In everything we do as part of St Michael's Church family we are doing it to show the love of God – to show people that we care for them because God cares for them.

We also do it because we want to show that we love one another, that the family of the church looks out for one another. We each have our different roles, characters and skills – none are more important than any others. We need to accept that and we need to encourage each other in the task that they have been given to do. Even if the thing that God has given another person to do is not to my liking, I have to respect that and to do what I can to support them in their ministry. It is not my ministry and that's okay, but it is their ministry.

The characteristics of the early church help us to understand how God intends his family to behave, as St Paul says in his letter to the **Ephesians Chapter 4**. We often refer to 'my church' but what we forget is that it is God's church and it is God's kitchen! We just run it in the best way we can.



And later on, in the same chapter, Paul says that we have all been given different gifts. But why? What for? Well, it's simple – to live as children of God, to live as God always intended humans to live.

Cont'd over page

Cont'd from previous page

In addition to this, the initiative which has become known as **Angel at my Table** is fulfilling some other of God's commands – in particular to feed the hungry and to look after creation.

Many people and particularly those of a certain generation cannot abide food waste or waste of any kind. One of the shames of our western society is how much food is thrown away when there are also thousands of families who can't afford to buy food; not to mention all those millions around the world who struggle to get any nourishment at all. The Surplus Food Grocery and cafes seek to address this challenge.



The St Barnabas Grocery, based at the Church on Moss Rose Estate, collects food from supermarkets around town and also from

Fairshare in Manchester. This food has been deemed surplus to requirements for several reasons – it may be close to its Best Before Date or it may have been over-ordered by the buyer. Most of this food is still perfectly edible. Once the food has been collected by the drivers it is sorted into food types and the Surplus Food Grocery opens in the St Barnabas Church Hall and other locations in the town.

Anyone can go along and buy an amazing amount of food for £5. You don't have to be struggling for cash - this food is available for those who on ethical grounds believe it is just plain wrong to be throwing away good food. Not only that, it is wasting the planet's resources....

Answering the question, "why do we do this?", on a different level it is to keep the building, including the Savage Family Chapel, open and available for the community, as a place to rest and reflect, to meet others, even to pray. We are amazed at how many come in to sit and pray, or light a candle in the Chapel. The friendly café volunteer may be the only person someone gets to speak to all day.

Thank you for reading this long article and please think carefully about whether you or someone you know could join this merry band of volunteers. They don't have to be church members or particularly skilled (training is provided). Maybe there are youngsters off school or college and at a loose end, or people who have recently retired or been made redundant, folk who are looking for work experience.



If you would like to chat about this before offering your services, please speak to **Garrie Naden (pictured)** who can be contacted through the church office.

To find out how to contact any of the people mentioned, please contact Isobel in the office (clergypa@macccteam.org.uk) or ask one of the wardens or Welcome Team.

Tricia Atherton

Church Picnic

A good time was had by all who attended the church picnic on 6th September in West Park



Here are some of those who went along.

It Must be in the Genes

Those of us who know Mark well are familiar with his habit of tearing out newspaper articles to present to us on any subject in which he thinks we are, or should be, interested!

This cutting is interesting not only in itself, but also for the shared family commitment to a no-waste lifestyle. It comes from the Congleton Chronicle of 22.08.24.

Mark discovered only in 1981 that he is third cousin to Eleanor Blythe, the writer of this letter. Eleanor's mother, Lorna, an elder of the URC, was apparently a guest at Martin and Sallie's wedding, .

Mark is a keen eco-warrior and member of the Eco-Group at church. He must be very proud to have a relative whose fridge dates back to 1969!

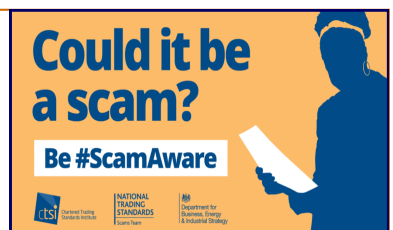
As Eleanor herself asks: can anyone beat that?



Scam Awareness

There will be a scam awareness meeting on 3rd October 2.00-4.00pm at the HOPE Centre.

If you would like to attend, please contact Kate P. on 01625 610574, as it would be helpful to know potential numbers



Silver Party Reminder

Saturday 21st 5.00-10.00pm at church. Ceilidh. Bring & share food. Celebrating Anne & James and Matt & Ruth's silver wedding anniversaries. **All welcome.**



Big Tree Hunt

Please see the poster attached with this newsletter.

In brief:

Sunday 15th Sept.
12noon—2.00pm at West Park.

Meet at the Ranger's Hut next to the café

Greenbelt 2024

I hope these photographs and brief article give you a taste of our visit to Greenbelt - the annual Christian festival of music, culture, art and theological and political debate.

The theme this year was **Dream On** - a better world is possible, if we act on our dreams to make a real difference in the real world. For a long weekend we were challenged to dream, to act, to make, to imagine, to give, to love, to be. It was like a taste of heaven!



Rachel undeterred by the rain

The festival is in the grounds of Boughton Hall near Kettering, Northamptonshire. The campsite was beautiful, with very good facilities - even showers! and composting toilets which really didn't smell too bad. There are alternatives to camping; you

can bring your caravan or camper van; and some people stay off-site and travel in each day. But despite our misgivings we loved the camping, and met many good friends old and new, as well as our children and grandchildren.

On the first night we were hit by Storm Lillian, and the programme the next morning was delayed while essential repairs were carried out - but of course everyone was very patient, helpful and cheerful. And it rained most of Saturday, so we sat under our brollies and listened to John Bell from the Iona



*And then the sun came out!
Rachel & David enjoying the ambience*

Community entertaining and inspiring us to build a world for our children. The music was amazing - from a few famous names like Corinne Bailey-Rae and Martin Joseph through a huge variety of folk, indie and hip-hop artists, to visiting musicians from the global south and the best worship bands you could wish for. The photographs show one of the venues and a brilliant performance on the oudh by Saied Silbak from Palestine.



I think it's a Mayers grandson under that face paint!

10000 of us shared communion on Sunday morning in the Glade, the main outdoor venue, and shared virtually with the community at Tent of Nations in the West Bank. We experienced the trauma of having to move with all our belongings to sit elsewhere - at no notice. This experience gave us a taste of the refugee experience - and it is hoped an insight into the lives of so many in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Syria and elsewhere. But the worship was great and left us hopeful that, yes, a better world is possible.

The most difficult part of Greenbelt is deciding what to do; there are usually 7 or 8 things you could be doing at any time. The choice is both wonderful and bewildering. We watched a 70-minute one-man play called *The Beloved Son*, about the theologian and L'Arche volunteer Henri Nouwen. We enjoyed a Friday night Shabbat meal cooked by the Jewish chef Judi Rose. We found out about the work of the Pickwell Foundation in supporting asylum seekers. We enjoyed some stunning sunsets and beautiful starscapes.

We plan to go again next year. *Rachel & David*

Season of Creation



TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION
SEASON OF CREATION 2024

Some highlights from next week's programme:

- **Saturday 14th, 10.00am - 3.00pm**

River Bollin clean-up. Meet at Riverside Park

- **Sunday 15th 12 noon - 2.00pm**

West Park Family Fun Afternoon/Big Tree Hunt - activities for all the family

- **Tuesday 17th 7.30pm**

Macclesfield Methodist Church "Brilliant Bees" talk by a bee-keeper from Tatton Park

- **Saturday 21st 5.30pm**

Prestbury Garden Centre, London Road, SK10 4DY Family picnic and story-telling around the camp-fire.

Summer Party for the Thursday Homegroups



The daytime and evening Thursday homegroups recently met together at the home of Jenny W for a lovely summer social.

Riding Lights Bring -

"Cups on a String"

**Tuesday 1st October, 7.30pm
at St Michael's**

Have you booked your tickets yet?

Do so by telephone 01904 613000 / or online at <https://www.ridinglights.org/cupsonastring>.



Please tell your friends and encourage them to come too.

We need to sell 60 tickets at £15 to break even - any surplus will be divided between St Michael's, and the charity Transforming Lives for Good.

Cups on a String is a warm-hearted and moving new play, developed from remarkable true stories. It's about playfulness, listening and laughter, and how risk-taking and trust can lead to growth and transformation.

RIDING LIGHTS
THEATRE COMPANY

Prayer Service at Danes Moss

The Season of Creation was launched on Sunday 1st September with a prayer service at Danes Moss.

About 34 people plus two very well-behaved dogs came along, and the service was accompanied by appropriately timed bird song.



A special thank you to Rev. Simon Bessant and the Team from St John's & St Thomas's who led the service, including the making of Season of Creation windmills.

The Season of Creation got off to a wonderful start.



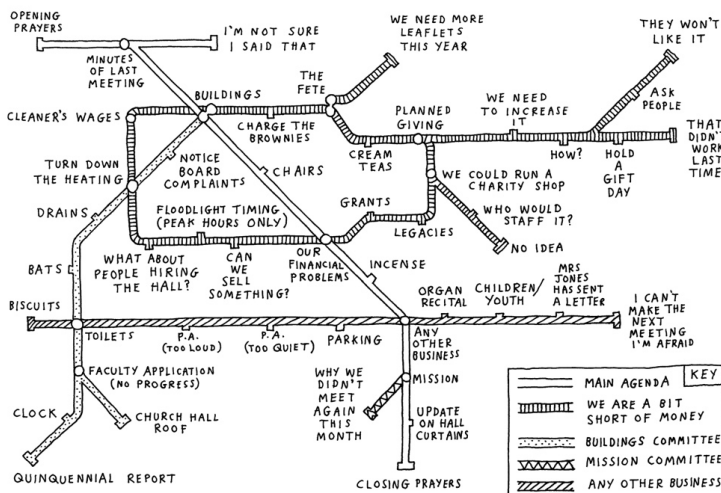
Anyone for a 1000-piece jigsaw?

Here's a 1000-piece jigsaw I recently completed. I'm not sure what possessed me to start it (I bought it in lockdown and never got round to making it). It's called "Shakespeare's World" so I'm sure it's educational.



If anyone would like to have a go, you're welcome to it. There aren't enough hours left in my life for me to tackle it again. All the pieces are there. Just let me know. *Lynne*

THE P.C.C. MEETING



Cartoonchurch.com

Homemakers

The next meeting of the Homemakers group will be a book review, and will be held on Thursday 19th September, at 7:30pm, at the home of Greeba Jones. Bring a book to discuss.



Greeba can be contacted on 01625 427085

All are welcome.

Sunday's Service

This Sunday's service (**Sunday 15th September**) will be led by the Connecting People Team.



If you are reasonably mobile we will be asking you to change seats for the purposes of short discussions during the service. We'll also be providing you with name labels to wear. (Of course both are optional!)

If at all possible, please complete the questionnaire which you can access using the link below.

[Connecting People - Questionnaire](#)

Music@Mike's

The first concert of this term is on Friday 20th September at 1.15pm and features mezzo-soprano Imogen Garner accompanied by pianist John Gould.



Entry is free but donations are welcome, to be shared between the East Cheshire Hospice and St Michael's.

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

The end is in sight!

The scarf project will soon reach its grand finale (and no-one will be more grateful than I!).



On Sunday 29th September we plan to "wrap up the church" with one enormous scarf made from some of the 260+ which have, wonderfully, been knitted and crocheted (see page 6).

For this feat, I need as many volunteers as possible to come outside at the end of the service (**before** getting your tea/coffee!) to hold up a section of the scarf to prevent it falling on the ground. This shouldn't take long and doesn't require strength or agility!

Once the scarf has gone all round the outside of the building and met itself coming back, we can tie a lovely bow at the church doors, take lots of photos then take it down again to be separated into its individual scarves.

These will be displayed and offered for sale.

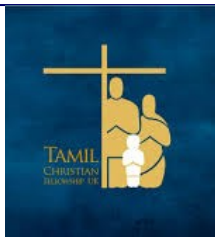
Please do help on the day!

There could be cake.

Lynne

The Tamil Christian Fellowship Weekend Away

The Tamil Christian Fellowship, attended on Saturdays by Esther, Vijay & family, enjoyed a weekend away last weekend.



Around 110 people - adults, teens and children - went to Tyn-y-nant Christian Centre in Abererch, Pwllheli. Also there were Prem's parents, Justin & family, and Esther's sister & family from Bristol. The theme of the retreat was 'All Creation Praise'.



Ed. What a splendid photograph! I think matching T-shirts would be a good idea one Sunday for everyone at St Mike's (together with a lovely weekend away - an idea for the Connecting People Team?)

Pilgrimage '24 – not long now!

This year's pilgrimage is from Friday Sept 27th to Sunday 29th. If you would like to join us on one or more of these days then please let one of us know fairly urgently. We aren't asking for 100% commitment but we do need to know approximate numbers.



On the Friday we will walk in the Cheshire plain between the churches at Gawsorth, North Rode, Eaton, Marton and Siddington with short acts of worship Eaton and Siddington.

On the Saturday it's a circular walk in the hills between Rainow Church, Jenkin Chapel, and Forest Chapel. There is a breakfast café at Rainow Church before we start and reflections at the two chapels.

On each of these days, pilgrims will be more than welcome to either walk the whole day, just walk between one or two of the churches, or drive and meet us for worship.

On the Sunday we will walk from Sutton St James to St Michael's along the canal to arrive in good time for our 10.00 o'clock service on what will be Michaelmas Sunday, the feast of St Michael.

We will be sharing cars to transport pilgrims to and from the start and end points each day.

We start on Friday and Saturday at 10:00 - earlier on Sunday to enable us to arrive at St Mike's by 10:00.

More information is available – routes and timings etc. Please let one of us know if you're interested.

Paul Spedding, Paul Simms paulspedding@gmail.com
paul@lowerbeechfarm.co.uk

How to make a scarf long enough to wrap up St Mike's

The first ingredient is a battalion of wonderful people to help with all the hard work.



My grateful thanks go to Beryl, Margaret L, Grace, Alexa, Kate P, Cheryl, Chris W., Tricia A. and Norma who came and put in hours of hard slog labelling and sewing together the scarves.

The second ingredient is the scarves themselves: I now have 262 (with more apparently still pending!).



I can't thank you all enough for your efforts, It's a pure delight to look at the handiwork - the scarves range from the simple to the sophisticated; the short to the (extremely) long; the straightforward to the crazy; the soft and gentle to the slightly scratchy and exfoliating (only a couple of the latter)! In short, there is a scarf to suit everyone, so do await the grand sale of these wonders and help us to boost our funds even more.

Included are some pictures from the workshop we held on Tuesday.



And of course, once more, a special mention of Garrie, our sole male contributor, who started knitting from scratch and persevered to an end product.

We're expecting to see Adrian wearing this work of love and commitment - although it might not be his usual urbane and sophisticated style!

Churches



*Rush-bearing Service at
St Stephen's Church,
Forest Chapel,
Attended by Tricia,
L:ynne and Mike*



Robert Bracegirdle has sent this photograph of the doorway to the church of St Mary & St John, the Parish Church of Rothley in Leicestershire, where he was baptised by the Bishop of Leicester at the age of 70!



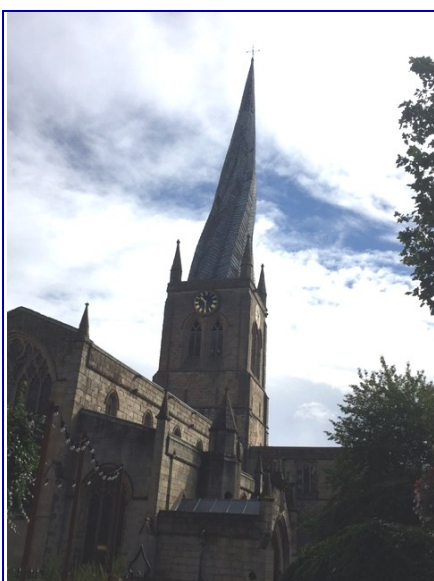
Jo has sent in these wonderful church doors seen on their family holiday on the Norfolk Broads:

*St Mary's, West Somerton
St Catherine's, Ludham
All Saints, Catfield*

*(I'm not sure which is which!
Ed.)*



Chris, Katie and Sarah enjoyed a trip to London and visited the Tower, so they have sent in these pictures of church entrances



The door of this church is relatively pedestrian but the steeple most certainly isn't!

Paul and Lynne visited St Mary and All Saints', Chesterfield, on their way to the even more spectacular Hardwick Hall



Christ Church, Eaton



St James's and St Paul's, Marton

Here are the three Daneside churches Lynne has been helping out at over the last 12 months



All Saints Siddington

Join us for *Worship*



Sunday 15th September

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Family Communion

Led by the Connecting People Team

Celebrant: Revd Jenny Fox-Eades

Bible Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6

Theme: Connecting People

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 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 18th September

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 September: Morning Prayer
26th September: 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

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



Compline

**Share your Photos with
St Mike's Church Family!**

 **WhatsApp**

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)

