

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH NEWSLETTER

19th July 2026



Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch Acts 8:26-39

Some thoughts from Lynne

A few weeks ago, I spoke at our morning service on Acts 8:26-39, a passage which tells us about Philip - not the Apostle Philip but **Philip the Evangelist** - and his encounter with a foreign traveller.

The theme was 'people changed by God', part of a series we have been covering on lesser-known individuals in the early church; how God spoke to them and worked through them. I'm pretty sure the intention was that I should focus on Philip but - although I did cover his story and what we might learn from him - I was much more interested in, and affected by, the story of the man he encountered:

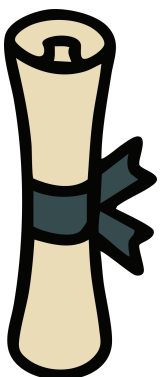
the Ethiopian eunuch.

Below is the second part of my talk, which I hope you will read, especially if you weren't at that particular service. (It might help to read the Bible passage again first - **Acts 8:26-39**).



Now I want to turn my attention to the Ethiopian, because it's him - if I'm honest - who interests me more than Philip (which is not to diminish Philip's impact). I want you to consider how much we learn about this man from just three brief verses (27-29).

Firstly, he was wealthy: we're told that he was in charge of the treasury of the Ethiopian Queen: a prestigious and undoubtedly a well-paid position. In addition, he was travelling by chariot and chariots were only for the rich. He was reading from a scroll and scrolls were very expensive.



His official position gave him not just money but status. He was a man of influence. He was also clever: obviously highly numerate, we know he could also read Greek (the language in which his Old Testament scroll would probably have been written, rather than the original Hebrew).

And finally, we know he was religious: not only was he reading scripture, but we learn that he had been to Jerusalem to worship and was now heading home. We might ask, was he himself Jewish? Or simply interested in Judaism? Probably the latter from his perplexity about the passage he was reading.

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Hold all this in your head as we now consider the two other facts about him:

- He was black (he was Ethiopian);
- He was a eunuch.

Now be in no doubt:

A eunuch is a man castrated as a pre-adolescent boy. This grim procedure was carried out for a variety of reasons, the most likely one being to prevent the eunuch ever having sexual relations. Eunuchs would often be 'created' to be in charge of a harem, or to move amongst the palace women without risk of sexual impropriety. There were other reasons for castration (the preservation of a fine 'castrato' singing voice for one) but there's little doubt that this particular man's position in service to the Queen would require no possibility of sexual impropriety.

What we can be very clear about is that castration involved painful mutilation and humiliation. And, despite his current prestigious position at the Ethiopian court, this man would not be fully acceptable in society nor indeed in Jewish religious practice.



From **Deuteronomy 23** we learn that eunuchs were precluded from full participation in Jewish worship: **'No-one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the Lord' (Deuteronomy 23:1);** and there was a general stigma of uncleanness associated with eunuchs.

And yet, in the book of Isaiah (that same prophet this man was reading from in his chariot) we read this contrasting affirmation:

'To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and who hold fast to my covenants, to them I will give my temple, a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters' (Isaiah 56:4-5).

'A name better than sons and daughters' - what a peculiarly moving promise to offer to those who would never themselves be able to father sons and daughters. So, from Isaiah, this man who is not a man learned that he was indeed acceptable to God through his faith and his obedience to God's covenants. No wonder he wished to learn more from the prophet.

And now he was reading another passage from Isaiah, one which described a man who was 'despised and rejected, humiliated, led like a lamb to the slaughter'. How this must have resonated with our eunuch who, despite money, status and influence, was nonetheless considered unclean, an outcast from normal society, and who had suffered his own humiliation, pain and rejections. Yet he didn't understand who this despised and rejected man was, so he sought Philip's help in understanding.

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Philip seized the opportunity to spread the Good News and explained that the one described by Isaiah is Jesus, the 'suffering servant' yet also the Messiah. And so it was, I firmly believe, that the Ethiopian recognised himself in the person described by Isaiah, and – incredulously – he recognised Christ in himself. He was validated, affirmed and owned by God, with 'a name better than sons and daughters'. He was a changed man.

Without hesitation he asked for and received baptism from Philip, and became a member of a church which, to our shame, in the intervening 2000 years, has perpetrated practices of discrimination against those of a different skin colour and those of a different sexuality.



Shame on us.

This passage describes two men, both changed by their faith in Jesus – one stepping outside his assigned role within the church and given the confidence and the opportunities to evangelise; and the other finally feeling vindicated, accepted and loved having recognised himself in a God who understands our pain, humiliation and suffering.



Can we learn from both these individuals on our own faith journey?



Lynne



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The Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Generous God, you give us gifts and make them grow:
though our faith is small as mustard seed, make it grow
to your glory and the flourishing of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Friday 17th July there is going to be a wonderful organ recital by Ian Dalglish, do come along!



Saturday 25th July - Simon Conning will be here playing some piano pieces!



Vision Zone 2026 - Coming to our church

We are pleased to be hosting a Vision Zone 2026 event here at the church on **Thursday 10th September, 11am-2pm.**

The event is free to attend and is designed for anyone living with sight loss, as well as their families and carers. Visitors can find out about the latest assistive technology, local support services, charities, community groups and practical advice, with opportunities to try out new equipment and speak to friendly, knowledgeable staff. Everyone is welcome. For more information, see the leaflet attached.



Vision Zone 2026



Eco tip

Shop Your Wardrobe!



Before buying something new, take a fresh look at what you already own. We often forget about clothes tucked away at the back of the wardrobe, so challenge yourself to create a few "new" outfits from items you already have.

Don't throw clothes away because of a missing button or small tear – repair them if you can. Unloved items can also be upcycled or repurposed, giving them a new lease of life. Using what we already own saves money, reduces waste and helps care for God's creation.

Job Opportunity at St Peter's Prestbury



Are you an experienced in communications looking for a flexible part-time role?

This is a new role designed to help promote the work, life and mission of St. Peter's Prestbury through our various online and printed publications and through other communication activities. See job advert attached. Closing date: Monday 20 July 2026

Many congratulations to Lynne & Paul as they celebrate their **50th Wedding Anniversary!** Look out on Sunday for a photo of them getting married here at St Mikes **50 years ago!!** They are also bringing cake for all to enjoy - yum!



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Reminders.....

Food Drop-Off Event



On Thursday 30th July 10:30m - 1pm there is a food bank drop-off event at Sutton St James Church, SK11 0NZ. Vicky Darlington can take donations. The final collection at church will be **Sunday 26th July**. Check out the A5 flyer in the welcome area for needed items and details. For any queries, contact Vicky on 01625 248 215. Thank you for your continued support.



Re-use and recycle stall:

Sunday 30th August

The SA&WW team is organising a fundraising sale in support of Tearfund. They are looking for donations of good-quality:

- Bric-a-brac
- Plants
- Books
- Children's toys



Please note: we are unable to accept clothing!

If you have any items you would like to donate, please bring them in by **Saturday 29th August**. Drop off down the left hand side of the Nave (near noticeboards) from Monday 24th August.

Tearfund is a Christian charity that works with local churches and communities around the world to help people overcome poverty, respond to disasters, and build lasting, sustainable change. Every donation and purchase will help support this vital work.

Thank you for your generosity and support.
Martin Bancroft, Ann Kite, Ann Radmall, Lynne Spedding



Kenya Choral Connections

An evening with the 7am Choir of
All Saints Cathedral, Nairobi, Kenya

with special guests: • Teddy Otieno (Piano)
• David Sotunde (Saxophone)

in St Michael's Church Macclesfield

Tue 21 July 7:00pm

**St Michael's Parish Church,
Market Place, Macclesfield**

Tickets

£15 - Adults

£12 - Under 18s

Cash payments via church office with Isobel:

Tel: 01625 421 984

Online payments to:

Martyn Donaldson Music Trust

Sort code: 01-05-41

Account no: 3951 3718

Please use reference

"Surname - All Saints Choir"

OR **Contact:** 01625 433 187

andy.donaldson@mdmt.org.uk



**For a sneak preview the choir can be
heard on BBC Radio 3 In Tune on Monday
20th July!**



End of School Year Prayer

*Let's
Pray*

Loving God,

Thank you for this school year, for all we have
learned, and for the friends we have made.

Bless us during the summer holidays. Keep us safe,
happy, and full of joy.

Be especially with our Year 6 children as they move
on to high school. Give them courage, confidence,
and remind them that you are always with them.

Amen



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Sunday 19th July

10:00am: The Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

Holy Communion service (with groups for children and young people).

Bible Reading: Acts 16:11-15, 40

Theme: People changed by God: Lydia

Leader & Speaker : Revd Canon Vivien Gisby

After service discussion: David Mayers

Use the link below to stream this
(and previous services) on YouTube
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 - [Link to Facebook](#)

Wednesday Morning Prayer Group -

Alternate Wednesdays, 10:30am in the
Savage Chapel - lasting 30-40 minutes.

Thursday 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

23rd July: Morning Prayer

30th July: Midweek 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



Held in the Silence (Contemplative Prayer)

Friday mornings from 9.20-9.50.

An opportunity for quiet prayer followed by a cuppa
and chat.

Compline/Night Prayer - Every Friday

Topic: Night Prayer | Time: 8.30 pm

Join Zoom Meeting; [Click here to join meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 756 7694 7476 Passcode: compline



Share your Photos with St Mike's Church Family



If you've any photos of recent significant
birthdays or celebrations which you'd like to share in
Church Family News on Sunday mornings, please send
them via WhatsApp to this number: **+44 7579 820265**

You can, of course, also email pictures and text to
stmikesnotices@gmail.com. The deadline each week
is: 12 noon on Wednesdays

How to contact the office...



01625 421984



Isobel: clergypa@maccteam.org.uk for ministry queries
(Office hours usually Mon & Wed 9.00-2.45;
Thurs & Fri 9.00-1.00.

Elaine: bookings@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk.
for bookings and building matters
(Office hours are usually Mon,
Tues & Thurs 9:30am - 1:30pm

- 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



The National Safeguarding Team
Promoting a Safer Church

Safeguarding Contact Information

If you have any safeguarding concerns, please contact
the St Michael's Safeguarding Officer, Liz Bradbury:

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

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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.