

ST MIKE'S NEWS

A newsletter brought to you during Covid-19

Issue 5 19 April 2020 Church Together Apart

 @stmikesmacclesfield

 www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk



From Martin: Can't see the wood for the trees?

Hello everyone, we hope you are healthy, keeping safe, and finding enough activity to be coping well. We have had to adjust considerably our way of living and working haven't we?

We clearly think our decision to upload video recordings of a St Michael's Sunday service has been right, but it's also been something of a trial. Conscious that quite a number of our church members cannot access online material, it's been a challenge to include everyone as much as possible, but it's so heartening to hear how others are sharing the experience – by phone (see last week's photo of Kitey).

And then there's our actual experience of sitting in front of the camera – alien, unnerving, and most uncomfortable .. watching ourselves back, seeing all our mannerisms, hearing our 'disembodied' voices coming from the speakers of the TV, tablet or laptop. Urgh!

We say that, but we know that some people love doing this sort of thing of course! And the more we do it the more comfortable we become and the less awkward it feels.

As well as the technical things to consider (lighting, volume, background, etc), we wonder how formal or informal we should be. And then there's the thought of 'who is the audience?' Who's going to be watching this? And when – on Sunday? The following week? Next month? And where – in Macclesfield? Elsewhere in Cheshire? Or from another country!

However, on the whole it's felt novel and creative, and Martin has enjoyed learning ('playing', says Catherine) with the technical aspect of editing the services.

We enjoyed doing last week's storytelling enactment of the Resurrection using Duplo (large Lego) characters - despite needing a number of 'takes' since Mary and her friends kept falling over on the stony path! *Apologies too for the sound of the person across the valley using a stone-cutter (was it either of you, Paul S or Kevin R?)!* We're glad our efforts were appreciated, especially by some of our younger church members, but it also made us think about how visually creative we could be.

Likewise, with the inability (for copyright reasons) to include the music tracks within our uploaded service, it's felt helpful to suggest a choice of hymns/songs, or of different versions. There's such variety isn't there? Acappella, choral, jazz, all sorts. A reminder that people have such different tastes and preferences.

These new ways of doing services, and of having staff and leadership meetings online, also makes us think

Church Online
NOT CANCELED

Quiet Time With God
NOT CANCELED

Praying For The Sick
NOT CANCELED

Checking On A Friend
NOT CANCELED

Helping Others
NOT CANCELED

Being The Church
NOW MORE THAN EVER

about how to reach out and share the awesome good news of Jesus – how the message of Easter isn't just for Mary Magdalene and Simon Peter, or even just for us 'regular' Christians, but is for all people... and (dare we say it?) especially relevant for times such as this!

Maybe an Alpha course or similar discipleship material could be shared and facilitated in this way, enabling younger parents to join in with the difficulty of finding babysitters overcome. The constraints of work and commuting often meant there was little left to give to church meetings; could online housegroups meet regularly in future?

Of course, we shall all be delighted to see one another again – to worship together and share fellowship and Holy Communion in person – but we wonder how we shall also do things differently.

Please do let us know if you've had any revelations about St Michael's and its way forward, since we've been apart. Sometimes it takes stepping away from our routine situation to be able to see more clearly. Our Salt & Light Vision Day, when one of the questions asked was "What would our church look like without the building?" - How timely!

Please take a look at the Vision Day material when we send it to you and prayerfully think about the ideas, comments, and challenges. It would be great to hear from you about any of this.

Remember: our **faith** is constant; **how** it's communicated has changed considerably.

God bless you, Catherine & Martin

Vive la Storytelling

Here are the Bentley family: Chris with Ambrose, Quentin and June and photographer, Hannah, all still enjoying their 9.30 story using the Storytelling Godly Play stories. Featuring Duplo tomb, Noah (from Noah's ark toy) as Jesus, a doll as the angel, a farmer as Mary Magdalene and two pirates as her friends.... And in the bottom picture the Palm Sunday story.

Each week Judith is sending the story and props list out to the 9.30 families. Share your pictures with us if you are joining in at home.



Reception Training Going Well



The new office recruits have been on Reception duties this week. What did the dogs say to their nagging boss? "We told you we'd get it done on time, quit hounding us!"



We haven't cancelled worship, by Thom M Shuman

We haven't cancelled worship;
we've cancelled a religious service
at a specific time, in a specific place,
on a specific day, but folk will still
worship God when they are caring
for the grand-kids and walking their dogs;
worship as they serve beside Jesus at foodbanks
and pick up groceries for a neighbour;
worship when they share the Spirit's peace
by singing songs over the phone to a parent;
worship when they work from home;
worship when they endure extra shifts
in nursing homes and group homes;
worship when they e-mail someone far away
and wave to a stranger across the street;
worship when they take toilet paper
to a homeless shelter
and volunteer at a polling place.
We haven't cancelled worship,
just the 'official' part
that may be the smallest part
of it all.

Where is Jesus this strange Easter day?

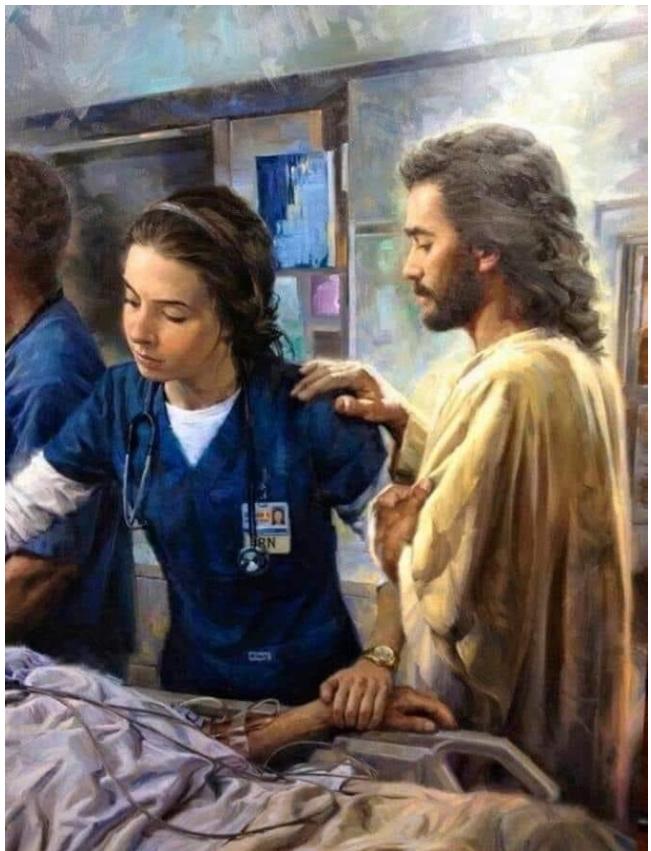
Like all of us, I have been drawn deeply into this strange Easter when so much of the outwardly familiar has been taken away, and yet the inwardly familiar, the great Easter story of Death and Resurrection, has suddenly been renewed and become more agonisingly close, more vividly relevant to our lives than ever. But, like so many, I am deeply distressed at not being able to gather in church this morning, and to receive communion in community, to meet Christ 'risen in bread, and revelling in wine', as I put it in a sonnet long ago. But this Easter he calls me to discern him in new ways and in different places. He is risen indeed, and if I cannot go to church then where am I to find him? That is the question my new poem seeks to address, and if it is a question you ask yourselves too, then I hope you will find this poem helpful.

And where is Jesus, this strange Easter day?
Not lost in our locked churches, anymore
Than he was sealed in that dark sepulchre.
The locks are loosed; the stone is rolled away,
And he is up and risen, long before,
Alive, at large, and making his strong way
Into the world he gave his life to save,
No need to seek him in his empty grave.

He might have been a wafer in the hands
Of priests this day, or music from the lips
Of red-robed choristers, instead he slips
Away from church, shakes off our linen bands
To don his apron with a nurse: he grips
And lifts a stretcher, soothes with gentle hands
The frail flesh of the dying, gives them hope,
Breathes with the breathless, lends them strength to cope.

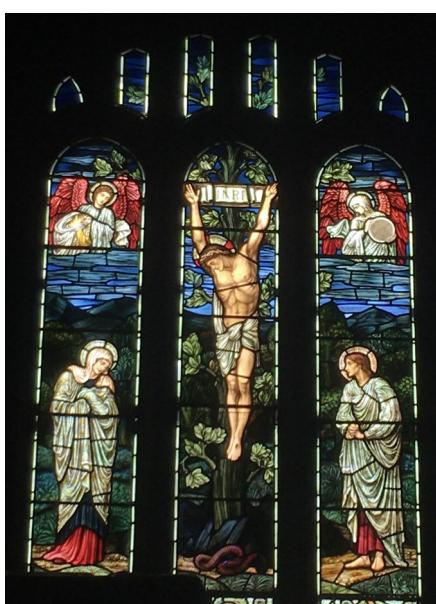
On Thursday we applauded, for he came
And served us in a thousand names and faces
Mopping our sickroom floors and catching traces
Of that virus which was death to him:
Good Friday happened in a thousand places
Where Jesus held the helpless, died with them
That they might share his Easter in their need,
Now they are risen with him, risen indeed.

by Malcolm Guite



Zoe & George enjoying the Easter Sunday service

If you still haven't joined in the Easter Sunday St Michael's Service, click here <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>



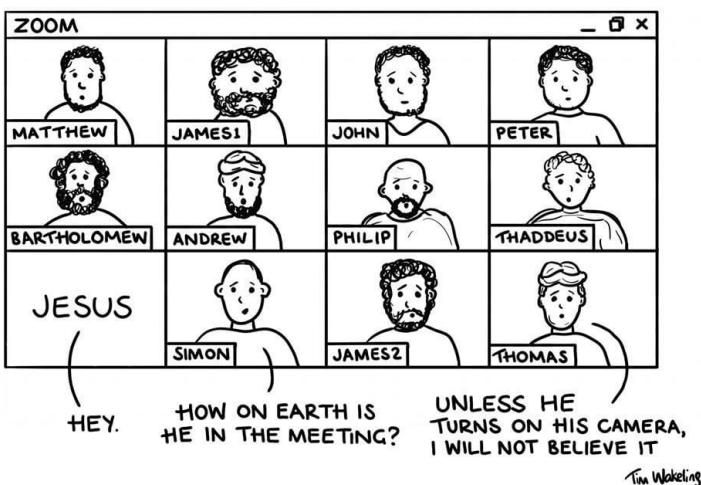
Meet the Zoomers

You may have heard the term Boomer? It's a term used as a retort for perceived resistance to technological change, climate change denial or opposition to younger generations' ideals. Well, there's a new term in town: the Zoomers. It's a term used to describe a group of church folk who had never even heard of Zoom prior to Covid-19 but who are now enjoying its benefits as can be seen in these photos...

The Home Group Zoomers hosted by David and Rachel Mayers



The 9.30 Women with Cake Zoomers hosted by Ruth Thompson



The Last Supper Zoomers

Beatitudes for these days

Blessed are they who wash their hands,
for they shall hold living water;
blessed are those who keep their distance,
for they shall draw closer to God;
blessed are they who self-quarantine,
for they shall help others;
blessed are those who do not hoard,
for they shall feed families;
blessed are those who sing songs to sheltering
neighbours,
for they shall be members of the heavenly host;
blessed are parents who learn to teach at home
for they shall learn from their children;
blessed are they who shop for older folk,
for they shall receive everlasting thanks;
blessed are the frontline health workers,
for they shall be called healers of humanity.



Easter Pilgrim Resources

A 40-day journey through the prayer Jesus taught his followers - one which continues to shape the lives of Christians across the world.

We are inviting the whole Church to take 40 days this Easter season to explore this prayer in still deeper ways. Take time each day to be still, to offer to God the pain and suffering around us and within us, to reflect on each line of the prayer and to pray with others across the world the words our risen Lord has taught us.

This will be an Easter season like no other as the world endures the coronavirus pandemic. Each day we will pray the familiar words: Our Father, give us this day our daily bread, forgive us, deliver us from evil. We will pray them with a new and ever deeper understanding.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/living-out-our-faith/lent-holy-week-and-easter/easterpilgrim-lords-prayer>

This Sunday's Roots resources to accompany the day's reading:

Resources for adults: www.rootsontheweb.com/adultsathome19apr

Resources for families: www.rootsontheweb.com/familiesathome19apr



The Holden family from our 9.30 Service. Amy and Thomas showing us their beautiful Easter Garden they made. Thank you.



Residents of Mount Pleasant sang Easter hymns at 10am on Easter Sunday. We were carefully distanced, under the canopy of the magnolia tree. The robin had to up his volume to compete! Thank you Rachel Mayers

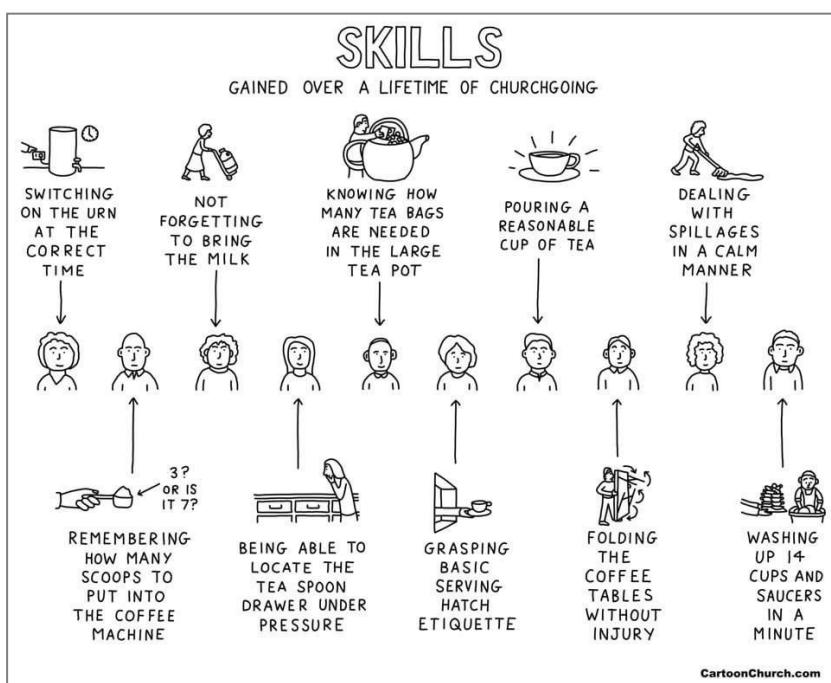
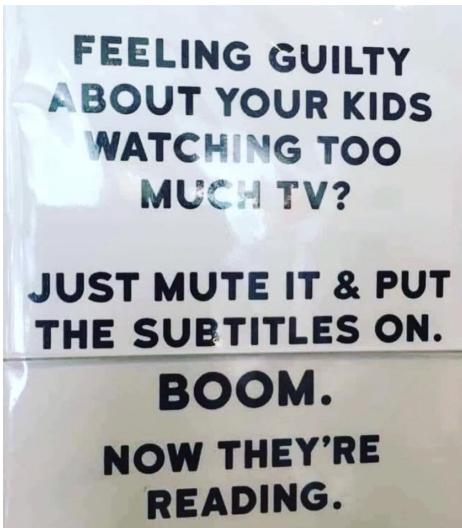


Two talented church members: Mary Rushton and Anne Kite and their Easter Wreaths



Four rolls of fabric set off from Angela Raval to the multi-talented Dawn Devine to begin their new life as NHS scrubs. Yesterday a big bag of shampoo, conditioner and shower gel (many thanks Kate Storey for your contribution) went to ward 12 of Macclesfield hospital to aid nurses and doctors cleaning as they leave shifts and tomorrow a similarly big bag of body and hand lotion sets off to Wythenshawe hospital who are asking for donations to counteract rubbing from masks and endless hand washing...doing what we can to support our wonderful NHS staff.





DOES ANYONE KNOW WHICH PAGE OF THE BIBLE EXPLAINS HOW TO TURN WATER INTO WINE?
ASKING FOR A FRIEND.

I love Jamie Oliver's Keep Cooking and Carry On because he says you can substitute ingredients for ones you do have in the cupboard. I made his Aubergine Curry Dal with Herby Flatbreads last tonight.
(Joke courtesy of Dad Jokes England)



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