



@stmikesmacclesfield



www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk



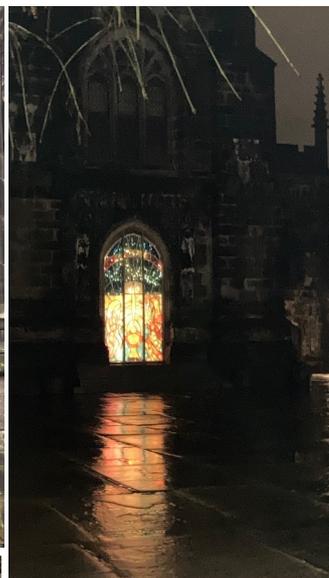
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Open Door



ADVENT



## Advent Trail Window No. 5

*Created by Catherine Stephens with assistance from Heather Smith and Martin Stephens.*

Our window forms part of an Advent Window Trail around the town centre organised by Macclesfield Town Council and supported by LITMacc. The theme was storytelling. There was no other possible story we could tell, other than the obvious but special one we have to share. So Catherine, Martin and Heather set to work to create this most beautiful window which glows at night creating a beautiful reflection on the churchyard path and shining like a beacon of hope in what is usually a very dark austere looking churchyard at night time

The message is the eternal story of Christmas. Mary and Joseph looking on in wonder at the newborn Jesus, born at night in humble surroundings. They are at one time both delighted but also in awe of what this means, for

themselves and the world. St Michael's has tried to be open for people during lockdown and we are hosting scaled down Carol Services this year. We know many of us will miss the children's Nativity plays at local schools in Macclesfield. Perhaps our Nativity image here will give us all a moment to think about these things and how God came to bring light to the world at Christmas. We hope it will bless people.

Don't forget your Christmas jumper for this Sunday's service at home and in church. If you haven't got a jumper, don't worry, grab some tinsel or baubles and wear those instead!!

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December  
9am- 9.45am  
National Christingle Service

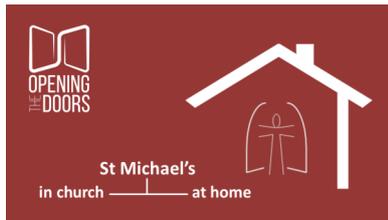
Register your interest to receive information on how to watch online [here](#), join in with Christingle making and download the Order of Service.

Join us for

# Sunday Worship

St Michael's Worship 13th December 2020  
Second Sunday of Advent  
**ONE merged service this week at 10am:  
both from home and in church**

To join by Zoom click  
on the image or use  
Meeting ID:  
939 7279 7379  
Password: 01625



Service Leader: Paul Simms  
Talk: Lynne Spedding  
Reading: John 1:6-8, 19-28

### Can't join us live either in church or on Zoom?

Watch the recording of our morning worship service on  
Zoom at a time to suit you after Sunday lunchtime [here](#)

### No Computer? No problem!

You can still join any of these Zoom meetings and services  
with your landline phone

If phoning:

Dial 0330 088 5830.



When prompted, enter the Meeting ID  
from any of these boxes followed by #  
[For Sunday's service: 939 7279 7379]

When prompted, enter #



Email any [prayer requests](#) here:

Based on this week's lectionary readings:

Resources for adults and families: click [here](#) and  
Family Time Sheet [here](#)

Resources for children: click [here](#)

(or printed with your hard copy newsletter)

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# JOIN US ON Zoom

CONNECT WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Wednesday Morning Discussion  
11.00am to 12 noon

Join Zoom meeting [here](#)

Meeting ID: 326 496 3258

Passcode: 01625



Coffee & Chat



*Apologies to those who had problems entering last  
week. Please use the link here from now on. Tricia*



### Monday House Group:

When? 7.30pm til 9pm Monday evenings

We meet up again Monday 11th January 2021. For  
more information contact Martin [by email](#) or 01625  
426110

### Thursday Homegroup

We meet via Zoom at 7.30pm. During Advent we  
shall be discussing an Advent study book. All are  
welcome to join for Bible Study, prayer and  
fellowship, including by phone. Please contact  
David Mayers by [email](#) or phone 01625 420716 or  
07963 802659.

### Contemplative Prayer

9.10am to 9.40am Savage Chapel every Friday.

**DONATIONS:** Donating to the  
church for general purposes  
has been made simpler. Either  
click on the blue Donate  
button or scan the QR Code.



SCAN ME

Giving to the work and  
worship of St Michael's

Click here to donate towards our church's  
ministry



# Revolution for WHAM in 2020-21!

Macclesfield Churches' Winter Nightshelter (WHAM) **WILL** be running this winter but in a different format.

We still want to offer an emergency bed to anyone who finds themselves forced to sleep rough in Macclesfield over the winter, but our usual model of rotating venues around six town centre churches is not possible because of the need to minimise the risk of transmitting Covid-19 to guests and volunteers. We will have one single venue – at the former Revolution bar on Mill St (or for those who have been around even longer, the former Majestic Cinema). This is a large space so guests and volunteers can be well distanced from each other, and we will be offering a more restricted service than usual, with overnight accommodation and meals only. We will be open Friday to Sunday each weekend, and also mid-week if severe weather is anticipated (and we have enough volunteers).

The team are extremely grateful to the owners, who have allowed us to use the property, to Nigel the agent for all his support, and to Kate Hancock of Wains Solicitors who has completed the legal formalities on our behalf. Also to Liz Braithwaite, Town Centre Councillor, for her support. We received the keys on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December and a team will be working hard to prepare premises and procedures, ready for opening on 18<sup>th</sup> December.



We would still welcome more volunteers: we need more people for overnight shifts (10pm to 8am), or for a daytime cleaning and preparation team. Everyone will be fully trained in safe procedures.

Please contact Richard Ainley on 07443 463910 or [maccnightshelter@gmail.com](mailto:maccnightshelter@gmail.com).

*Rachel Mayers*

*Thank you to Rachel for co-ordinating this project and making it happen and a huge thanks to all those who will volunteer there this winter time and to Richard who co-ordinate the volunteers.*

**0800 804 8044**  
**DailyHOPE**  
A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

We have been sadly informed that John Whyte who was known to the Nightshelter volunteers died last weekend. John would be seen around town in his tent, more recently by the Council building opposite the police station where it was warm and on Mill Street. If you were ever in doubt about the need for the work of the Nightshelter in our town...



Professional Telephone Listening Service  
The Hope Centre  
Registered Charity 1140845  
**0300 3034 566**  
**Open Every day**  
**READY TO LISTEN!**

OPEN for Private Prayer  
Monday to Saturday  
11am to 1pm  
Still here for you...

Join Us For Some Warm Food,  
Music and a Lovely Festive Atmosphere  
**Christmas Day 2020**  
On the Cobles Outside St Michael's Church  
Food will be served from 12pm-2:30pm.  
Father Christmas will be with us!  
All individuals and families welcome that  
need some Christmas Food.  
STRICT COVID GUIDELINES WILL BE FOLLOWED  
Organised by Reach Out and Recover,  
Macclesfield Lions and The Church of Jesus  
Christ of Latter - Day Saints  
Please contact 01625 619106 for further details.

# Christmas Day Services



One of my strongest desires, in the midst of the pandemic, has been to enable our Church community's worship to be as inclusive as possible. It's not been without its challenges of course - not least when public worship within the building wasn't permitted. But, by and large I'm happy with how we've managed to facilitate something

as much for those who are offline as online; for those wanting to be in the building as those needing to shield or self-isolate. I felt last Sunday's service was one of the smoothest yet – it was certainly one of the largest in terms of total attendees.

Smooth, maybe, but our corporate worship for the past 9 months has **not** included Holy Communion. I appreciate some of you have deeply missed that - the special encounter with God through bread and wine. I thank you for your forbearance regarding this.

However, on Christmas Day we will have an online gathering on Zoom leading into a 'Sharing of food and drink', and a separate service in the building leading into Holy Communion.

What's the difference?

Holy Communion is where a priest consecrates bread and wine before distributing it. 'Sharing food and drink' is something anyone can do, and is actually probably closer to what the Early Church did in terms of the 'ordinariness' of eating together.

So, on Christmas Day, on Zoom we'll invite all participants to have something ready to eat and drink - perhaps a biscuit, or a piece of bread or toast, and a glass or mug of water, juice, tea, etc. At the relevant point the leader will recall Jesus sharing food and drink with his followers, and invite us to do the same whilst focusing on God's love for each of us.

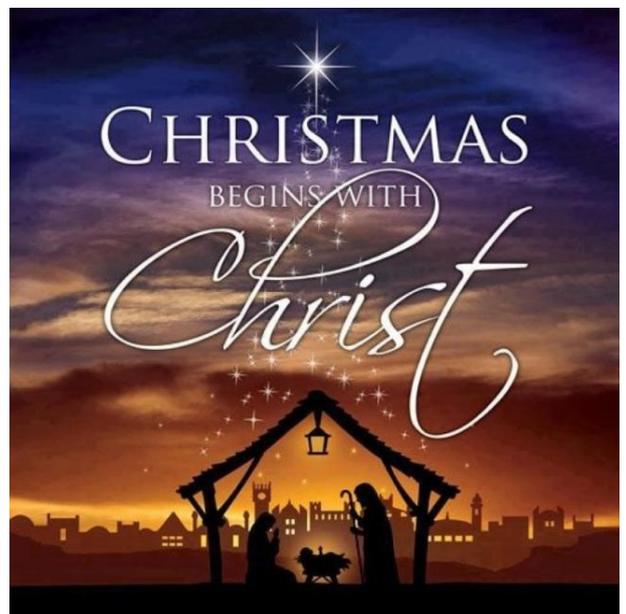
In the building I will pray the prayer of consecration (the 'epiclesis') over Communion wafers and a chalice. The congregation will be invited to receive communion – in one kind only (ie. the wafer) – which will be distributed to people in their seats (to reduce movement of people).

[As you can imagine there has to be strict hygiene rules regarding this:- handling of the wafers will be kept to a minimum, and hand sanitiser will be used both before and after the distribution. *We encourage congregation members to bring and use their own at this point in the service too.* Face coverings will need to be worn by both the minister and those receiving, removing the covering only after the minister has moved away.]

Whichever Christmas Day service you choose to join, I pray that your experience of sharing food and drink/Holy Communion with the church family will be special for you as we celebrate our Lord's birth.

Mark

**STOP PRESS:** Christmas Day Service will now be ticketed. The link to register for tickets (free but limited) is [here](#):



Tickets are still available for the following events. To register for free (but limited) tickets click on the relevant image.



If you don't manage to get tickets for either of these above services, the Carols by Candlelight Service at 5.30pm will be livestreamed so you can join live from home at the same time. A pre-recorded Crib Service will be available to view through our A Church Near You website at 4pm on Christmas Eve so again you can watch from home. These recordings will remain to view throughout the Christmas holiday period. The links you'll need for these will be included in next week's newsletter.



## A warm welcome to Neil, Lori, Sarah and Matt Brighton

Neil, Lori and Sarah have been attending St Michael's for a fair few weeks now, so we thought it was high time to introduce them to everyone.

Neil is a Baptist minister, and for nearly 20 years was the minister in Poynton. His current role is as Britain and Ireland Team Leader for Latin Link; a mission agency with a particular focus on mission to/from Latin America. Interestingly, a number of Anglican Churches in Chester and Carlisle diocese have links with the Anglican Diocese in northern Argentina - and particularly the church in Salta. In between being a minister of a local church and taking up the role with Latin Link, he and Lori spent a couple of years (with BMS) working with projects in the Peruvian Amazon; where he was involved in helping redevelop a training course for church leaders from Amazonian river

communities. Lori, who is an accountant, was involved with creating admin systems.

Lori and Neil have two children: Matt is looking for a job/apprenticeship in digital communications and plays guitar and drums and Sarah is also musical and played clarinet in the Southampton University orchestra. She finished Uni this year and has recently started working as a Health Economist.

You can find out more about LatinLink and Neil by clicking [here](#) - why not introduce yourself to the family and ask Neil directly. He also writes a [blog](#) which has lots of posts about Peru and book reviews and other musings.

Neil has very kindly agreed to preach for us on Sunday 24th January so you will all get a chance to see him then.



### Virtual Balloon Race

There is still time to support our Parish Scout and Guide groups with their fundraising for their building. They are holding a virtual balloon race. All the details in last week's newsletter and on their race page [here](#) You have until 22nd December to buy your virtual balloon. Good luck and have fun!

### A prayer for putting on a Face Mask

Creator God, as I prepare to go into the world, help me to see the sacramental nature of wearing this cloth. Let it be a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbours, as I love myself.

Christ Jesus, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart, that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes. Since my voice may be muffled, help me speak clearly, not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully and caringly to all those I meet. May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner, and may each breath that it holds, be filled with Your love. In your name and in that love I pray. Amen.



## Escape Room Fun



This Sunday Youth Group will be taking part in the Nativity Escape Room. Jonny, James and Catherine will be putting them to the test as Evie has given it a dry run and managed to complete it in 45 minutes and looks very pleased with that. So the gauntlet is now thrown down to Youth Group. Can you beat Evie's time? We'll let you know how they did next week...

# Reflection on LIGHT

I too have been reflecting on light and, following Tricia's [article in last week's letter and sharing my thoughts with a few others](#), have been encouraged to share them here too.

The days are getting shorter, the nights and darkness earlier and longer. The weather has also been grey and gloomy and cold. This year has been one filled with uncertainty and sadness; no clarity as to when things will improve and get back to "normal". There has been little "light at the end of the tunnel".

But I am reminded that it is in the darkest of skies that we see most stars. We have certainly seen "stars" this year; those working for the NHS, carers, clergy and undertakers, those on the frontline delivering food, keeping the supermarkets and food shops open, those providing services e.g. refuse collectors. But there are personal stars too – the person who has delivered medication or other essentials, telephoned to make sure you are ok, someone you live with who has been extra patient when you have a bad day, a friendly smile while out for a walk, Sue creating this News-letter week on week – who has been a star to you? We can all be stars and lights in our world of darkness – remember the song "Jesus bids us shine".

We are seeing the Christmas lights going up, perhaps more or earlier than previous years to counteract the darkness felt in our lives. People need light. As a Christian family we have that light in Jesus, the light of the world. We have the bible with many verses about light and the positive power of light. We also live in homes which have electric light. How many light bulbs and light switches are in your home? In our home there are 43 light sources (lamps, light fittings, bulbs counted individually) and 31 switches. We are a people of prayer. What a powerful prayer it would be if each one of us made a prayer (or several) using one of the "light" passages from the bible and stuck it on the switch then, every time the switch is used pray the prayer.

*Sallie Bancroft*



## A few examples:-

- Let there be light (Gen 1:30)
- Open our eyes – turn darkness to light (Acts 26:18)
- The Lord is our light and salvation, whom shall I fear? (Ps 27:1)
- Call us out of darkness to your marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9)
- The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5)
- Jesus light of the world, shine in our darkness (John 8:12)
- Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Ps 119:105)
- Help me to shine as a light for you, Lord, and not hide under a cover (Matt 5: 14-16)



When posting cards or letters this Christmas, don't forget to ask for the commemorative stamps this year which feature nativity scenes depicted in stained glass windows.



## Paul's BIG Birthday

Did you guess correctly or manage to count all the balloons?! Perhaps this balloon will help!!

Hope you had a great day celebrating this special birthday Paul.

Karen Brady's Church has organised a fundraising evening of entertainment for Sunday 27th December, which she has shared with us. If this is something you might like to watch, click on the image to purchase tickets.





## Taking the Advent Message of HOPE, LOVE, LIGHT, JOY, COMFORT out to our town and its community

Our Posada figures have been travelling round Macclesfield visiting businesses and organisations and people particularly affected this year by the pandemic. We've been receiving and hearing their prayers for our town. Our aim is to spread the Advent message of HOPE, JOY, PEACE and LOVE.

So far they have visited:

**Day 1: Train Station** - we prayed for all those commute into our town by train and work or shop in our town.

**Day 2: Cre8 Surplus Food Grocery** - we prayed for the families and individuals who make use of the grocery who have lost their jobs, been furloughed, live in fear of losing their job, supporting other family members in difficulty and of course Katy and her team of volunteers.

**Day 3: The Hope Centre** - we prayed for the 400 people who have accessed their telephone listening services with heart-breaking stories and for those who have received over 5000 meals provided and again Emily and her team of volunteers and staff.

**Day 4: Belong Care Home** - we prayed for the staff and residents for the Lord to protect them.

**Day 5: Christmas Tree in the Market Place** - usually the focus for bereaved families with the Tree of Light service. We prayed for bereaved families in our town who have suffered restrictions in numbers for funerals and not been able to comfort one another as they would like.

**Day 6: The Samaritans:** we prayed for hope and comfort for those with mental, emotional or mental health concerns, finding life overwhelming right now.

**Day 7: Parish Scout Hut:** we give thanks to the leaders who have kept the unformed groups connected through online meetings with creativity and energy who have also been out helping in our community delivering prescriptions. They prayed for those who are isolated, trapped and lonely in their 20s and 30s - a generation who thrive on social contact, meeting up with friends and forming relationships.

**Day 8: Norma** - we prayed for elderly people with no access to the digital online world who can't carry out their volunteering roles, be that grandparenting, or in church, or other settings, who feel isolated and useless. We pray that our community will look out for one another particularly in these dark winter months.

**Day 9: Small bars** - we prayed for the night-time economy in our town which contributes to the prosperity of our town. We pray for continued support from our community to protect and sustain the dreams, jobs and incomes of these business owners, their employees and their families.

**Still to visit...** funeral directors, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Bollinbrook School, Macclesfield Hospital, Silklife Foodbank, East Cheshire Hospice...



# A letter from our friends at The Hope Centre

The shop has now been closed since March 18th and was only able to open for a few days in October. The good news is that we plan to re-open the 1st floor on December 3rd for books, cards and gifts- from Monday to Friday 10am-3:30pm. Please let your friends know.

Since March, the Management team has been working tirelessly to support those in need within our community. In this period, we have received negligible income, but have been able to continue through Grants provided from Cheshire East, Cheshire Community Fund, Reaching Communities, Macclesfield Council and The Lindow Trust. We are incredibly grateful to all who have contributed so generously to enable us to continue to serve in our community.

As we move into 2021, the needs in our community continue to grow. During this month the demand for meals has escalated and at this time we are delivering to four hostels and preparing each week over 150 meals.

We could not meet the COVID regulations issued back in March and so had to keep the café closed. As the Trustees and Management team we have taken the decision to prepare for the next 10 years and invest in refurbishing the ground floor and installing a new commercial kitchen. We hope, early in the

new year, that we will be welcoming you all back to a loving, caring café where you can meet with your friends, as well as helping Emily and her Team to provide meals, for those in need, on site, making their job much easier. We are so grateful to St Peter's for providing us with the use of their kitchen throughout this time.



**“Behold, I am  
doing a new thing”  
Isaiah 43.19**

View the list of items and equipment we need [here](#). It is fully appreciated that for many Churches and individuals this is an incredibly challenging time and we totally understand that it will not be possible for many to give financially. However, we would ask that you support us in prayer as we seek to make an even greater impact in demonstrating the 'Love of God' to our community.

On behalf of the Trustee & Management Team

## HOPE Covid Food Partnership HOPE IN NORTH EAST CHESHIRE

Hope in NE Cheshire (Hope) represents some thirty-nine Churches with twenty-six Church Leaders working together in mission in their communities throughout Macclesfield, Bollington and the surrounding villages. Hope encourages shared initiatives which any one church would not be able to sustain and responds to requests for information, help and funding.

Early in the COVID-19 crisis the organisations providing emergency and subsidised food concluded they needed to co-ordinate their provision and resources. So it was decided to establish the Hope COVID Food Partnership bringing together five Foodbanks, two Food Groceries and two Cafés to serve the Macclesfield and Bollington area.

Members of the Partnership are: Cheshire Streetwise and Calvary Church (Weston) Foodbanks, The Core (Upton Priory) Food Grocery, Cre8 (Moss Estate) Food Grocery, The Green on the Corner Cafe (Hurdsfield), The Hope Centre cafe (Park Green), The Hope Central (Bollington) Foodbank, The Salvation Army Foodbank and Silklife Foodbank. These organisations are very grateful for the support and funding they have received from Cheshire East Council, Cheshire Community Foundation, Macclesfield Town Council and many generous local organisations and people.

Foodbanks provide emergency food only through referrals, for example from the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), GPs, Social Services, Housing Officers and churches. Food Groceries, in contrast, are open to everyone; members pay a subscription of £3 to £5 per week and receive about £20 of

food plus available fruit and vegetables. The two Cafés have been preparing daily cooked meals for the homeless, those in hostels and other needy people. Every two weeks the Food Partners take time out to share their plans, experience and resources; the Partnership WhatsApp group makes it possible to share daily information about food availability. The Food Partnership continues to be very grateful to the many generous organisations, including FareShare, the supermarkets, retailers and suppliers, and individual people, that provide surplus, donated and subsidised food. Without this wonderful generosity, the provision and distribution of free and subsidised food would not be possible.

Pip Moss crop, Chair of the Partnership commented: 'Demand throughout the COVID Pandemic has grown substantially but the generous funding has assured that no-one has gone hungry. However, we expect the need to rise again in the New Year as personal finances become tight, unemployment rises and the availability of funding falls. We are blessed to have the Hope COVID Food Partnership which will continue to ensure that we make the most of the food and resources we have!'

If you would like to know more, please do contact Pip Moss crop at [pipmoss crop2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pipmoss crop2@yahoo.co.uk)