

## Chosen and appointed (John 15:16)

Have you ever gate-crashed a party? A number of us did last week!

Actually, it wasn't a party as such, just a 'signing-off/handover chat' between Sue Reid and her line manager, Rachel, as Sue was working her final day in the Church/Team Office last Friday.

What Sue had expected to be a 'what I need to make sure you know before I leave' conversation on Zoom turned out to be far more memorable, and – rightly so – a much more appropriate ending for Sue on her last day, 'surrounded' by friends rather than quietly locking the door and slipping the keys through the letterbox.

Not good at lying (even for a worthy cause like this) Rachel and I were relieved that the surprise gathering of people to send Sue on her way to her new role at Wythenshawe Hospital, had managed to remain just that – a surprise gathering. It was quite clear Sue hadn't twigged a thing!

It would have been right to have a much more public celebration and thanksgiving for Sue's 11½ years in the office, but the pandemic has seen to that. So, with apologies to everyone who would have liked to be present, we gathered a small group of people who'd been 'significant' in Sue's ministry among us to



date. These included:

- Chris Gleaves who met Sue on Alpha and helped nurture her in the Christian faith .. and has continued to so.
- Graham (& Rosie) Turner who first floated with Sue the possibility of her taking the new Clergy PA role
- John Phillipson, Chair of the Team Council, under whose remit the Clergy PA appointment was made
- Chris Wightman was on the interviewing panel which appointed Sue
- Fran Hiles was in the office on Sue's first day, and was a regular recipient of requests to take funerals on behalf of the Team
- Harriet from the Town Council, who has worked with Sue to develop and strengthen the links between the Church and wider community

as well as others you'd recognise who've worked closely with Sue in the office over the years.

This isn't intended to be a full-blown "Sue Reid, This is Your Life" article, but last Friday's gathering has made me wonder:

Who have been the 'significant people' in **my** faith journey?

Who have been the ones who have nurtured **me** and encouraged **me**; who have walked alongside and worked with **me** in ministry?

Whose are the faces it would be sheer delight to see unexpectedly turn up in a Zoom call to mark a moving on in faith and personal development?

Not everyone will be called to change roles and start a new ministry in a different place this year, but we have been chosen and appointed by God, that we might go (or stay) and bear fruit that lasts (John 15:16)

Can I invite you to do one (or all) of three things?

- Even (perhaps especially) in these difficult times, do consider who are **your** 'fan base'. Who are the ones who will cheer you on as you adventure with God! As people's faces and names come to mind, thank God for them, and thank them personally as well by dropping them a line or giving them a call.
- Think about ways in which you are being, or could be, a 'significant person' for another person or other people? What does it mean to nurture someone in the Christian faith, or to walk with them as they seek to journey with Jesus every day? Are there particular things you can do to encourage them? Or books to read / podcasts to listen to / activities to undertake that you can recommend or signpost them to?

**Be encouraged** that growth and development **are** happening to the People of God in our church community at this time. Whether or not you feel it, I see the green shoots of new life appearing.

I recognise that I perhaps more regularly get the privilege of hearing first-hand people's stories of God's work in their life. Please, if you have such a story then do share it with others – either one-to-one or perhaps more publicly.

In the current lockdown there's understandably a lot of uncertainty and anxiety around, but be encouraged. The psalmist puts it like this: "Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord." (Ps.31:24) And the writer to the Hebrews like this: "We must hold tightly to the hope that we say is ours. After all, we can trust the one who made the agreement with us." (Heb.10:23)

God bless you and our church this year,

**Foodbank Donations – can you help?**

Our road – like many other neighbourhoods - established a WhatsApp group at the start of the pandemic, so that we could contact each other for help, the loan of items, and just the sharing of information, supportive and humorous comments, etc.

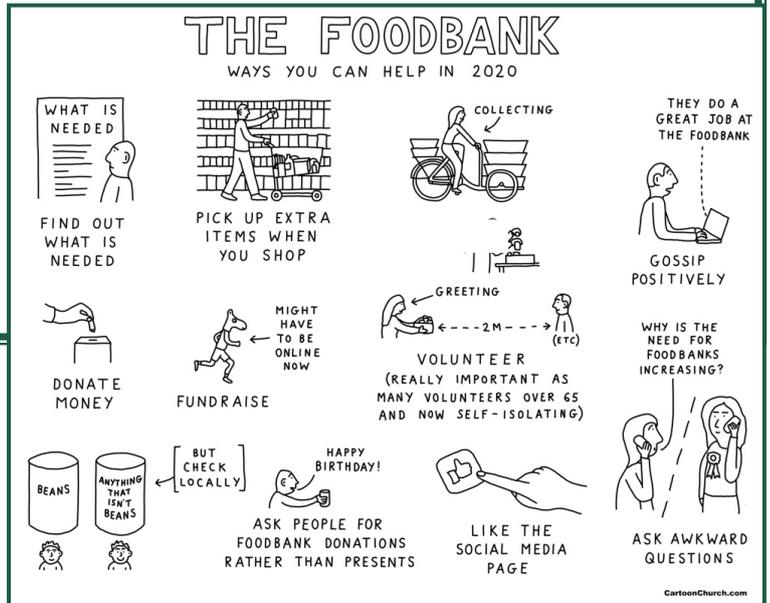
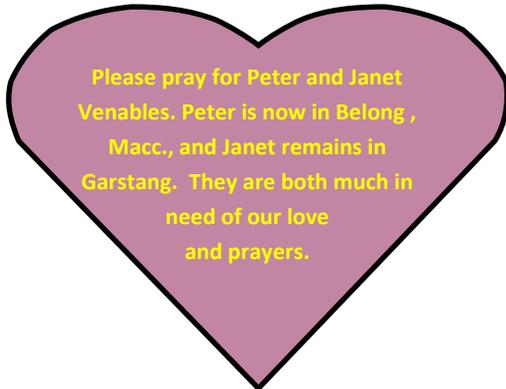
Recently one household initiated a fortnightly collection for the Foodbank and we all now gladly provide items to go into the box. I am sure that there are some at St Michael's who would normally bring items to put into the Foodbank box at church and who now find it more difficult to make donations.

Maybe you could set up your own local collection point with neighbours, or – failing that – contact me ([lynne.norbron@gmail.com](mailto:lynne.norbron@gmail.com) / 01625 614819) and I will willingly come and collect any items from your doorstep by pre-arrangement. Paul and I have made a resolution to go for a "good" walk every day, and we are happy to combine our walk with other errands! Or you could drop things off at our house if you happen to be taking your own daily exercise in our neighbourhood. Just give me a ring before you come.

Thanks,  
Lynne (Spedding)

**Items needed**

Milk (UHT or powdered), tinned meat/fish, sugar, fruit juice (carton), pasta sauces, sponge pudding (tinned), tomatoes (tinned), cereals, rice pudding (tinned), tea bags / instant coffee, instant mashed potato, rice / pasta, tinned fruit, jam / honey, biscuits/snack bars, general toiletries.



**Welcoming Visitors**

An informative one-hour [training session](#) brought to you by The National Churches Trust's tourism team on Wednesday 10 February, 11.30am. Discover the many ways in which your place of worship can benefit from tourism, from increasing visitors and raising funds to recruiting volunteers and staging events, now and post-Covid.

**Poetry Challenge**

For all poetry nerds, here is a medley of English poetry, adjusted for pandemic times.

You can either read it and enjoy its allusions or treat it as a challenge: see if you can identify the poems referenced in its lines. There are 12!

Answers on page 6

**A Brief Pageant of English Verse**

I won't arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
I'll sanitise the doorknob and make a cup of tea.  
I won't go down to the sea again; I won't go out at all,  
I'll wander lonely as a cloud from the kitchen to the hall.  
There's a green-eyed yellow monster to the north of  
Katmandu  
But I shan't be seeing him just yet and nor, I think, will you.  
While dawn comes up like thunder on the road to Mandalay  
I'll make my bit of supper and eat it off a tray.  
I shall not speed my bonnie boat across the sea to Skye  
Or take the rolling English road from Birmingham to Rye.  
About the woodland, just right now, I am not free to go  
To see the Keep Out posters or the cherry hung with snow,  
And no, I won't be travelling much, within the realms of gold,  
Or get me to Milford Haven: all that's been put on hold.  
Give me your hands, I shan't request, albeit we are friends,  
Nor come within a mile of you, until this nightmare ends.

**It's 13th July 2022 and Gavin, who lives in a tier 43 area, gets ready to put the bins out.**





## In loving memory of Doreen

It was with great sadness and some shock that we learned last Sunday of the death of Doreen Dawson.

Here are a few of the tributes paid by members of the church family.

Doreen and I were young post-war neighbours - our homes faced one another across the village road and in 1953 we were linked by Coronation bunting. Doreen was a Big Girl; she taught Sunday School, sang in the choir and rang the bells. I was a bit in awe of her. We became in-laws when her brother married my sister and we met at family celebrations over many years.

Then Doreen moved to Macclesfield in 2003, so we met as old friends and became new ones on the foundation of our shared past. A few years ago, Doreen told me that although she had lived in various places at different stages in her life, it was in Macclesfield that she had the strongest sense of belonging to a community: surely the result of what she gave to us in her service of time and love and energy. Until Doreen's recent illness, age did not weary her: it brought her rich fulfilment.

**Bernice Jones, friend, and related by marriage**

## A Special Neighbour

A couple of summers ago, Marek and I were all packed up and ready to go on our holiday to Germany. It was a mere 25 minutes to the arrival of our taxi for the airport when I suddenly discovered that water came through the ceiling in the kitchen... Within a couple of minutes the electricity had cut out and all appliances were dead. My mind was spinning and I had visions of returning after a 4 week holiday to a flooded kitchen and the smell of the decomposing contents of a freezer...

There were only 2 options: either, miss the plane and sort it out or... get Doreen from 3 doors down the Close. Within minutes Doreen appeared, assessed the situation, requested our key and insisted that we were not to miss the plane. 20 minutes later we sat in the taxi for the airport...

This was Doreen: calm, with a no-drama, rational and matter of fact approach to dealing with life's challenges. She made sure she had all the facts straight and that all angles were covered and then she got on with it. Thoroughly impressive!

There is not enough space here to expand on all the examples of her neighbourly support, but I should mention her regular visits to my kitchen armed with a vegetable knife when it was that I was out of action for a considerable time with a fractured right arm.

She was incredibly good company. Neither of us dwelt on small-talk for any length of time and we enjoyed stimulating conversations when she visited us for coffee and cake.

By her own account, her time in Macclesfield was a very happy one. She got involved in all sort of things and felt - and these are her own words — very much at home at St Michael's.

Doreen had a number of voluntary roles; one of which was in the café in the hospital. Once, when I took her to the hospital for an appointment, she was met by folks from the café at the door and she was looked after throughout until they delivered her back to me for the lift home. It was plainly obvious in what high regard she was held there.

When Doreen's mobility started decreasing early last year, it was time for us to reciprocate. Throughout lockdown Marek went across to Doreen's each lunchtime for little jobs (and a jolly good discussion on politics) and we managed the occasional outing (see picture).

Marek kept admiring Doreen's flowers in her garden (very colourful compared to the Werner garden). Doreen was thoroughly puzzled by our complete incompetence in the gardening department, so she decided Marek needed to create a flower bed and take some flowers across to us.



Doreen & Marek, July 2020, Victoria Park



I do love blue flowers, so she sent him with numerous forget-me-not plants. I can't wait for them to come up. There is no better way to remember a very special neighbour. Thank you Doreen!

From Heike & Marek

*Further tributes over page*

*Memories of Doreen: continued*

**On behalf of the Social Committee**

I have known Doreen for many years as a member of St Michael's congregation and she has always shown a great interest and supported many of the events we have put on in Church, as well as our weekly services.

As a Pastoral Care Visitor she took her role very seriously and continued to keep in close contact with the families she visited until failing health prevented her from carrying out these duties.

Doreen was always the first person to put her name on the list for helping on Treacle Market Sundays when the church was open to our various visitors. She also encouraged her son, David to help in the kitchen which was very much appreciated.

Always smiling, she welcomed people into our Church, serving refreshments from the kitchen: the cakes and buns she baked for the event were amazing.

Yes, Doreen you will be sorely missed by the many people you came into contact with as a member of St Michael's Church and family. A real privilege to have known her over these many years. God Bless. Vicky Darlington



*Photograph taken by Pam Pearson - one of many "doorstep photos" taken of church family members in the first lockdown: 2020*

**On behalf of the Bellringers**

Doreen learnt to ring at an early age. She was the eldest of a large family, several of whom were also taught by her father at Etwall near Derby, and her brother, John Murfin, now rings nearby at Holmes Chapel. Wherever she moved around the country she joined the local band. So when she came to live in Macclesfield in 2003 she joined St Michael's church and climbed the tower stairs to join the bellringers. A ready-made, experienced ringer! She was welcomed with open arms and stayed to become a much-loved member of the band. When Doreen first arrived in Macclesfield she was still doing occasional work as a short-term live-in carer for people who had just come out of hospital, for example; this took her away all over the country. When she was here however she was happy to participate wherever and whenever she was required, She was a regular Sunday service ringer, of course, but she also rang for weddings and carol services, open days, school visits, and striking competitions, came on tower outings and meals out, served tea and washed up. Until hip and back pain made prolonged periods of standing difficult she often rang in the quarter peal attempt before Evensong. After a hip replacement, a time when many would have thrown in the towel, she returned with some difficulty but an absolute determination to get back ringing. Her indomitable spirit had her back to full speed within a couple of months. This week-end in 2020, when Macclesfield hosted the North-west 12-bell striking competition, Doreen was there in the kitchen dishing up pies and tea, unstoppable.

Doreen continued to make her way up to the ringing room for a quick ring right up until a fall last February just prior to Covid lockdown. Bellringing was a part of her identity; if you could cut her in half, *bellringer* would be stamped through, alongside many other things, like in a stick of rock. We are so pleased she could continue so long. As the bells at St Michael's, and particularly Christ Church, became a bit too much for her she would join the ringers at St Peter's or Sutton and both of these towers have expressed their appreciation of her time and skill and said how much they enjoyed her visits.

Our previous tower captain, James, has written to express his sadness at the news of her death and to join others who commented independently on how supportive and appreciative Doreen was of their work in the tower.

Doreen's outlook was always cheerful and she grasped most opportunities that came her way with the result that she was held everywhere in high esteem and made many friends. We will miss her greatly.

Kevin Rogers and all the bellringers

**Doreen's Funeral**

Doreen's funeral will be in St Michael's, 2.00pm on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February.  
The Committal will be at Macclesfield Crematorium at 3.00pm

**Choir Update**

Despite being unable to sing in church together, the choir is continuing to hold weekly practices. These are by Zoom, and each voice part logs in for a half-hour of personalised rehearsal with Karen. Of course we are all on mute, so Karen can only imagine the cacophony and discord, but it's lovely to see each other - and of course we'll all be in excellent voice when finally allowed back in the building to sing!

And here's a treat for you all: click to open [this hyperlink](#) to watch and listen to "The Gawsorth Road Mob" (aka Karen and Arthur) playing every part in an unforgettable rendition of a well-known tune.



*A winter walk along the canal*



## In loving memory of Susan Henderson- Armstrong

(7<sup>th</sup> Jan 1964 to 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan  
2021)

I first met Sue when I called round to see her and Dave. She was receiving treatment for cancer at the time, and their plan to get married was both a sign of hope and of realism – reflective of Sue’s character itself.

It was a joy to officiate at their wedding in June 2017 – *I think weddings of mature people are always extra special* – but my joy was increased because Sue had now begun worshipping regularly with us at St Michael’s Church. A quiet but committed and interested presence, Sue contributed to the life of St Michael’s, including being a recruit of Anne Kite’s for arranging flowers.

Further joy was meeting and baptising Sue’s grandson Fraser, whom Sue would also bring to our weekly Toddler Group on Thursday mornings.

Although only 4 years at St Michael’s, don’t think Sue was new in town: Sue was born in Macclesfield and attended Christchurch for many years, and was a Sunday School Teacher there for a while. She had been actively involved in scouting for most of her life, serving forty years as a Cub Scout leader, latterly as Group Scout Leader for 3<sup>rd</sup> Macclesfield Scout Group, and finally District Scouter. She will be sadly missed by so many whose lives she has positively affected.

My overarching memory of Sue is of someone who retained an amazingly positive outlook and demeanour. Time and again over these past four years Sue was knocked again by illness and the debilitating effects of treatment for cancer – she was an inspiration to many. Sue – a sign of hope and realism – lost her battle with cancer aged 57 on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> January this year, but was received into glory by her Saviour Jesus.

Please pray for Sue’s husband, Dave, her children Emma, David & Peter, and her parents Hedley & Carol

Sue’s funeral will take place in St Michael’s next month; further details to be announced in due course.

Martin

### From Hilary Halliwell

It is with great sadness that we learned of the death on Saturday of Sue Henderson -Armstrong.

I have known Sue a long time, both of us being Scouters and Cub Leaders; she with 3<sup>rd</sup> Macclesfield (St George’s) and myself with 6<sup>th</sup> Macclesfield (St Michael’s). Sue served for 40 years as a Cub Leader and was awarded the Silver Acorn in 2008.

Sue’s profession was as a nurse, and she was a very caring one. In 1988 she married Laurie and moved to Stockport, and there she had three lovely children: Davey, Peter and Emma. The family moved back to Macclesfield in 1999.

Sue has been a member of the St Michael’s Church family for a few years and was part of the flower-arranging team, taking her turn on



the rota for decorating the church so beautifully each week. This was a role she thoroughly enjoyed. She also regularly came along to the Toddler Group in church, bringing her much-loved grandson. After the death of her first husband, Laurie, Sue continued in Scouting, undertaking many roles, and in 2017 she found happiness in a new marriage to Dave Armstrong. Dave was a tremendous support to Sue over the last five years as she battled with the cancer which eventually took her life.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Dave and the children at this very sad time.

Sue will be greatly missed.

### And from Anne Kite (Flower Ministry)

In the last few years Sue was a valued and enthusiastic member of the Flower Ministry team, always willing to help to decorate the church for Festivals and bring lovely blooms from her garden. We will miss her lovely smile and her talents so much.



### Sue’s Funeral

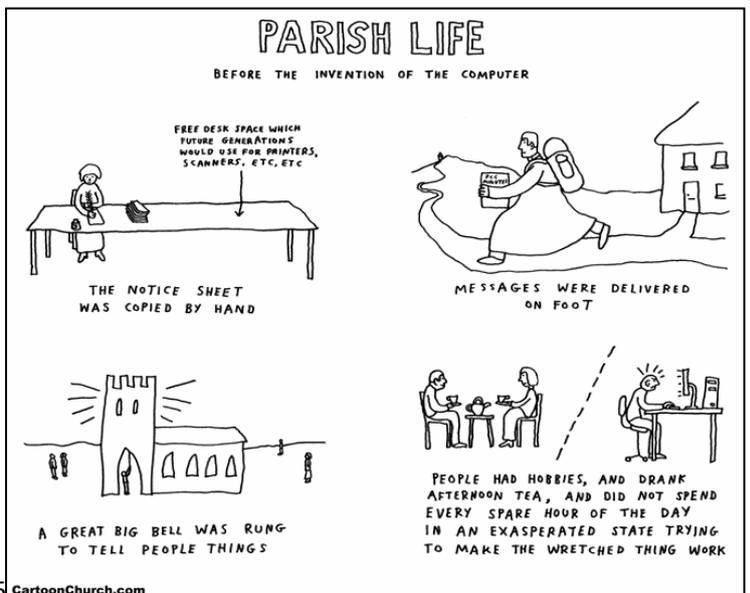
Sue’s funeral will **PROBABLY** be 10.30/11am on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February in St Michael’s, with a burial at Macclesfield Cemetery afterwards.

**To be confirmed next week.**



This is Alan Wootton’s photograph of the Jupiter/Saturn conjunction which occurred around the Winter Solstice.

It might not be top-quality when printed but is fantastic online!



## The History of St Michael's Church Building

We have had a few articles in recent months containing people's memories of their life within the St Michael's church family. I thought it might be interesting to include snippets on the history of our building. These are excerpts from the quarterly newsletter which is sent out to the Friends of St Michael's, compiled by Paul Spedding.

### The Origins

A Saxon cross, found under St Michael's, suggests that there may have been a chapel here before 1066, and there was probably a chapel built on this site from around 1220 when Macclesfield Borough was established. However, the first chapel on this site for which we have definite knowledge is that founded by Queen Eleanor (wife of Edward I) in 1278, following a visit to the town by the King and Queen in 1275.

The oldest remaining building is the Legh Chapel built around 1422 for Sir Piers Legh of Lyme who died at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. This was a chantry chapel where prayers and masses were said for the soul of Sir Piers.

A similar chantry chapel was built by Thomas Savage, Archbishop of York around 1505. Macclesfield Grammar School (now King's) was built as part of the Savage Chapel development at the same time and was funded by Sir John Percyvale, a Macclesfield man who had gained great wealth and become the Lord Mayor of London.

Both the Legh and Savage chapels are of course still in existence and well worth a careful look (when Covid restrictions permit!)

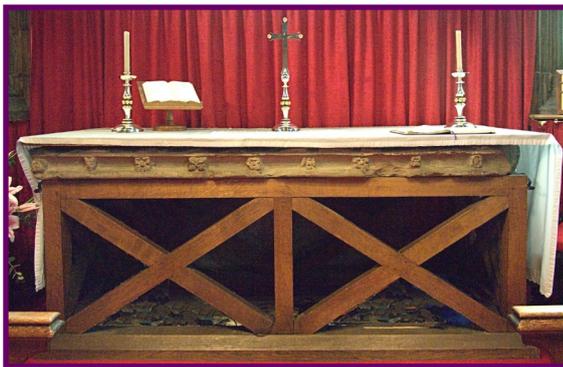


The Legh Pardon Brass

Points of interest include the remaining parts of the 1506 Legh Pardon Brass on the west wall of the Savage Chapel. This depicts Roger Legh, his wife and their 13 children.

The Savage Chapel also contains a very unusual feature - the stone altar, which survived an order by Edward VI in the mid sixteenth century (as part of the Reformation) that all stone altars were to be destroyed, being considered "papist". The Chapel also includes a "squint" to allow visibility of the altar in the main church from the chapel.

It is not entirely clear when the tower was built: the early fifteenth century has been suggested for its lower part, with a spire added in around 1500, although this no longer exists of course.



The stone altar in the Savage Chapel

### Poetry Quiz Answers

1. The Lake Isle of Innisfree by W.B. Yeats
2. Sea Fever by John Masefield
3. I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud by William Wordsworth
4. The Green Eye of The Little Yellow God by J. Milton Hayes
5. The Road to Mandalay by Rudyard Kipling
6. Something on a Tray by Noel Coward
7. The Skye Boat Song by Sir Harold Boulton
8. The Rolling English Road by G.K. Chesterton
9. Loveliest of Trees the Cherry Now by A.E. Housman
10. On First Looking into Chapman's Homer by John Keats
11. Milford Haven by Michael Drayton
12. Give Me your Hands by William Shakespeare from Midsummer Night's Dream

## How to contact the Office after 22nd Jan

We no longer have Sue in the office, so several volunteers will be trying to keep most office functions going. Please would you be careful to use the correct email address for the purpose of your message.

- For the **newsletter**: [stmikesnotices@gmail.com](mailto:stmikesnotices@gmail.com)
- For **bookings, building maintenance**: [office@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk](mailto:office@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk)
- For **service details, rotas, anything else**: [clergypa@maccteam.org.uk](mailto:clergypa@maccteam.org.uk)

These email addresses will be accessed at least once per week, but not every day, so don't expect an instant response.

The office phone will also be accessed at least once each week.

## Hospital Chaplaincy Visits

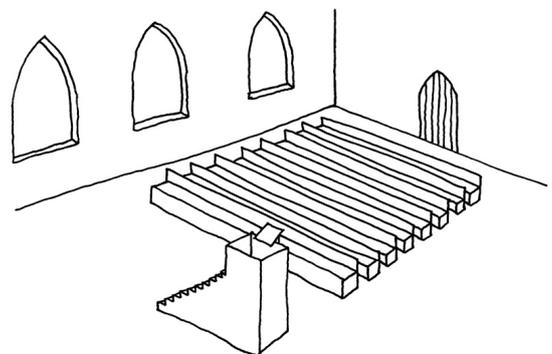
I've heard that hospital chaplains at MDGH are now able to get onto some wards with COVID (currently wards 11, 12, 3 and 9).

If you are aware of someone in a ward at Macclesfield Hospital who would find comfort in a visit from a chaplain please let me know, and I'll forward a message to the Chaplaincy Team.

Even if they can't get to see them in person the chaplain can get to the nurses station and share resources to be taken to them.

Martin

THE CHURCH IS EMPTY



THIS IS BECAUSE EVERYONE IS BUSY





## Thank You - from Sue

I just want to say such a heartfelt THANK You for your wonderful and loving messages of support, encouragement and affirmation as I leave the Church Office and move to Wythenshawe Hospital. I have been overwhelmed by the number of messages I have received in cards, emails, texts and phone messages. I will never forget the kindness shown by so many of you.

On my last day I was treated to a real surprise. I had been asked by Rachel to join her on Zoom at 4pm for a signoff and handover meeting. I spent the day tidying and sorting, a final clear up and hoover in the office itself at church, tying up as many loose ends as I could. Finally, 4pm came and I was ready to hand over to Rachel. When the screen opened up, I was greeted by cheers and a sea of friendly faces from across my 11 years of working. I shall treasure that moment forever. I could not believe that everyone had managed to keep that a secret from me. No clues or hints. Nothing! A genuine surprise. My first reaction was to burst into tears. It was all too much to take in. The fountain of emotion and tears that I had been holding back for days had just been given the green light to pour out.



Then came a knock at the door with Catherine bringing me the most amazing afternoon tea made by Chris Wightman, complete with crockery and linen napkins and a three-tiered floral serving plate. Then everyone took turns to say such lovely things said about me and my time in the Church Office.

Many of you, who know me well, know that I have a number of passions (some

may say vices!) in life – yes, there's my two gorgeous fluffy assistants, Kez and Chip, my girls, Kev, walking in the hills, chocolate, Pinot Grigio and of course, gin, but there is also FLOWERS! Flowers really do make me happy. So, I can't thank you enough for the beautiful flowers which arrived on my last day here at home. And more than that, this bouquet is to be followed up by 11 more – one each month for a year. I can't think of a nicer way to be reminded of all my lovely church family at St Michael's each time the flowers arrive and as they sit in a vase in my home or on my new office desk. Thank you so very, very much.

I will hold onto all your lovely comments in my Smile File – yes, I genuinely do have one!

On days when I doubt myself or feel overwhelmed, I shall open up the smile file and retrieve all your lovely messages and remind myself of how blessed and thankful I am to have my church family and all that support. There have been some



dark times personally for me whilst working in the office with grief and much loss. But God will now use that. He will use my cracks and my fissures to pour out light to shine and help others in darkness.

Please pray for me as I embark on this new chapter. I did a recy visit to the hospital last Sunday to find the bereavement office. Wythenshawe is a huge hospital. The actual office itself is in the middle of a clinical area: a suite of operating theatres opposite and a children's ward next door and a beautiful bereavement garden to the other side. As I walked back along the corridors to the car, the reality of what I am about to do really struck me. I know God has equipped me with gifts to do this role and will strengthen me and sustain me, but your prayers are also much appreciated as well as for those I will be serving: bereaved families grieving the loss of loved ones and the staff and clinicians looking after those who are sick and dying.

Thank you all.

Sue xx



## A Personal Covid Reflection

On 18<sup>th</sup> April last year, our daughter-in-law Laura lost her mum to Covid. This is the only direct contact Paul and I have had with death as a result of the pandemic.

We knew Yvonne fairly well, having met up quite often before and after our son Chris's marriage to Laura. She wasn't in good health generally, having suffered encephalitis around 12 years previously, but she took enormous pleasure from her family. Yvonne – whose proper name was actually Artemis (she was Greek Cypriot but it seems we English couldn't cope with her Greek name!) – was so delighted when Chris and Laura gave her two lovely grandchildren – Sam and Evie - and she delighted in their company and, of course, spoiled them thoroughly.

Laura and her sister Adeline had a heartbreaking time at the start of the first lock-down, unable to see their mum at home as she had to isolate (she had a carer living with her to support her) and, when she was taken into hospital with a non-Covid medical crisis a few weeks before her death, visiting was prohibited. The girls were summoned on 11<sup>th</sup> April to say goodbye, as Yvonne had contracted Covid while in hospital and had experienced a crisis. They were kitted out in full PPE and taken in to see their mum, who by now had revived a little. Yvonne knew her girls and was able to communicate minimally with them.

A week later, on her little boy Sam's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, Laura received the second summons to the hospital. She and her sister very sadly didn't arrive in time: Yvonne had already died.

The experience has made us very aware of the cost to families of this pandemic. The death of someone close for whatever reason is almost unbearable. To be unable to see a vulnerable person for weeks/months is simply dreadful: almost inhumane. And coming to terms with a death in these circumstances is well-nigh impossible.

I have written this because today (Wednesday), while listening to the R4 *Today* programme as it covered the, now, 100,000+ dead from Covid, we heard part of the litany of victims' names read out by Rory Kinnear. Yvonne's name was one which was read. We hadn't expected it. I wept. I wept for Yvonne whom I knew, and for Laura and her sister, and for all the other families devastated by this virus. Laura and Adeline will not easily recover from their loss and particularly the circumstances around it: Yvonne was their mum, they were unable to see and care for her as they had done for so many years previously, and they were unable to be with her at this final stage of her life. That is so very heartbreaking.

Lynne Spedding

So I'm getting older and I'm not as well balanced as I once was and my Doctor recommended I put a bar in my shower. I have to say, I'm really quite happy with it.



## February

February joined the calendar with January around 700 B.C. It derives its name from the Latin *februus*, which means "purification rites."

During the ancient Roman festival Lupercalia, thongs made from goatskin were used in purification rituals, which took place during the month, earning it the name *februarius*.

When February was first added to the calendar along with January in 700 BC by Numa Pompilius, it became the **last** month of the year. Pompilius tacked on these two months to line up with the lunar cycle. However, Romans believed odd numbers to be lucky. Since February ended up being the unlucky one, they placed it at the end and shortened it so the bad luck wouldn't last long.

February remained there for nearly 200 hundred years. Then, both January and February moved to the beginning of the year.

(For those who are interested, this explains why September (meaning 7th month) is actually our ninth month, ditto October (8th but our 10th), November (9th but our 11th) and December (10th but our 12th).

### Notable dates in February

2<sup>nd</sup> Candlemas / The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (and British Yorkshire Pudding Day!)

4<sup>th</sup> World Cancer Day

6<sup>th</sup> Accession of Queen Elizabeth II

16<sup>th</sup> Shrove Tuesday

17<sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday

27<sup>th</sup> George Herbert, Priest and Poet 1633

14<sup>th</sup> St Valentine's Day

20-26<sup>th</sup> National Chip Week (this speaks for itself)

14<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> National Nest Box Week (put up a nest box (or two) in your garden to help the birds)

22<sup>nd</sup> World Thinking day – when Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the world remember each other and reaffirm their commitment to international friendship and understanding.

27<sup>th</sup> Feb – 11<sup>th</sup> March Fairtrade Fortnight

### Other names for February

The Anglo-Saxons called it Sol-monath (cake month) because cakes were offered to the gods in this month

Welsh – "y mis bach" or "little month" owing to its relative brevity  
In Shakespeare's time, the month was called Feverell. In Isaac Newton's time, 100 years later, it had become known as Februeer. The modern name February is only around 100 years old.

I don't have any office assistants like Sue's but here's a picture of my "wily" hen - a bit befuddled by the snow. (Where's the grass gone?)

I'm sure I'll soon have her trained up to do the newsletter printing.

Lynne

(She's called Wily as she escapes the garden so often and can sometimes be found half-way to town.)

