



MINI MACCLESFIELD MESSENGER

34th Issue: 17th January 2021

Please feel free to distribute 'Mini Messenger' to others who may find it of interest.

A message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

I have had babies. Now before you raise your eyebrows at what seems to be a very juicy scandal, I am talking about fish babies! There are over thirty-five of them now, earlier in the week I had about 18 from a pair of Koi Swordtails but was waiting on Pamela (the Pineapple Swordtail). While Pamela was very clearly pregnant she would not be rushed! But today was the day! When the babies arrive, they come with certain challenges. Firstly, how to ensure that their mother doesn't eat them, as she will inevitably do if they come too close! Secondly how to ensure they have a safe place where they can grow without fear of their mother or anyone else eating them! This meant that within their first few hours, I had removed their mother and moved them to another tank! As I was doing all this, I wondered for a moment how all this feels to them (yes – I'm assuming fish can feel!). I am doing my best for them, but it must seem odd, the phrase that came into my mind was that I'm trying to *watch over them in love*, yet I don't know if they realise that!



When life is hard for us, it can be challenging to imagine that God is watching over us in love. When we can't meet with family or friends, when we can't meet physically for face-to-face worship, when we are restricted in what we can and can't do, when we struggle to know what the future, both short and more medium term will bring, how can we see God, how can we trust God? We are not the first to struggle in this way, in the exile from Egypt the Israelites get fed up and complained about the food they had: "we remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic" they said, Numbers 11:5. And yet God was at work to lead them to the promised land – even in the challenges they faced, the hardships they endured, the frustration and disappointment, God was at work – watching over them in love.

Watching over in love, is of course, John Wesley's phrase. In 1743 he used it in *The Nature, Design, and General Rules, of the United Societies*, to explain the purpose of the early Methodist societies. They were, he wrote, groups who "having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may



help each other to work out their salvation". God watches over us in love, partly by asking us to watch over one another in love. When hard times come how do we see God, how do we trust God? By watching over one another in love – so that each of us see God in each other, so that each of us catch a glimpse of the love and light of God in each other, so that we see the living hope of God in each other.

Watching over one another in love often means making difficult choices, it can mean being misunderstood, it can bring the messiness of life very close, but it is about finding and holding on to the way of God, the way of Grace and not letting go. And that is I think, perhaps like never before, our call at this time. Watch over one another in love – not just our friends, not just those in our church, or in our circuit, but all people. In the midst of this pandemic, we are called to watch over all people in love – so that all may see the God of love, and proclaim even in challenges and struggles, as Wesley did in his reported final words "best of all is, God is with us".

With every blessing,

Graham

We are always pleased to receive articles for mini messenger and these are the words and views/ comments of the authors themselves. They may or may not represent the views of the Macclesfield Circuit of the Methodist Church.

Please keep collecting!

Please don't forget other ways of giving! Church finances continue to be stretched, so if you haven't already, why not set up a regular Standing Order?

And of course, don't forget to Gift Aid if you can - it's worth an extra 25% from HMRC for your church.

Your church Treasurer can let you know how you can help – they'd be delighted to hear from you!!!

Children & Families

For those missing Sunday School, or if you know other children who may be interested, this week's focus is **John 1 v43-58 - the story of Jesus, Philip and Nathanael**. Resources are attached.

Christmas 2020

Happy New Year to you all! It doesn't seem right saying 'happy' with the situation we find ourselves in, another national lockdown.

Christmas 2020 was not what we were expecting!!!! I remember my first Christmas in my role in 2019 and everyone telling me how busy and hectic it will be, and they were not wrong. I thought at least I know what to expect next year!!!! How wrong was I. Christmas 2020 was definitely different, still as busy, and hectic but we had to be organised and had very tight deadlines due to having to quarantine activity bags for 72 hours.

Like everything else that 2020 threw at us, we were not letting it get in our way of how we like to celebrate the wonderful news of Christ's birth. I think we did everything we would normally do just a little differently. So here is a round up of what went on for children and their families during Christmas 2020.



Nativity 'in a bag' we created 50 bags with everything you needed to create your own nativity set, which hopefully the families will now be able to get out year after year. As well as all the craft materials needed, there was an instruction booklet with even more activities and treats for both the children and adults. We managed to reach more families with these bags and the feedback we have received

has been positive. The families enjoyed spending time together creating their own nativity set.



Messy Christmas was attended on zoom by 13 children from 9 families. Together we played games with Ann, listened to a story told by Annie, magic from Graham and a candy cane prayer from Helen. As well as listening / singing along to songs we all made a star bookmark together following Heathers instructions. All the children got an activity bag with everything they needed for the event. Including a candy cane so that everyone could join in with the interactive candy cane prayer and not forgetting the items for the adults to have a nice cuppa and treat during the session. Again, we have had amazing feedback from the families who attended.

Virtual Nativity Play - It Begins in Bethlehem with over 300 views on YouTube we can confidently say this was a great success. We would

just like to thank every child and family who took part with out you this would not have been possible. We had over 30 children take part. We have had tremendous feed back from both members of the church and the families that took part. We can safely say that this is something that we will do again. It took a lot of organisation and time editing it, but it was worth it.



Christingle 'in a bag' again with over 220 views on YouTube this was successful. This was advertised on Facebook, banners / posters outside our churches and through the local schools. We had 118 Christingle kits reserved from 31 families as well as all the members of 1st Gawsorth Girls' Brigade. We think in total we gave out 160 kits. We would like to say a huge thank you to Jo and Anna Beesley for putting all the music and singing from the children together.

On our Facebook pages during each week of Advent, we posted resources so that the children could celebrate Advent and the lighting of each candle. There were also resources to enable them to create their own Jesse Tree and information about the people in Jesus' family tree.

We will continue to interact with our children and their families how we have been over the majority of last year, but we hope not for too long this year. We pray and hope that we can start some face-to-face activities sooner rather than later, but we will take each day as it comes. Planning to continue the way we have been but will be able to change if we need to.

We are starting to plan for the coming year with a Messy Valentines, Pancake Mania, Messy Easter, and Easter 'in a bag' (due to the success of nativity 'in a bag'). Look out for dates in future mini messenger.

In the meantime, I need help from all our lovely knitters out there. Not being a knitter myself I don't have a clue when it comes to



patterns. We would like to give the children a knitted heart in their Messy Valentine bags approximately 3" wide. Just like the one in the picture. I would need to have them by the 3rd of February.



We also would like to send out knitted cream egg chickens like the one in the picture in our Easter 'in a bag'. I would need these by the beginning of March.

If you can help with any, please can you contact me at methodistfamilies@gmail.com or 07901777506

So, as we enter 2021 may God fill us with his peace and hope this year is a breakthrough for us all.

God bless, Angela and all the children's volunteers.

Prayer – in our Circuit Prayer Cycle we remember Poynton this week. This prayer has been provided by Helen Holmes.

Lord, it's been a difficult time.

We thought we were walking on concrete, but it feels more like quicksand.

I'm sorry God that sometimes when I stumble I forget to call out your name for help or comfort. That the world wraps a blindfold round my eyes and prevents me from seeing how you're working in my life.

But Lord help me to remember that you're there. Even if I can't see you in this moment, you're there, by my side. Gently nudging me in the right direction, holding my hand through the tough parts and being a shoulder to cry on when I feel alone.

Help me to be gentle with myself, to not despair in the darkness but look for the light you provide. To turn my pain, no matter what form it takes, into praise.

You are wonderful, powerful, mighty and yet you are a friendly face, a hug when I need one and a cheerleader when I feel like giving up.

Help me to keep looking for you, always; and help me to point out your light in others' darkness too.

Thank you Lord,
Amen.

Helen was partially inspired by the new Rend Collective song "I Choose to Worship" if anyone wishes to listen...

[Rend Collective - I CHOOSE TO WORSHIP \(Radio Version\) \[Lyric Video\] - YouTube](#)

Year of Testimony: Sharing Our Story

It has been good to share the story of God in our lives with each other during our services this year. We all benefit from hearing each other's testimonies and so we would like to continue this during our online services. So, if you would like to share your experiences of God during this time please make a recording and send it to Graham. Or, if you would prefer, contact Graham and he will record you via Zoom.

YouTube

A massive 'Thank You' to everyone who has subscribed, we reached our target of 100 subscribers. Our subscribers will now automatically get an alert when services have been put onto the YouTube channel.

If you haven't already subscribed, please do so at.....

<https://www.youtube.com/c/macclesfieldmethodistcircuit>

Just click on the red 'Subscribe' button on the top left of the screen and click 'sign in'.
Or from the TV, on the YouTube page, under 'Subscriptions' click 'sign in'.

Subscribing doesn't cost anything as this is a free channel.

There's a Subscribe button under any YouTube video or on a channel's page.

Tell your relatives, friends, neighbours and ask them to subscribe too!!

Subscribing will mean you don't miss any services!!

Members' voice - by Rev Sheila Bishop.

ONE DAY

Six letters and two small words

yet they contain all the yearnings of our hearts

that things will improve,

that a change of date to 21, and the turning of the year

not only will bring longer daylight hours,

but falling numbers of those with Covid19,

which has almost overwhelmed the NHS,

and governed our lives for nearly a year.

That ONE DAY the vaccines will bring to the whole world

immunity, hope and health,

So we can move without fear and express our love, concern and joy

through natural physical responses, forbidden of late!

That ONE DAY plans made, will become reality,

family gatherings and community activities resume,

fresh opportunities for work be found, anxiety eased.

Then to THAT DAY may we bring with us,

continuing concern for others and generous spirits,

the new found talents and interests

which are enriching our lives,

nor may we lose these things when the frantic tempo of life returns,

But, conscious of our common vulnerability,

Value the things which last, and living by faith,

Care for the world and one another as never before

2021

It lies before us,- this New Year,
like a fresh exercise book given out for a new term
Empty yet full of promise to be filled with.....
who knows what-except that we are sure
there will be mistakes and omissions as well as successes
for we are fallible human beings.
We shall record our experiences, some joyful, others less so
and there will, please God, be learning and growth.
These empty pages will become a travel log
of where we go, what we see and whom we meet,
all mysteries -now to be discovered
And we shall all travel, not over continents, perhaps
but on life's journey with its changing vistas, opportunities and struggles,
until we reach our eternal home.
For that surely is our destination, through the grace of Jesus Christ,
And to travel safely there is the nature of all human endeavour,
trusting in the promises of God who declared, through St Paul,
that 'nothing in all creation, past, present or future
can separate us from His love!'
So we go forward in faith,
thankful for all that is past and trusting Him for all that is to come!.

Could you write the next article?

We are looking to feature a contribution each week from a member of the congregation who would be willing to tell us what they are doing during these strange times – what are you watching/reading/making? Any tips to share with others? It would be lovely to hear from you! email: macclesfieldcircuit@gmail.com

Helen's Blog



More to follow in the coming weeks.

Community....

From Dialstone Lane Methodist Church, (Stockport United Circuit), who are raising funds for Action for Children.....

*Just a reminder about our quiz
Many thanks to those who have already entered / donated
There is plenty of time to enter - closing date is 31st Jan
Donations may be made any time
at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/stokerquiz2020>
Thank you for your support.*

Copies of the quiz relating to items of clothing were circulated before Christmas, if you haven't got a copy and would like one, email macclesfieldcircuit@gmail.com



December 2020 is one to remember! We packed and distributed over 5 tonnes of food, treats, and Christmas gifts to hundreds of people who had been referred to us by professional services within the Borough of Macclesfield. This equated to 9192 meals in total being freely given as a helping hand. That is a huge increase on previous months and a sign of the times we are experiencing at present. This was only possible through the extreme generosity of those who donate food and finance to the foodbank and our volunteer team who work so hard in these difficult times.

WHAM and Street Angels

The WHAM team have done a great job in getting the Winter Weekend Night Shelter up and running in the, now-closed, Revolution Bar on Mill Street. This has given Street Angels Macclesfield an opportunity to support it by re-establishing the two-hour Friday evening shift to patrol the town letting homeless people on the streets know that basic accommodation with a meal is available overnight on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. We are very grateful to all those volunteers who have generously agreed to support these initiatives; volunteers are now required to complete a personal risk assessment on each occasion they go on duty.

J/P

Prayer Vigil for Peace



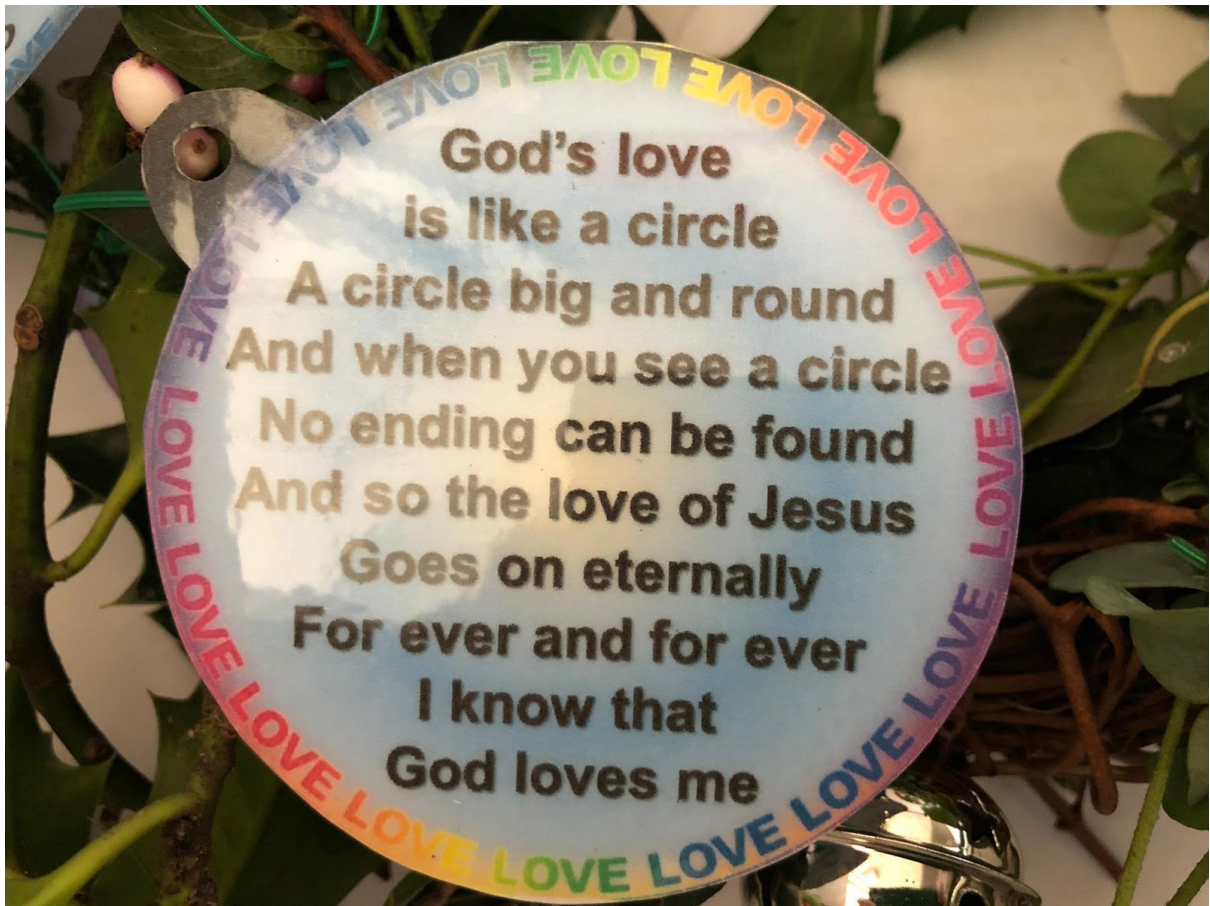
Saturday 16 January, 8-9 pm

On the start of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18-25 Jan),
St Alban's Justice & Peace invites you to one ZOOM hour of
prayer, Taizé chants, silence and reflection on

Pope Francis' World Peace message 2021:

A CULTURE of CARE as a PATH to PEACE

To join us please email: mcdavison@hotmail.co.uk and you
will be sent the Prayer Vigil ZOOM meeting details



Just for fun!

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Parish Pump

Fancy baking?

Another lockdown.... are you feeling the need to get back into your apron and start baking?

A new year often prompts us to look at a healthier lifestyle. Since 2014, Veganuary has inspired and supported more than one million people in 192 countries to try vegan for January – and beyond.

Here is a classic cake adapted for vegan taste buds.

Vegan Lemon Drizzle

For the sponge

150ml soya milk
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 tsp baking powder
100g self raising flour, sifted
150g ground almonds
90 solid vegetable fat
110g golden caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla paste
Finely grated zest of 1 unwaxed lemon

For the drizzle

Juice of 1 lemon
2 tbsp caster sugar

For the lemon icing

250g icing sugar
Juice of ½ lemon

Grease and line a 450g loaf tin. Preheat the oven to 180c/160 fan/gas 4. Put the soya milk in a jug and add the vinegar. Leave for 5 minutes to curdle slightly. In a bowl stir together the baking powder, flour and ground almonds.

Beat the fat, sugar, vanilla and lemon zest for 3-4 minutes until pale and creamy. Gradually add the curdled soya milk and beat for 30-60 seconds until combined. Add the flour mixture mix gently until just incorporated.

Spoon the mixture into the tin and bake for 1 hour until the top is golden and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave in the tin to cool whilst making the drizzle.

Mix the lemon juice and sugar in a small jug until the sugar has dissolved. Still in the tin, pierce the warm cake with a cocktail stick and pour the drizzle slowly over the top. Leave in the tin to cool completely.

Make the lemon icing by mixing the icing sugar with the lemon juice a little at a time, the icing should be thick but pourable.

Remove the cold cake from the tin and using a spoon, drizzle or pour the icing over, allowing it to run down the sides.

SERVICE LINKS & CONTACTS

Sunday 17 January – 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

AM – Morning worship led by Ros

WATCH ONLINE : <http://tiny.cc/epiphany2>

The Reading is John 1: v43-51

LISTEN.....DIAL IN - 01625 786346 (Available from 10am Sun)

FACEBOOK..... : <https://www.facebook.com/MacclefieldCircuit/>

YOUTUBE..... <https://www.youtube.com/c/macclesfieldmethodistcircuit>

PM – Live Evening Prayer Service at 6.30pm

JOIN ONLINE..... Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88677436411>

Meeting ID: 886 7743 6411

Dial by your location

+44 203 051 2874 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5240 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom

+44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 886 7743 6411

LISTEN.....DIAL IN - 0203 051 2874 or 0203 481 5237 & and when asked, input the Meeting ID: 886 7743 6411

Services coming up.....

24 January - Graham

31 January - Helen

A [FREE phone service](#) to hear prayers and news from the **Methodist Church** has been launched.

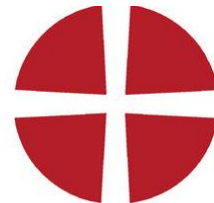


FREE phone lines for prayers and news from the Methodist Church

Listen to a **prayer**: 0808 281 2514

Listen to **news**: 0808 281 2478

Content is updated weekly on Thursday afternoon



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Are you in need of some daily hope during this lockdown? The **Church of England** have a new FREE telephone line for you to ring to hear comforting hymns, daily prayers and reflections.

Circuit Facebook page

For the latest information on what is happening within the circuit, follow....

<https://www.facebook.com/MacclefieldCircuit/>

Other important links

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus-guidance/>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.methodistchurch.org.uk/MWoL>

Contact Details

For Children & Families

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Ministers

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