



MINI MACCLESFIELD MESSENGER

37th Issue: 7 February 2021

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

A message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

I made a terrible mistake this week. While I was shopping, I picked up a packet of biscuits, there is nothing too unusual about that, but you see, I was aiming for Custard Creams but somehow ended up with a packet of Bourbon Creams. You might not realise how bad this was, you might think "a Bourbon is ok". Well, I cannot abide them.



Countless people over the years have looked shocked when I tell them this, "but they're chocolate" they say. I like chocolate, but I don't like these – they aren't chocolate, they are some kind of chocolate flavour – a very poor substitute. If I'm going to have a chocolate biscuit, I want the real thing! When I was young, I remember my mum would occasionally buy "Rola Cola" which was a cheap Coca-Cola substitute, but it too was a poor substitute. On another occasion I remember my brother and I rejecting the beef burgers we were served one day because "they tasted weird". My mum's response to this was to say, "they are exactly the same as McDonalds use"! They weren't. They were another poor substitute!

Its easy to be seduced by poor substitutes, perhaps because they are cheap, or freely available, or just a bit easier, but often I find myself yearning for the real thing! In the life of faith, I find myself wondering if sometimes we settle for the poor substitute of God rather than the real thing. I don't assume that my understanding of God is the only, or even the best one, but as I watch the political world (especially in the US) and some posts on social media it feels like we've missed the point! We get drawn in by poor substitutes because something seems, at first, appealing about them. Perhaps they don't challenge us, perhaps they sit comfortably with our view of the world and don't require much of us, perhaps so many people have been seduced by them that we assume they must be true.

The poor substitute for God says if you follow me everything will be fine! The poor substitute for God says God's way will mean we never have to change. The poor substitute for God says if you trust God you will be blessed with money and material 'things'. The poor substitute for God says life will be easy if you're faithful. The poor

substitute for God says those who are not “like us” are not really as important. The poor substitute for God says faith is easy and our doubts and questions show that we have failed somehow. The poor substitute for God says we can treat the earth, and its people however we like, and not worry about the consequences. The poor substitute for God says that in a time of pandemic that God will fix everything with a click of his fingers and not ask us to share the burden of this time with the rest of humanity.

The real thing is different, and it's the real thing we need – the truth of God. The truth of God says all of us will have to change our views and our practices because



its then that we see the Kingdom. The truth of God says sometimes life is hard, but God is with us. The truth of God says material wealth is not that important, but spiritual wealth is priceless. The truth of God says faithfulness opens our eyes to the depth of God's love, it doesn't make everything “ok”. The truth of God says all

people are precious whoever they are. The truth of God says doubts, questions, anger and everything in between is part of trying to live faith in a messy world. The truth of God says we have a responsibility to the earth and its people, because in this world and this life all people have the opportunity to encounter God's love and we shouldn't hinder it. The truth of God says each of us can find our place in making a better world, whoever we are (think of Captain Sir Tom if you need an example!)

We live in a difficult time, and but let's not be seduced by the easy answers and quick fixes of the poor substitute for God, let's look to the real thing. The way is hard, the path is often narrow, the challenges are painful, but it's here we see God most clearly. St Augustine said, “God loves each of us as if there were only one of us” and that God is with us in all we do – loving us, helping us, guiding us, calling us, and leading us in the way to life in all its fullness.

I don't know what will happen to the bourbons, but its ok, I've got a bar of dairy milk somewhere...

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, for this week's focus we will be **exploring together the opening of John's Gospel**. You can find it in your Bible in John 1 v.1-14. Resources are attached.

Messy Love – don't forget to book your place if you haven't already!



The poster features a background of colorful hearts in shades of purple, pink, green, blue, and red. In the top left, there is a red splatter graphic with the text 'Messy Church' and a blue banner below it that says 'At Home LIVE'. The main title 'Messy Love' is written in a large, red, cursive font. Below the title, the date and time 'Sat 13th February 2-3pm' and the location '@ your house via zoom' are written in a black, handwritten-style font. A line of text reads 'All the normal fun of a Messy Church, just done a little bit different during these times. Live story, magic, music, craft making and an activity bag'. At the bottom left, there is a 'Crafts' logo with a sun, scissors, and a pencil. In the center, there is a musical treble clef with notes. On the right, there is a black top hat with a wand and stars. At the bottom, there is a black banner with a Facebook icon, the text 'Email methodistfamilies@gmail.com to reserve a place or PM on Facebook @MacclesfieldCircuit', and a red cross icon.



Messy Easter preparations.....

I still need help from all our lovely knitters out there.

A pattern is included for the knitted cream egg chickens like the one in the picture for our Easter 'in a bag'. I would need these by the beginning of March.

If you prefer, we also have another easier pattern and this is included too. If you can help, please can you contact me at methodistfamilies@gmail.com or 07901777506

Angela

Prayer – in our Circuit Prayer Cycle we remember Prestbury this week. This prayer has been provided by Roger Bolton.



PRAYERS FROM PRESTBURY

“In all these things **we are more than conquerors** through Him who loved us.”

Romans 8:37

Dear God, we are in awe of your love, undeserved and so generously offered through your grace. You shower us freely with the good things in our lives; friends and family, good ministry and fellowship through Church and the protection of skill and science. Help us to recognise these amazing gifts in our lives as we seek to reflect your image in the world.

Forgive us Lord that our response has not always been as it should be. If we have stayed silent when we should have spoken out for you, if we have followed our own desires ahead of your call and if we have neglected the cries of our fellow beings, Lord in your mercy - **Hear our prayer.**

In this LGBT+ History month we affirm that all are made equal in your sight. Forgive us if we have not always loved others as we should. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer.**

As we remember Holocaust Memorial Day at the end of January, we confess that a suspicion of foreigners or people of different ethnic background sometimes still colours our unconscious reactions. We remember the horrors of powerful people who stirred up hatred and rejection with tragic consequences. Lord, we affirm that all are made equal in your sight and are loved by you. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for your world – our world – remembering all oppressed peoples including the people of Myanmar, the Uighurs in China and the Palestinians. We pray for an end to false information and dishonest propaganda that continues to put others at risk of hatred and violence. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our Prayer.**

In the current pandemic emergency, we give thanks for the contributions of medical scientists to vaccine development, medical care, public health procedures and the rolling development of diagnostic tools. We thank you Lord for the skills you have created in us. We give thanks for the gracious living of all volunteers who befriend those lonely and isolated by shielding, who run food banks, who are working online with disconnected young people, and who care for those with dementia in these

disorienting times. Lord, strengthen all those who work in caring and volunteering, including our own churches, and direct all your people to seek ways to serve your name. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer.**

Finally, for all in our neighbourhood, our families, our churches and Circuit we pray for anyone facing bereavement in isolation, anyone sorrowing, anyone in pain or fear, suffering in mind or body. We remember anyone waiting for medical treatment suffering exceptional delays through pressures on medical services. Inspire us to hold them in our love, in your love and to pray for their healing in your name. Lead us to action with our phone-calls, letters, gifts and prayers. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer AMEN**

Members' voice - by Beryl & Colin North, Macclesfield

LOCK-DOWN REFLECTIONS

Musing over recent events, we thought we'd tell you about Colin's mini-stroke on 8th November. We had been tidying the garden and came indoors for a break when he said his left arm felt heavy and he couldn't lift it very well. Referring to our list of stroke symptoms, that was one of them. We dialled 111 and after answering a few questions the call-handler said an ambulance would be with us in 18 minutes. It was! There followed a quick scramble to find some presentable pyjamas and dressing gown. After some investigations at home, Colin was taken to Stepping Hill hospital – no prospect of accompanying him because of the virus. The following day he had an MRI scan and other tests and was able to return home in the evening. No praise can be too high for all that the NHS provides.

Incidentally, he was born at the hospital where the NHS was launched in 1948 – Park Hospital, Davyhulme, now Trafford General. Lindsay was born there too and I remember the pictures on the walls of the corridors showing Aneurin Bevan performing the ceremony. Reflecting on those times, no one could have foreseen the enormity of that enterprise. Amazingly, it was only two or three years after the end of WWII, when Britain was in dire straits and not a good time to launch anything on such a scale. If you are fortunate enough not to have required what the NHS offers, you may not imagine what a jewel it is but, be assured, it is there for you - this is a very holy, all-inclusive concept, representing all faiths. We do appreciate all we have received in this long life – Colin's only previous visit to hospital as an in-patient was in 1944 (D Day), with Scarlet Fever. It might be thought that he has not been a drain on the NHS but his medication includes that for blood pressure, cholesterol etc., like many of our age group, cost unknown over the years. He firmly believes in the NHS, as do I.

Before the stroke we had begun to realise that our days of towing a caravan were numbered and, as it had sprung a leak, a decision had to be made about whether to have it repaired and try to sell it or sell it as seen. Despite the leak, it was very comfortable and we were loathe to see it go. The first person to come for a viewing offered to take it away, gratis! Then Colin had a brainwave to contact the small company we bought it from six years ago. To our amazement, the manager named

his figure and said he would be here in one hour to collect it! A flurry of activity followed while we tried to empty it but he was on time! In one way it was good not to have any time to dwell on it as it signalled the end of that particular era.

Thinking of MMC and lockdown, we are very grateful for everything that has been done to keep us all in touch: Sunday Services with flowers, and the possibility of keeping in touch by phone and email. Thank God we have come thus far. We're really missing choir practices and the various events we had been preparing for. None of the choir will need any persuading to resume practices and we are so blessed to have the opportunity to learn an amazing variety of music.

Because of not being able to join in fund-raising activities, all charities will have seriously depleted funds and we feel guilty about not being able to promote Christian Aid in the usual way. Online possibilities are suggested but require a certain level of IT expertise which has so far eluded us!

In conclusion, we have very much missed everyone at church, including those we don't always manage to speak to, but it is reassuring to see everyone sitting in their usual seats and we look forward to such a time again. God bless you all.

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

Signs of Spring

Perhaps as we return to our lockdown routines of daily walks, you may spot a little bit of creation – please take a picture and let us **share some signs of Spring!**

Please send us your pictures for sharing through Mini Messenger and let us celebrate the joy and beauty that is to come.



email: macclesfieldcircuit@gmail.com

Primroses on the banks of the canal spotted by Ann & Roger Moss.

YouTube

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!!

Helen's Blog



Back soon!

Community....

Action For Children

'Count your Blessings' during Lent (starts 17th Feb)

Get involved this Lent and help give children in the UK a safe and happy childhood by participating in 'Count Your Blessings.'



It's so simple - there's a short reflection for each of the 40 days in Lent that will make a real difference to children and families struggling in these challenging times.

It's informative and fun to read either as an individual, with the rest of your family or with a friend.

Just follow the link:

https://media.actionforchildren.org.uk/documents/1521_Count_Your_Blessings_DIGITAL.pdf

Further info from Steve Oliver, District Advocate: steve.oliver3@ntlworld.com

Just for fun!

The Lord's Prayer

T A R D S Y D K H D
E E O E R I I X A K
V T M O H N M E L R
I E L P G T R S L E
L G J D T B A X O W
B Q O O Y A V F W O
R M Q L Q I T M E P
E V I G R O F I D Q
X A X W I L L K O G
D L J G F H B A J N

FATHER
HALLOWED
KINGDOM
WILL

DAILY BREAD
FORGIVE
SINS
TEMPTATION

EVIL
GLORY
POWER



PANCAKE DAY – Tuesday 16th February

Please 'hold the date' for Shrove Tuesday for pancakes 'on line' from 4.30pm (full details in next week's messenger).

NEW: Prayer page

Do you or anyone you know need praying for?

We'd like to include a section in Mini Messenger for us all across the Circuit to pray for those in need. If you'd like us to pray for you/others you know or are perhaps be providing pastoral support for etc.... then please let us know.

We can include them in a prayer section and we would ask that all our Mini Messenger readers hold those people in their prayers. If your church already has a method of including folk in prayer, that's great, but we can include them in Mini Messenger too if required. With all of us across the Circuit, that's a lot of prayers and you can never have too many!!

It's up to you how much or little detail you give – it can just be a name or be more specific, either is fine, but please make sure that whoever we're including, you have asked their permission first!

EXAMPLE

*We
remember...
The family of
Joe Bloggs
Anytown
Church*

Please email: macclesfieldcircuit@gmail.com

SERVICE LINKS & CONTACTS

Sunday 7 February

AM – Morning worship led by Ros

WATCH ONLINE : <http://tiny.cc/ordinary5>

The Reading is Isaiah 40 v.21-31

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.....

14 February - Graham

21 February - Helen

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

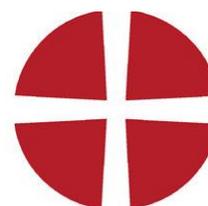


FREE phone lines for prayers and news from the Methodist Church

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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