



MINI MACCLESFIELD MESSENGER

45th Issue: 4th April 2021
EASTER SUNDAY



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

A message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

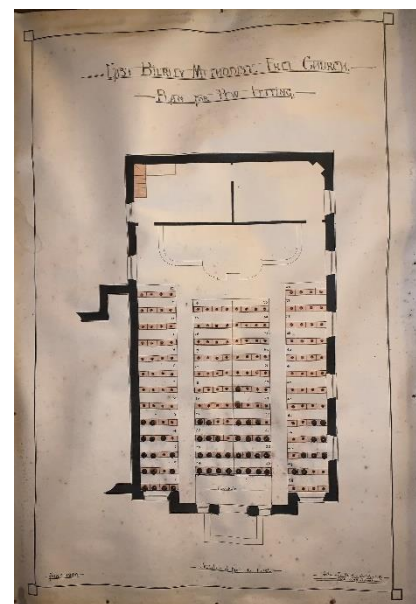
In the last circuit I served, one of my churches closed its building and merged with the Methodist church down the road. It was, I think, an overwhelmingly positive experience which brought new life to both congregations. However, the decisions meant clearing out the church building we were leaving behind. One of the things we found, tucked away in the storeroom, was a Pew Letting board! It a fascinating thing where the pews that had been leased were filled with a screw! I wonder what you notice about it...

Well, I noticed immediately that all the screws are at the back! The board is dated 1906, so this sitting at the back is not just a modern thing! I will admit to you that when I go to a church (and I'm not preaching) I like to sit at the back too. I know I'm not alone – it's quite a common feature of church life (when we're in buildings!) I wonder what it is that makes the back so appealing, is it a better view of the preacher so you can take it all in? Is it warmer in the back corners? Is it because some people (and their mother and father before them) have always sat at the back? Is it to avoid the eyes of the preacher giving a particularly fiery sermon? Is it because the preacher might ask a question of those in the front? Or is it simply to keep everything at a safe distance?

I don't know where you sit in church, but where are you in the great Easter story?



You see some stay at a distance, not wanting to get too involved, not really sure what to make of it, wanting to get on with their lives. Some people are somewhere in the middle, they've certainly seen some of the things that went on in Jerusalem, they are confused, scared, and trying to put all the pieces together. Then there are some who are right at the front, the ones who saw everything on Good Friday, who waited in the hopelessness of



Holy Saturday but now they are at the tomb, going right in, in the very front seats on that most amazing morning!

Where are you? Keeping your distance? Somewhere in the middle? Or right in the front row? Well, here is the amazing thing – wherever you are, you should probably be ready to meet the risen Christ! Those who are far away meet him, the two on the road to Emmaus get a shock as they realise he's been walking alongside



them for miles! Or later on St. Paul gets a shock on the road to Damascus when he meets the risen Jesus! Those who are somewhere in the middle encounter Jesus, the terrified disciples locked in the upper room get a shock when Jesus turns up and says "Greetings!" And he keeps turning up – when Peter tries to go back to his old life, the life he understood, and says "I'm going fishing", who is it on the shore? Those who are in the front row get an incredible shock – the stone has been rolled away, the tomb is empty, and Jesus stands risen and speaks Mary's name! The risen Jesus meets people - people in fear and doubt, people in sadness and apathy, people in hope and joy, he meets people near, far, and everywhere in between! So, wherever you are, look around, listen, because the risen Jesus is near.

NT Wright wrote

"the resurrection completes the inauguration of God's kingdom ... It is the decisive event demonstrating that God's kingdom really has been launched on earth as it is in heaven. The message of Easter is that God's new world has been unveiled in Jesus Christ and that you're now invited to belong to it".

Jesus invites you into that new world, whether you are near, far, or somewhere in the middle – he speaks your name in love, through grace and with hope. Don't miss it.

*Now let the heavens be joyful!
Let earth the song begin!
Let the round world keep triumph,
and all that is therein!
Let all things seen and unseen
their notes in gladness blend,
for Christ the Lord hath risen,
our joy that hath no end.*
ST. John of Damascus. Tr John Mason Neale

With every blessing

Graham

A message from Helen

Dear friends,

What are you looking forward to this Easter?



For some of us it might be seeing loved ones in our gardens or outside in a public place, for others it might be shopping for what I call the 'interesting stuff' rather than groceries (yes, I am still doing the weekly shop and yes I am still grumpy every time I go!). For some of us simply venturing out a little further than before may be all the joy we can cope with right now and there will be some who still do not feel safe to come out at all. Whatever we are looking forward to, we can all stay hope-filled because Easter is the Season of Hope and New Beginnings.

I saw an article recently from the Guardian, written by John Harris entitled '*How do faithless people like me make sense of this past year of Covid?*'. He grumbles about how those without faith have really struggled these past twelve months and those with faith have had hope to hold onto and coped much better. The article made me reflect on all whom I've ministered to this past year, many who were hopeless, scared and lost, all of whom I saw as my responsibility to help them find the hope and peace they so desperately needed. Did I succeed? I will never know. But I believe that, as a Christian, I was there to share the hope of unending love, of a God who loves us all, a God who cries when we cry and rejoices when we rejoice, a God who never gives up on us, even when we try to give up on Him. Yes, people without faith find that journey harder but humanity has shown this last year how love overcomes the darkest of places, how love doesn't stop when we die and how love is the constant we all need a bit of in our lives.

Well now we are here on Easter Sunday and it is 100% about everlasting love and hope! Endless, boundless, relentless hope hope hope hope hope. As Christians we can shout from the rooftops that '*Christ is Alive*' and know it in our hearts it to be true. We can tuck into our hollow Easter eggs, appreciating the deeper significance of the empty shell and the link to the empty tomb that first Easter Morning.

There is hope for a better tomorrow all around us and I, for one, intend to grasp it and drink it in. *The cross stands empty to the sky* – Love has overcome death and there is hope to hold onto for whatever tomorrow may bring, for God is with us, Jesus said '*I will be with you always*'. Everlasting love and hope.



I visited two ladies recently in hospital, each with significant medical issues, both relatively young, struggling to find hope to cling onto and desperately wanting answers to the difficult questions of 'why me, why now?', questions that can't be answered easily by medics, which is where chaplains come

in. We are invited into someone's space, someone's story, for just a short time and our role is to bring those we meet some hope, to help them find meaning amidst all their worries and anxieties. We do this for patients of all faiths or of none and when I was called upon to talk to these ladies my role was to help them find the hope they were searching for. One of them said *'I hope to meet my mum again and my brother – they are up there watching over me and that gives me hope'*; the other said when asked about where she finds joy: *'I find joy when I think about my grandchildren and how much I love them. They give me hope.'*

As heartbreaking as these ladies stories are, there was still glimmers of hope when they began to think beyond the here and now to the bigger picture and to think on all the blessings in their lives. As they held onto the knitted hearts I gave them we prayed for peace, for love and for hope to sustain them in the days ahead.

The Easter Story is filled with hope and it is filled with joy, but it is also set in a real context of fear and anxiety. Let us not forget how scared the disciples were, how unsure, even after that first Easter Sunday. We have a great gift with Easter to soak up the joy and share it with those who need it most – not to preach at them but to *show it* to them in how we live as the Easter People. Are we not called to rejoice for the Lord is with us? Are we not called to be forever hopeful? And is Easter Sunday not a reminder that love conquered death so we need not be afraid for whatever life hurls at us, God is with us, our ever Living Loving Saviour.

What am I looking forward to this Easter? Spending time with loved ones – family and friends – face to face in our garden, enjoying a few days away in our secluded camper and maybe a cold pint outside the local! But most of all, I am looking forward to being able to celebrate this wonderful season with those who are able, in person; I am hopeful that our communities will see us opening our doors and be curious to find out what it is that keeps us going, what it is that has sustained us, what it is we have discovered that maybe – just maybe – they might like a bit of too..... Who knows how far the Easter Hope will reach?.....

*Now let the heavens be joyful,
Let earth her song begin,
The round world keep high triumph
And all that is therein;
Let all things seen and unseen
Their notes of gladness blend,
For Christ the Lord is risen,
Our joy that has no end!*
[STF311 *The Day of Resurrection*,
by St John of Damascus c675-c750]

Go and en-JOY yourselves in whatever way you can this Easter and keep rejoicing in the Lord always, again I say REJOICE!

Easter Blessings to you all,
Helen

A message from Ros

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am writing this on a beautiful spring afternoon, the sky is a clear bright blue and the sun is shining. I woke up early this morning to a dawn chorus and there are spring flowers everywhere. I don't know about you but I seem to have seen more daffodils this year than ever and they seem to be even more vibrant a yellow than I have noticed before. It is as though the whole of creation is glorifying God as it is released from the cold, dark sleep of winter into the new life of spring with all its promise of summer to come.

The pandemic has indeed meant that it has been a long, dark winter for us all but there are many signs now that we are coming out of it and moving towards the light of a new day and time without the need for the fear and restrictions of this last twelve months.

There is transformation in nature and transformation in how freely we will be able to live our lives in the coming months.

Easter Day brings the biggest and most important transformation of all. It offers each one of us transformation so that we can glorify God with our lives and transformation so that we may live freely in the love of God as we are put right with God through Christ and His death and Resurrection.

As wonderful as the hope that spring stirs up in us is, it is only a pale reflection of the hope that we have in Christ. In Christ our hope is even more abundant and vibrant than we can even begin to imagine! In Christ this Easter, all things are made new and that includes you and me! **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.** (John 3: 16)

I pray that this Easter you will know the transforming power of the love of God in your life and that you will live in the hope that Christ offers to you.

Happy Easter!

Every blessing,

Ros

<p>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.</p>
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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 story of the empty tomb! You can find it in your Bible - John 20 v.1-18.**

Resources are attached.

A BIG Thank You from the Children's and Families Team



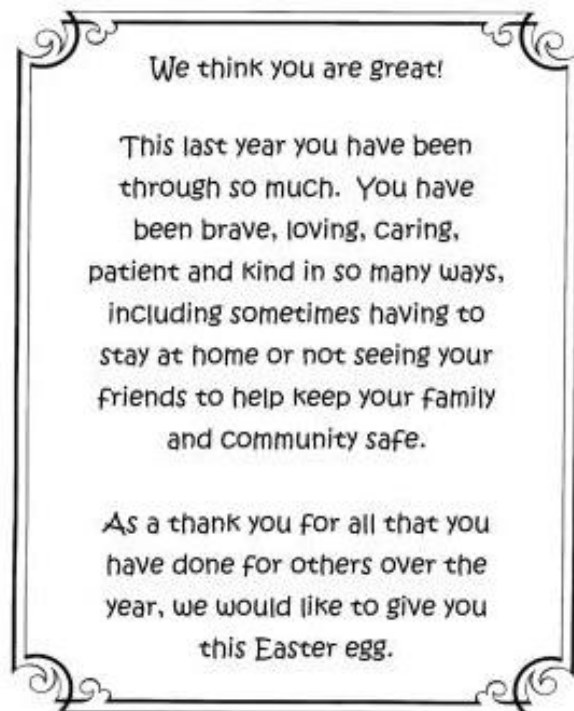
Thank you so much for your lovely and kind donations to our Easter Egg for School initiative with the Macclesfield Lions. You donated an incredible £405. Which in terms means that your donations have provided **405** Easter eggs to children in our local area. We can't thank you enough for your generosity during the current time. We would also like to say thank you to The Macclesfield Lions for asking us to join them in this initiative. Due to the supply of Easter eggs, we supplied 6 schools in the Macclesfield area who have the highest percentage of children receiving a free school meal. These schools

were, Hurdsfield Community Primary School, Ashgrove Academy, Broken Cross Primary Academy and Nursery, Christ the King Catholic and C of E Primary School, Park Lane School and Upton Priory School. The headteachers were very welcoming with our offer and thought it was a lovely idea. Thanks to Alex from the Lions, he eventually managed to source 1318 Easter eggs to supply the six schools.

They were all stored at Macclesfield Methodist Church waiting for our team to attach a card to each egg telling the children that 'you've been great'. Thank you to Alison, Brenda, Heather, Julia, Pam, and Sheila for applying the cards, it did take longer than we expected but it was worth it in the end as the eggs looked amazing with the cards on them. I am sure the children will feel incredibly



special when they receive their eggs. Inside the card are the following words



Easter is a time of new life,
new beginnings
and HOPE for the future.
Your hollow Easter egg is a
symbol of all this.

Wishing you an
Egg-tra special Easter

from

Macclesfield & District Lions Club
&
Macclesfield Methodist Circuit
Churches

The eggs were delivered by the Macclesfield Lions and us. The morning deliveries got an extra special surprise the Easter Bunny aka our minister Rev Helen!!! This made the children smile. It's not every day you see a 'Minister Easter Bunny.' The schools were overwhelmed when they received their delivery of eggs. One school email to say 'they have the eggs under wraps and will hide them around the school for the children to find on the last day before the Easter holidays' (Maundy Thursday).



Another **BIG** thank you.

We just want to thank everyone who knitted hearts and chickens for the children and families of our churches. They were amazing and the children loved them. We used the hearts for an interactive prayer at our Messy Love Live in February and to remind the children that they are loved so much, and that God loves every one of us. The extra hearts went to Helen to use with families at the hospital. The chicks were filled with a cream egg or other eggs like them and were given to the children, again some of the extras went to Helen to use on the children's ward at the hospital.



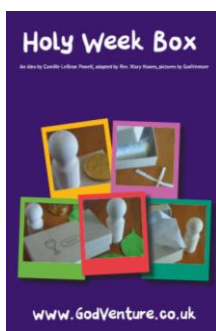
Easter Activities for the Children

We have provided over 60 Easter Gardens 'in a bag' to children as well as 7 to Bollinbrook Primary School to use in their classes. In the bag is almost everything that the children will need to make an Easter Garden, all they will have to provide is the soil and flowers. There is also a booklet with step-by-step instructions on how to make the garden and at each stage there is a reflective question or something to think about. The children only collected their bags last week, but we hope they will enjoy creating their own Easter Garden. Here are some pictures we have already



received.

We also included 'Holy Week in a Box' activity for them to do each day in Holy Week. Each day they take something out of their box, read part of Mark's gospel, think about what they have read and finish by saying the Lord's Prayer together.



Also in the bags was a book about the Easter story 'Are we nearly there yet?' and treats for both the children and the parents/carers.

Messy Easter

On Saturday 27th March we had 25 children live on zoom from 16 families. We shared the story of Holy week and the children watched some magic. We made palm leaf palms together and waved them about when we sung about Jesus' riding into town. We had time to think about the cross and the children held their palm cross while listening to an interactive prayer. The session will be posted on Facebook some time during Holy Week, so feel free to watch what went on.



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

Dear Father God

The signs and sounds of Spring in our gardens and across the fields and hills bring joy and thankfulness for the blessings you pour on us, you, our Creator God.

We also give thanks that the successes of the 'lockdown' and vaccination programme are also adding to the hopefulness that the signs of Spring bring. We appreciate the commitment and dedication which has been shown, not just by those on the front-line but all who are following the lockdown guidelines. Help us to build on that love of community and support and pray that it will never be forgotten.

On this glorious Easter Day, as we celebrate Christ's Resurrection, help us to remember the pain and sacrifice you gave for us by sending your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer for us. Help us to be humbly thankful and promise to strive to live like Him.

We will go out with joy in our hearts to tell the world the good news that 'Jesus lives! He is risen, He is risen indeed'. Alleluia.

Amen

Members' voice - by Rev Sheila Bishop, Gawsworth

An Easter reflection

Whether our church buildings are open or closed this Easter
Christ comes, as He did to the disciples,
through locked doors in the upper room.
He is present with us who sometimes doubt as Thomas did.
For doubt, used well, leads to a search for faith.
He meets us in our gardens
As at last we are allowed to meet with friends
and as we talk together, He is there!
Just as He came to Mary,
when she heard her name and recognised Him.
He comes, as we seek to find new purpose,
like the disciples who fished all night,
then with His guidance found what they were looking for.
And as we need forgiveness for past failures, He comes ,
and we can say 'Lord, You know that I love You!'
He comes as we share with Him our sadness and concerns
He joins us, and talks with us on life's journey.
And because our hearts burn within us,
we ask Him in, to come and stay with us.
Then this Easter, as the first, we must run with the good news,
and share with others what we know for certain
that JESUS LIVES!



This poem was written after the sermon on 7th March, in which Graham preached on the story of Jesus clearing the temple courts- challenging us to think what place anger should play in our lives.

What makes you angry and want to cry- is it your suffering and you don't know why?

The lack of care for the planet green; or the inequality which is obscene?

Perhaps the fact you can find no work, though references are good and you don't shirk!

Is it the careless fly tipping of litter; or the hospital wait- you long to feel fitter!

The monstrous trafficking of human kind, across the world that you can find.

The countless homeless with nowhere to stay; or 'highrise' families with nowhere to play!

Is it giant rich companies who evade their tax; or false news which denies the facts.

The prejudice against those different from us; the celebrities who get all the fuss.

What makes you angry, what will you give, to make much fairer the place where you live?

Afraid of speaking and rocking the ship, do you smother your anger, remain tight lipped?

That way justice will never become, the experience of all- just the privileged ones.

So take courage now and make a stand, against what is wrong within this land.

And remember the words of God's promise true 'Behold I am making all things new!'

So harness your anger, take up the fight, let faith make you brave till things are put right.

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

Thank you for all the lovely photos you have sent to help us share some signs of Spring and hope for the coming months!



A perfect picture for our Easter edition - Ann & Roger Moss spotted this beautifully decorated tree on one of their daily walks.

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'.

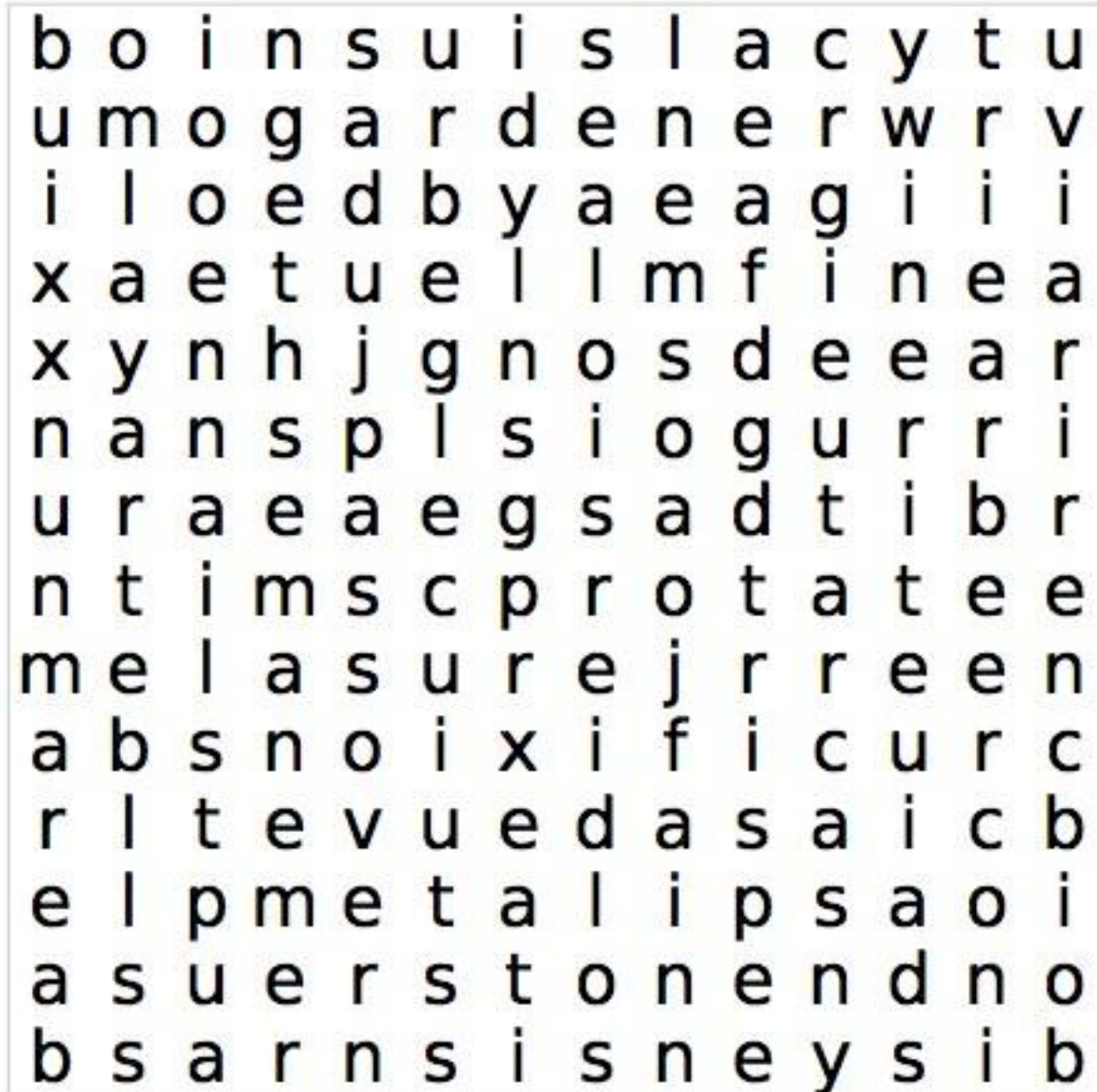
Subscribing doesn't cost anything as this is a free channel.

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!!

Just for fun!

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! April brings us to Easter – the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - the triumphant highlight of the Christian year. As St Paul pointed out, unless Jesus really did rise again, our faith is useless, and we may as well forget any hope of heaven or eternal life.



passover
bread
wine
body
blood
betrayal

jerusalem
pilate
judas
gethsemane
trial
crucifixion

soldiers
cross
nails
vinegar
temple
curtain

tomb
angel
stone
risen
gardener
Mary

This was sent to me, I would like to share with everyone.....



God Bless,
Ruth Gunning,
Macclesfield

EASTER SERVICES Sun 4th April 2021

We are delighted to announce we are re-opening our buildings for worship, as the current lockdown rules change. Please see below the times of our services this Easter Sunday 4th April 2021.

[Note: some churches require you to book before you attend due to Covid restrictions on numbers]

CHURCH	Time of Service	Preacher	Important Information to Note
Broken Cross	10am	Revd Helen Byrne	Need to book via Dai Jones tel 01625 618505
Gawsworth	10.30am	Rev Shelia Bishop	Need to book via Carolyn Boden tel 01625 502856
Langley (outside church)	3pm	Revd Graham Edwards	Need to book via Alan Chapman tel 01260 252745
Macclesfield	10.30am	Revd Graham Edwards	No need to book.
Poynton	10.30am	Revd Ros Watson	Need to book via Mandy Hawkyard tel 01625 875032
Prestbury	11am	Revd Helen Byrne	Need to book via Roger Bolton tel 01625 420127

Everyone attending services will need to wear a face mask throughout the service and use hand sanitiser. We are sorry to say if you are unable to wear a face mask for medical reasons, you will not be able to attend due to COVID restrictions. We apologise for this.

SERVICE LINKS & CONTACTS

4 April - Easter Sunday

Worship led by the ministers

WATCH ONLINE : <http://tiny.cc/eastersun2021>

The Reading is John 20 v.1-18

The hymns are StF 309/ 313/ 298/ 311

The services will also appear on Youtube : [Macclesfield Methodist Circuit - YouTube](#)

In case you missed them:-

Maundy Thursday <http://tiny.cc/maundythurs>

Good Friday <http://tiny.cc/good-fri>

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

Coming up...11 April



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

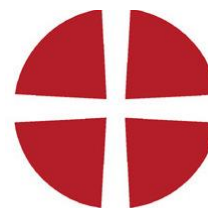


FREE phone lines for prayers and news from the Methodist Church

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

Angela Bourne

Tel: 07901 777506

Email: methodistfamilies@gmail.com

Ministers

Rev Graham Edwards

Tel: 01625 426051

Email: graham.edwards@methodist.org.uk

Rev Helen Byrne

Tel: 01625 572259

Email: helenmethodist@gmail.com

Rev Ros Watson

Tel: 01625 872060

Email: ros.watson@methodist.org.uk
