



@stmikesmacclesfield



www.stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk

Entering the Season of Lent

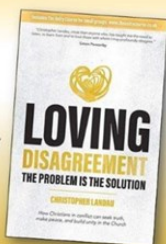
'In Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.' (2 Cor.5:19)

This Lent, in conjunction with other churches in Macclesfield, we will be using

THE UNITY COURSE

as a focus for study together.

Based on Christopher Landau's book
'Loving Disagreement'
(but you don't need the book to take part)



Currently: **Tuesday mornings** at St John's/St Thomas'
also: **Thursday evenings** at St Michael's

We're hoping for at least one other opportunity in the week too!

The other day I had a laugh-out-loud moment when someone enquired whether it was because of **them** that I had decided to do **The Unity Course** as a basis for study during Lent! It wasn't.

Nor was it because I'd heard of a **fallout** between two other Christians I know!

Before I explain more, let me tell you about a lesson I learned, whilst a student at 'vicar-school'. I was on placement in a parish which had some really great ministry happening and new people were becoming Christians. It was a complete privilege to learn from Beverley, the vicar there.

What was definitely not good, however, were the pews there! They didn't have a full back, just an angled upper-back support ... at the WRONG ANGLE! The leading edge stuck sharply in my back and didn't actually support me at all. It was just plain painful!

But the lesson I most strongly learnt was just how often, when things seem to be going **'very well'** in ministry (as they sometimes do!), there can often be a backlash from 'the Enemy' – and so often this is manifested by Christians falling out with one another, over both big and, sadly, very small issues. It was from Bev that I learnt about the day-to-day reality of spiritual warfare.

During the season of Lent – the period leading up to Easter Day – many people think the focus should be on penance and discomfort, of 'going without' (of giving up chocolate, cakes, alcohol, meat, social media or whatever).

A much better view is to see Lent as a time simply to deepen one's relationship with God and to allow God to shape us in our Christ-likeness. If you like, the first group might see sitting on the uncomfortable pew as sufficient; whereas tackling growing in Christ has a longer and deeper effect (though may also be uncomfortable, albeit in a different, more purposeful way).

And so to **The Unity Course**, a 5-session, video-based course, written and presented by Revd Christopher Landau. This former BBC reporter had noted how readily Christians were to argue fiercely with one another about every conceivable issue. They didn't realise how damaging it was to the Church's unity and mission.

You and I are unlikely to find ourselves on national TV or radio, but how often do the words we use about other Christians, or the approach we take towards them, further affect our view of them? (Even as I say this, I wonder what image or aspect of Church life comes to mind for you? What is your 'battleline', however small or feint it might seem?)

And whatever it is, how does the way you act towards or speak about other Christians tarnish the view your family or circle of friends have of Christians, 'the Church' or of Jesus Himself?

Through **The Unity Course** we will seek to strengthen the quality of relationships among believers generally – both within St Michael's or between different churches.

I'm delighted there will be 3 courses (of 5 sessions each) happening during Lent in Macclesfield. Join the one that suits you best, or use the variety to catch up with any individual session (s) you miss:

- 10.30am-12noon **Tuesday mornings** starting 20th Feb alternating between **St Thomas's** (Church Lane, SK11 9NN) & **St John's** (Wilwick Lane, SK11 8RS). Contact Simon 07957 211 319
- 7.30-9.15pm **Thursday evenings** starting 22nd Feb **St Michael's Church**
Contact Church Office 01625 421 984
- 2.30-4pm **Monday afternoons** starting 26th Feb
Contact St Paul's Church Office (01625 501 773) to confirm venue details

Why did I choose **The Unity Course**? God knows! And maybe He thinks I need it!

Jesus said: "By this will people know that you're my disciples, by how you love one another." (John 13:35)

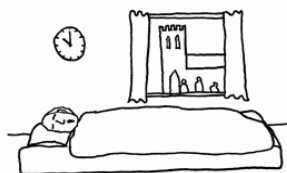
LENT



LENT IS A TIME FOR QUIET
REFLECTION AND CONTEMPLATION



IT IS A SEASON OF ABSTINENCE
AND FASTING



SOME CHRISTIANS GIVE
SOMETHING UP DURING LENT



OTHERS CHOOSE TO CARRY
OUT ACTS OF PENANCE

Advance Notice: Easter Saturday

Easter Experience 30th March: 11.00 - 3.00

This is aimed at families and includes activities and crafts for all ages.
Participation is free
All are welcome

Can you help? Please speak to Catherine.



Farewell to Porsche

Rachel gives Porsche a gift, and our best wishes

At the end of December we said goodbye to Porsche who has been our clergy PA and church administrator for almost three years.

The process of finding a replacement is ongoing, but in the meantime we have help from two people, either of whom you might see at "Porsche's desk".

Judith Whittingham is covering all the administration for Life Events (funerals and weddings), and keeping an eye on the email; she is in the office on Tuesday and Friday mornings.

On a Wednesday you might meet Anthony Walton, the administrator at Holy Trinity Hurdsfield, who is helping Martin out with specific pieces of work. He will be in the office on Wednesday mornings.



Anthony, from HTH

Elaine continues to cover all matters relating to church bookings, and regular maintenance. A reminder that she can be found in the office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Mondays are particularly busy so if your request or visit can wait until later in the week, that's great.



Taizé Services

Macclesfield & Bollington United Reformed Church hold a Taizé Service on the 4th Sunday of each month, beginning at 5.30pm.

The next service will be on 25th February.

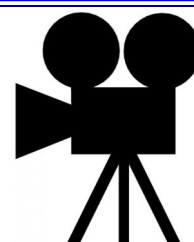
All are welcome.

For further information please contact Alison Carver directly (alisonleacarver@gmail.com)

Film Evenings

The first film evening is **Friday 16th Feb** (possibly tonight, depending on when you read this newsletter!) **starting at 6.30pm.**

The first film will be "**The Lost King**", a dramatised portrayal of the discovery of the remains of Richard III.



No, we don't use such dated technology!



The second film night is **Friday 8th March**, (again starting at 6.30pm, when we will be showing "**The Great Escaper**", starring Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson, both performing in their final film.

Outline of the story of The Great Escaper

This film is based on real life when, in the summer of 1944, Bernard Jordan (Michael Caine) made global headlines. He had staged a "great escape" from his care home to join fellow war veterans on a beach in Normandy, commemorating their fallen comrades at the D-Day Landings 70th anniversary.

It was a story that captured the imagination of the world as Bernie embodied the defiant, "can-do" spirit of a generation that was fast disappearing. But of course, it wasn't the whole story. It was an inspirational but sanitised retelling of one man's need to come to terms with the lasting trauma of war.

Bernie's adventure, spanning a mere 48 hours, also marked the culmination of his 60-year marriage to Rene (Glenda Jackson). This film celebrates their enduring love but always with an eye to the lessons we might learn from this generation

Please sign the list at the back of church if you will be attending, or email lynne.norbron@gmail.com.

(Obviously we need to provide enough cake for everyone!)



Savage Chapel Memory Tree

In the run-up to Christmas each year, the Savage Chapel houses a "memory tree", a Christmas tree on which people can hang paper angels with the names of any they wish particularly to remember at this time of year.

Some of you might not have had the opportunity to see how well-used this tree was, so here is a photograph Enid took.

Our thanks to all who provide the many creative opportunities for prayer in this beautiful Chapel.



Hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6)

I have always thought of this teaching as being a search after personal holiness but apparently the real meaning is about 'right relating' to others in the way of love.

So the real meaning of this verse appears to be **How good is life for those who hunger and thirst for right relationships.**

Jesus goes on to say that those who seek after this will be satisfied.

Tricia A.

Click [here](#) for the full article from the Bible Project website

The Knitting Lessons continue...

Our "knitting for beginners" sessions are continuing - this week David M and Dek K came along to try their hand at this ancient art under the supervision of Judith, Lynne and Cheryl.

Spurred on by Garrie's successes last week, Paul S had greater success on his second attempt!

Kitey herself just came along to chat (and laugh).



The next knitting session is on **Sunday 18th Feb. at 7.00pm (56 Fence Avenue)** if you'd like to come along.

Much better than last week's efforts, Paul!

Right: David M proves himself an accomplished leaner, and bottom right: Dek shows his dexterity skills



If you're a beginner, some experienced knitters will be on hand to help you learn. If you're already a knitter, just come along for a chat and some laughter.

Let Lynne know if you are coming along - 07881 423687
lynne.norbron@gmail.com



ROAR

REACH OUT & RECOVER

You are warmly invited to learn about good work done in Macclesfield.

Reach out and Recover

is an award-winning not-for-profit

Macclesfield organisation

It helps people affected by addiction victims, friends and family

ROAR Volunteer William Meek will explain its philosophy and work in a

Zoom Talk

highlighting ROAR's core values: love, respect, honesty, compassion and faith.

Tuesday 20th Feb. 7.30-8.15pm

Organised by St Alban's J&P Group Macclesfield



Contact Keith Taylor: 01625 429915

You will be most welcome
Please register at skeithtayl2@outlook.com

Thank-you, Chris!



Chris Wellavize has very generously restocked and refreshed all the planters outside church – please have a stroll around the front and south side of church to admire them, and to check on the progress of the raised beds towards the back of the building.

Also, take a minute to admire the wonderful crocuses and snowdrops in the churchyard.

The snowdrops were donated by Jo some years ago from her garden, and are gradually colonising the grassy bank, and the crocuses are ones we planted in 2019, bought with donations generously given by members of the church.

All these projects are part of the eco-Group's aim to "green" the churchyard as much as possible.



Pilgrimage 2024

Thu 26th - Sun 29th Sept

This year we are planning a non-residential pilgrimage taking in the beautiful countryside of the Cheshire Plain and the Peak District, with visits to some of the magnificent and historical country churches on the way.



We will plan a different route each day, with the final day (Sunday) just a short walk, probably from Sutton St James to arrive at St Michael's for the 10:00 service on the 29th which is of course also the festival of Michaelmas and this coincides with the much-anticipated *wrapping a scarf round the church* event - details to follow.

Pilgrims will be free to join as many or as few of the walks as they wish and we will also plan shorter walks each day.

There will not be any cost as the idea will be to share cars to the start and finish points with lifts arranged for those without transport.

As on previous pilgrimages, we will be stopping at churches as we go along for brief times of reflection.

We are not asking for any firm commitment at this stage, but please let one of us know if you are interested.

Paul Spedding

paulspedding@gmail.com

07747 622765

Paul Simms

paul@lowerbeechfarm.co.uk

07879 446906

Taffy Davies

ewldavies@gmail.com

01260 253671



Reflection Day at Broken Cross School



Church members, Mo, Dek and Kitey, assist with Broken Cross Primary School's Reflection Day

Church Newsletter Submissions

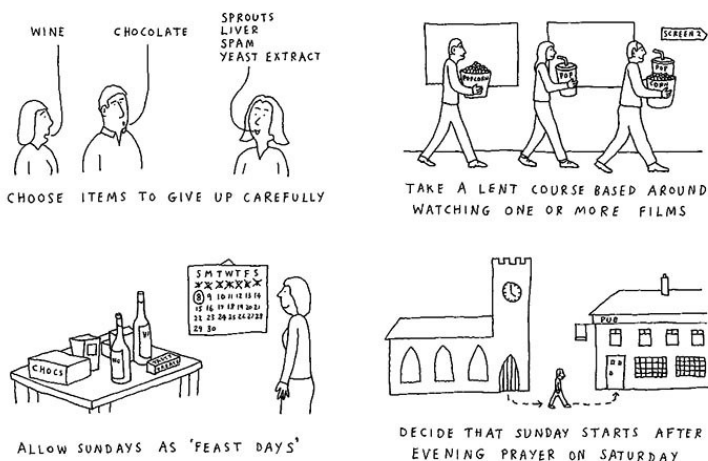
Our monthly newsletter comes out in time for the third Sunday of each calendar month. Please send your articles, items, photographs, etc for inclusion **any time** and they will be saved for the next edition.

The deadline for the next full newsletter is noon on Wed 13th March. Email items to stmikesnotices@gmail.com

Our weekly Bulletin is for more urgent notices and information.

OBSERVING LENT

LESS DEMANDING OPTIONS



Thank-you

To all who attended the St Peter's Jazz Evening.



The Children's Society

making childhood better

It was a great success and £756.24 was raised for the Children's Society.

The Collect for Sunday 18th Feb The First Sunday of Lent

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.



Amnesty International, Manchester

invites you to join us in our weekly
**silent vigil calling for a
ceasefire and the protection of
all civilians in Palestine and
Israel.**

We are sure many of St Michael's congregation are troubled about the situation in Gaza and Israel and would like to help but feel helpless. Amnesty International is not a political organisation, and is not affiliated to any religious group, but works for human rights all over the world. The vigil is silent, and there are no banners, flags, chants, or placards, other than the Amnesty International placards as detailed below. Some of our church family been to these vigils and have found the silence and solidarity powerful, giving a quiet hour where one can pray about the situation.

St Peter's Square, Manchester
Friday 16th February, 2024, 5pm to 6pm
Meet from 4.50pm in front of Central Library

Please wear black or dark colours (and please dress warmly!)

No placards / No banners / No flags / No chants

Simple placards will be provided bearing the messages:

- Ceasefire now
- Israel: stop killing civilians
- Hamas: release all hostages
- Humanitarian aid now
- Uphold International Law
- Protect all civilians
- Protect human rights
- Stop war crimes

We will also provide tealights

Please join us

We will continue with the weekly vigils until further notice.
[Manchester](#) | [Amnesty International UK](#)

LET'S This Sunday



Don't forget that Let's Eat Together Sunday is this week, **18th February**. Please bring some food to eat and possibly share with others.

White Tablecloths Available for Loan

Chris W made a number of large white tablecloths for Sue & Kev's marriage, which are now available for anyone who might like to borrow them.

Please contact Chris on 01625 428443

While we are on the subject of knitting..

... here's a screenshot Garrie sent

Australia's oldest man Alfie Dates (109) knits tiny sweaters for injured penguins!

Join with us [Beautiful, Bizarre and Oddly Humorous](#)

121k

4.9k comments 22.4k shares

Like

Comment

Share



1.8k

137 comments

Like

Comment

Share



2.9k

306 comments

Sweaters for penguins! That's even battier than knitting a scarf to keep the church warm! (Ed.)



Farewell to Audrey.

A group of friends met with Audrey for afternoon tea recently, to wish her goodbye, as she relocates from Macclesfield to Cornwall to be close to her daughter, Helen.

We wish Audrey all good wishes for her new life and send her our love.

News from the Eco-group

Precedents for church roof solar panels

St Peter Mancroft, a Grade I listed medieval church founded in 1075 and a landmark in the centre of Norwich, has been granted a faculty to install clamp-fixed arrays of solar panels on the roof of the south aisle. They will also have six storage batteries in the former organ-blower room, and two external heat-pump evaporator units.

If *they* can do it.....



Solar panels on a church roof

Managing our own "green space"



Anthony tending to one of our raised beds last summer

This month's General Synod of the Church of England will consider a Land and Nature Motion which will seek to give biodiversity equal consideration with net zero carbon, recognising the need to respond urgently to the ecological crisis. Sponsored by the Bishop of Norwich, the motion will encourage parishes to encourage wildflowers, manage mowing regimes and increase the biodiversity of their churchyards.

We are on it!

Don't forget to admire the beautiful flowers and plants in our array of tubs and raised beds, and special thanks are due to Lynne Spedding, Chris Wellawize and Anthony Hulme for all their hard work (and expense) in maintaining these.

Eco-Group: Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the eco-church group is on **Monday 4th March 7.30pm in the 1st floor room.**

All welcome to share ideas about caring for God's amazing creation and helping St Michael's to be carbon-neutral by 2030.

Eco-tip

Are you concerned about single-use plastic and the tons of plastic waste which pollute our rivers and oceans, ending up as micro-plastic in our water, food and bodies; or get dumped in land-fill sites or burned in incinerators? Then try shopping at Scoop and Scales in the Old Sunday School, Roe Street. They also sell organic fruit and veg now, so why go anywhere else?



Or take your own bags to the Corner Plot on Park Lane for a bigger range of locally grown fruit and veg.

Music@Mike's



The next concert is a welcome return by exciting drumming group Kukua, performing West African style djembe rhythms.

This is on **SATURDAY 24th February** at the usual time of 1.15.



Kukua Drumming Group

Enjoy a lunch or light refreshments before or afterwards at our Angel At My Table café.

Please see the Music@Mike's flyer, attached along with this newsletter. All the dates for this spring period are included.

Foodie Friday



The spread at January's Foodie Friday was amazing.

Here are some photos of the food we enjoyed.



It was a full house with almost 30 people served with a 3-course meal, all made from surplus food.

The cost is on a "pay as you feel" basis and the money raised enables us to offer free meals during the week to those who cannot afford to pay. Many of these folk, but not all, are residents in hostels for the homeless but run out of cash towards the end of the month.

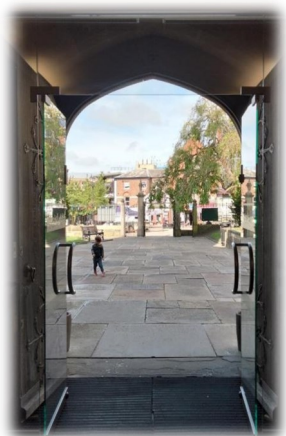
Foodie Friday is usually the first Friday of the month – but book early (via Ali or the Church Office) as places fill up fast! If you haven't tried it yet, do join us.

The next Foodie Friday is Friday 1st March.

Open Church Team

What do we do?

The Open Church Team oversees a number of activities falling within our "umbrella" of responsibility but we certainly do not actually DO them all ourselves. None of these would happen without the amazing team of volunteers who actually make these things happen. Thank you to everyone.



Our Remit

is to consider and oversee the ways that St Michael's uses its building and church grounds (churchyard), to offer generous and welcoming hospitality, allowing visitors to encounter God through our people and our building. Where appropriate, we will identify and use opportunities to introduce elements of the Christian faith to visitors, and invite further exploration.

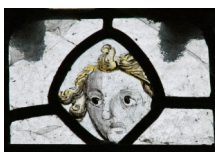
There are many biblical references to hospitality, emphasising that this is how we demonstrate the nature of a hospitable God to those who do not know God. Leviticus 19:34 "The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God". Recently we have considered 1 Peter 4:8-11. Above all, love each other deeply because love covers a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. (read the rest for yourselves)

Our Specific Areas of Responsibility are

- **Town Centre Ministry including Treacle Market**
- **Café:** A small group oversees development and running of the cafe, and links between the two offers.
- **Use of Premises including Church grounds**
- **Access to Heritage**
- **Visitor Experience**

What would we like to develop?

- We would like to establish a Heritage Group, to lead on how we promote and describe our heritage building and artefacts, and how they can be used to inform and inspire – giving another opportunity Encounter God.



Our ancient (mediaeval) stained glass



Heritage Open Day is in September: could you take a lead or help with planning what we offer?

- We would like to ensure that we have someone available in the Welcome Area, at least one day per week: someone who can offer listening, prayer, or advice as well as information about the church building. **We need someone to coordinate this.** If not the coordinator, **could you be a listener/prayer?**
- **Produce a leaflet** which explains some fundamentals of the Christian faith, to "match" the current tourist leaflets.

Churchyard signage and prayer stations

If you could help with any of the activities mentioned please contact a member of the Open Church Team: Rachel Mayers, Vicky Darlington, Garrie Naden, David Mayers, Tricia Wilson, Ali Griffen.

The Open Church Team produced a full report of the year's activities for the September PCC meeting; if you would like to see a copy of the full report please contact the PCC secretary or Rachel.

Crunching the Numbers

"The total Worshipping Community of the Church of England was

- **1,113,000 people in 2019;**
- **1,031,000 people in 2020;**
- **966,000 people in 2021;**
- **984,000 people in 2022.**

The Church of England's Worshipping Community in 2022 was 1.7% of the population of England".



Have you ever seen these figures in a news report and wondered where they come from?

Church of England Statistics

St Michael's Numbers

Every year we are asked to complete a "Statistics for Mission" return. These figures are combined to get the Diocesan return, then these become part of the national figure etc. So what did we report for St Michael's? *(I have to admit that because of the size of our church community, and that we don't know everyone's date of birth, there is a certain amount of estimation involved...)*

There are about 195 regular worshippers (who are not members of another church) of whom up to 28 are under 18, and about 80 are over 70 years of age. Of this total, 19 have joined and 13 left in 2023.

158 are on our electoral roll (that number is not an estimate but does include some who have now left) *[are you on our roll, which is effectively our list of members? If not please do join – forms are in the welcome area].*

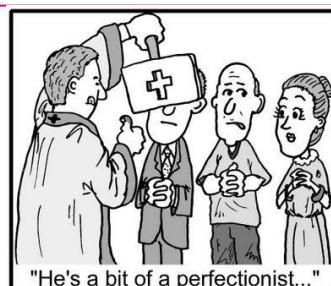
Average attendance on Sundays in 2023 was 83 adults and 14 children (under 16); the average for October was slightly higher at 98 adults and 16 children – so are we growing? We had to estimate the number who worship mainly online.

On "high days" numbers were higher: 149 at Easter; and 570 at Christmas (this number is very high because Christmas Eve was a Sunday and included the Crib Service). BUT in Advent, which included five school services and the Town Carol Service, total numbers were about 2500!

We had only 1 wedding in 2023, and 11 funerals, with another 19 in the crematorium. 11 children were baptised.

And how does all this relate to previous years? Not much change, taking Covid-19 into account.

Rachel



Join us for *Worship*



Sunday 18th February

The First Sunday of Lent

Family Communion

Leader & Speaker: Revd. Martin Stephens

**Please use the link below to stream this
(and previous Services) on YouTube**

<https://www.youtube.com/@stmikesmacclesfield>

Start the Week ...

... Every Monday from 7.30 am in church
Morning Prayer at 8.30 am in church and also on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/stmikesmacclesfield>

Wednesday Morning Prayer Group

Alternate Wednesdays at 10:30 am in the Savage Chapel
lasting 30-40 minutes.

Next taking place on Wednesday 21st February

Thursday Morning Worship 10:30 am (35–40 minutes)

22nd February: Morning Prayer
29th February : Holy Communion
(alternately thereafter...)

Our midweek services follow the order from
the Book of Common Prayer (old language)

Thursday Homegroup

Meeting for Bible study and prayer –
Morning and Evening groups

**The usual meetings are suspended during Lent so that
members can attend the Lent Course**

Please contact Eve & David Budgett (431606)
or David Mayers (420716) for more information



Compline/Night Prayer

Every Friday

Topic: Night Prayer | Time: 8.30 pm

Join Zoom Meeting; [https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?pwd=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZoVXdaZz09)
[pwd=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZoVXdaZz09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75676947476?pwd=R2twT2pQbTFzUGR5bk1reDZoVXdaZz09)

Meeting ID: 756 7694 7476 Passcode: compline



How to contact the office...



Phone – Landline: 01625 421 984

Email – clergypa@maccteam.org.uk (currently managed by
temporary cover - see below for interim office
arrangements)

– office@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk to contact
Elaine for room bookings and building matters

– stmikesnotices@gmail.com for newsletter items

– maccteamprinting@gmail.com for all printing

– safeguarding@stmichaels-macclesfield.org.uk to
contact Katie Wilcock, Parish Safeguarding Officer

In person – The Office, St Michael's Church, Market Place,
Macclesfield, SK10 1DY

**Elaine's office hours are usually Monday,
Wednesday, and Thursday 9:30 am – 1:30 pm**

Temporary Office Arrangements

While we are trying to find someone to be our new Clergy PA/
Administrator, the office staff will be even more stretched than
usual, so please bear this in mind and limit interruptions and
the number of small tasks you might have asked them to do.

Judith Whittingham will be in the office on Tuesday and Friday
mornings, so there will be some office cover every day. Judith
will deal with urgent email, and arrangements for funerals and
weddings.

Rota changes: if you cannot manage your slot please do your
best to arrange a swap yourself, and inform Judith to change it
on the master rota. If you can't find a swap then Judith will
assist.

Contemplative Prayer

Every Friday at 9:20am in the Savage Chapel lasting half an
hour. An opportunity for quiet prayer followed by a short chat.



SCAN ME

**Donating to St
Michael's**

has become easier!

Scan this **QR Code** or use the
contactless donation point



Email any **prayer requests** here

*(your request will be circulated confidentially to
a limited group of people who will pray for you)*

