



St Helen's Church

Loving God, loving others, loving the world

Notices for 21st June, 2020

Dear Friends

This week has seen a flurry of activity in our church building: Bibles and soft furnishings have been stored in the Hastings Chapel; altar frontals have been changed; the side-chapel pews have been moved to enable social distancing; signs have been printed; floors have been swept and candle-holders put in place around which attractive cord will be looped to keep people safely spaced as they pray.

Church is looking beautiful and we are on course to open our doors for solitary prayer once a week, 10.00am-12.00pm, from Saturday 27th June. We're praying that, for some, this opportunity will be a real blessing, a source of hope and strength in these challenging times.

Wherever we might be, prayer can be just that for all of us: a blessing, a source of hope and strength. (And also, let's be honest, a conundrum, from time-to-time; a challenge; a reaching out in the darkness and a groping for the light.)

We have never felt that prayer has been confined to our buildings, but in lock-down we have rediscovered, as never before, the home as the engine-room of prayer. Morning after morning in our pjs with our cuppas, we have been inspired / challenged/

provoked / comforted (delete as applicable) by Prayer for the Day. Night after night in our pjs (don't some of us *ever* get dressed?!) we have been lulled by Night Prayer. Our living rooms have become our sacred space, a candle or a simple cross a visual reminder of God's presence.

What a good, sustaining pattern of prayer this is for us, offering a rhythm to our days which have otherwise become so free-form. And how we have been blessed by an ever-growing group of creative, inspiring Prayer-ers for the Day, and a small, faithful group of Night Prayer leaders.

From next weekend, we're going to make a small change. We're going to continue with Prayer for the Day just as it is on Monday and Tuesday and Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8am. And we're going to continue sharing Night Prayer Monday-Friday at 9pm. At the weekend, on Saturday and Sunday nights, there is a new invitation for us all: to continue to say Night Prayer but to do so on our own, or in our households, following one of the liturgies we've been using together. We hope that this will be an opportunity to develop personal patterns of prayer; to savour going at our pace, using just the mixture of silence and song that is right for us; to be able to linger over words of

Scripture that especially strike us; to offer to God our very own jumble of thoughts and desires and questions; that jumble we call prayer.

The ministry team and I are praying that this would be experienced as an opportunity for each of us to deepen our discipleship; to embed the practices we've been learning together, to discover afresh the amazing truth that none of us need an intermediary to encounter God, but that he stands ready to respond to each one of us whenever we call to him.

In next week's pew sheet, I'll let you know the Bible readings for Saturday and Sunday Night Prayer so that we can all be united in our study of the Scriptures but at our own pace, in our own time. I'll also offer some simple suggestions that might help you establish new rhythms at home.

I think many of us will look back on lock-down as a time when our spiritual lives have flourished: what a blessing out of bareness; a growth of intimacy in isolation; what freedom in a time of greater restrictions than many of us have ever known.

With love

Mary

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NOTICES

Opening of Churches for Solitary Prayer

◆ A message from the Bishop of Leicester – The Rt. Rev'd Martyn Snow

Even while our church buildings have been closed, the church has still been alive and active. I am deeply grateful to the many volunteers who have regularly phoned people, helped with shopping and other practical support, organised online worship and prayed for those they know have been suffering during this pandemic. This is the heart of what the church is all about.

As our buildings re-open, we are once again reliant on volunteers to fulfil all the requirements around cleaning and other safety measures. Not all churches will be able to do this and so some will re-open sooner than others. This is completely understandable, and no one should feel under pressure to do anything which might put others at risk.

My sincere hope is that our communities will work together, continuing to focus on caring for one another and praying for one another. The Rt. Rev'd Martyn Snow, Bishop of Leicester.

Opening of Churches for Solitary Prayer

◆ A message from the Rector and Wardens of St Helen's

It is our hope that St Helen's Church will be able to open Church for solitary prayer.

To assist in how and when this can happen, we must seek to minimise the risk of spreading the Corona Virus by complying with the guidance issued by the Government and the Church of England in response to the current Corona virus threat.

In line with this we have completed a risk assessment, which has informed our decision open for solitary prayer *on Saturday 27th June from 10am to midday*, and then each Saturday at those times.

The reopening of the church relies heavily on our volunteers, and if you feel that you would like to be part of this team which may enable us to maintain or extend our hours of the church opening, then please do contact the Revd Mary Gregory who would be delighted to hear from you (revmarygregory@aol.co.uk)

We look forward to welcoming you here on Saturdays from 27th June, but in the meantime we are grateful for your help, prayers and encouragement.

Helen Smith, Valerie Bowron & Mary Gregory

Free Dial-in Worship Phone Line

Just a reminder that there is a free national phone line, called Daily Hope, which is available 24 hours a day and offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. Simply ring it on **0800 804 8044**.

Please spread the news about this service, particularly to those you know who are not on-line.

Giving

We have added a function to the St Helen's Church website whereby monetary giving is now possible.

To do this go to the website <https://www.sthelensashby.net/> where you'll find 'Giving' is one of the options on the drop down menu on the 'Church Life' tab. John Backman has written about our church's approach to giving, and you can click on '[donation here](#)'

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

The bereaved:

Please pray for anyone known to you who is bereaved.

Please pray for all families for whom the funerals of their loved ones have taken place during this difficult time, including:

- ◆ Sheelagh Judge
- ◆ Roy Hodges
- ◆ Mykola Kuzyszyn
- ◆ Hazel Farmer
- ◆ David Robert Smith
- ◆ Dorothy Wragg
- ◆ Marie Bowman
- ◆ Bill Woodward
- ◆ Olive Pointon
- ◆ Sheila Wood
- ◆ Henry Tagg
- ◆ June Stapleton
- ◆ Judith Graves
- ◆ Ann Wheatley
- ◆ Albert Meakin
- ◆ Christopher McVickers
- ◆ Dennis Grainger
- ◆ Graham Howells
- ◆ Jane Wise
- ◆ Florence Hannah James
- ◆ David Garrett
- ◆ Lindsay Pointon

And for the families awaiting the funerals of loved ones.

The sick, disabled or housebound:

Pray for ...

- ◆ Tia Rose Brownlow
 - ◆ Zoë Chidlow, having a major operation on 23rd June
 - ◆ Val Dawson
 - ◆ Margaret Stalker
 - ◆ Carole Youles
- ...& others known to you

In love, we remember those whose anniversary of death falls at this time, and pray for their families and friends:

- ◆ Doreen Frances Brown
- ◆ Gwynneth Eileen Richards
- ◆ Freda Mary Stanley
- ◆ Kathleen Parker
- ◆ Doris Croxton

◆ St Helen's Prayer Chain requests:

Judith Lewis on 01530 564204
or email jchjcl@gmail.com

◆ Notice Sheet Prayer requests:

To Jill Chapman on 07725 519453
sthelensashby@gmail.com