



St Helen's Church

Loving God, loving others, loving the world

Notices for 24th January, 2021

Dear Friends,

More than a few times this week I have found myself using the words 'relentless' and 'overwhelming' as I have referred to the pandemic and its ravages, as well as the many other challenges facing us as a Family of Churches at this time: one beloved to us is gravely ill, another has been diagnosed with Covid-19, yet another has had an accident requiring surgery, still others await diagnosis for illnesses, others are bereaved. Honestly? - it's all a bit too much: we called ourselves a 'Family' because we love one another and so, when one hurts, we all hurt.

As is so often the case I have found my feelings expressed in the beautiful words of Scripture; in Jonah's words, especially, as he lies deep in the belly of the fish: 'You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and billows passed over me...The waters closed in over me; the deep surrounded me' (Jonah 2.3,5). I am so profoundly thankful that our pain, our confusion, our overwhelming is not excluded from Scripture or sugar-coated within it. No, at the heart of Scripture, in the very word of God, the human condition cries loudly and is not suppressed. This gives permission to my own cries, too. But there is something else in Jonah's fish-bound prayers that I hold on to;

that in the depths of his despair, at the height of his grief, he remembers God's faithfulness - and not in vain, for God delivers him. 'I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me for ever - yet you brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God' (Jonah 2.6). And so, for now, I hold both of these things together: that I feel overwhelmed, but will be rescued; that I feel stricken with grief, but will be comforted.

And there is one more thing: that for Jonah, the belly of the fish, the place of captivity and fear, becomes a holy temple where he can praise God and worship him. And so, together, we will seek for God and worship him even in this land that feels so dark and so difficult. And we will remember in the words of Amanda Gorman, President Biden's inauguration poet, that 'there is always light if only we are brave enough to see it, if only we're brave enough to be it'.

Much love,

Mary

NOTICES

Ashby Foodbank

At a meeting with my ecumenical colleagues yesterday, Catherine Booton, minister at the United Reformed Church, gave us an update on the Foodbank that I think is important for me to share with you. She reported that the Foodbank is giving away more than **double** the amount of food that they did this time last year and that the recipients now include people who, pre-pandemic, were employed in steady, professional posts.

In December, the Foodbank gave out 4.1 tonnes of food, and received in donations 3.9 tonnes - so it is really important that those of us who can continue to donate to it so that those who are hungry are fed. Donations can be left in the porch of Holy Trinity. If you know anyone who might be in need of the Foodbank's support at the moment, please signpost them to me as I am of several people around Ashby who can give out vouchers for the Foodbank.

Revd Mary

Lent 2021

Lent is nearly upon us. We started the first lockdown in Lent and all indications are that we will live most, if not all, of this Lent in lockdown, too. We've been thinking about how, even so, we will work to make this a rich season, where we can deepen our discipleship and identify more than ever with Jesus' own wilderness experience.

As ever, on **Ash Wednesday**, we'll have services of Holy Communion at 10.00am and 7.30pm, both online only.

A particular focus for Lent will be given by our **Sunday sermons**, and by our accompanying Lent Course

- **Team Talk** - when we'll be asking ourselves the questions, 'What is the church? What is it *for*?'

Each Sunday one of our preachers will take a different image for the church and explore that, and each following Tuesday from 7.30-9.00pm, we'll dig deeper into that topic together through Bible study, discussion, prayer and worship. The sessions are:

Sunday 21st and Tuesday 23rd

February - The Bride of Christ - a worshipping community

Sunday 28th and Tuesday 2nd March
- The Body of Christ - an active community

Sunday 7th and Tuesday 9th March -
The Family of Christ - a supportive community

Sunday 14th and Tuesday 16th March
- The Servant of Christ - a serving community

Sunday 21st and Tuesday 23rd March
- The Herald of Christ - a proclaiming community

We want to commend to you a book for daily reflections, too. It's called **At Home in Lent: an exploration of Lent through 46 objects** by Gordon Giles. There is a reading for each day in Lent, inspired by an object from our home. I will be placing a bulk order for these books to get them at a discount. Please let me know by January 31st if you'd like me to order a copy.

I hope that you will join us for some or all of these opportunities over Lent so that we can journey together in preparation for Easter.

Revd Mary

Giving

A reminder you can make donations to the work of St Helen's via our website -

<https://www.sthelensashby.net/Groups/327469/Giving.aspx>

Stations of the Cross

Following on from the great success of our Christmas Windows, we are exploring doing something similar for Holy Week, this time with Stations of the Cross. There are fourteen of these (listed below). We are just asking, at this stage, whether there are 14 households in Ashby which might be willing to depict one of these Stations of the Cross in a front window, or garden, so that we could form a pilgrimage route around Ashby, with an accompanying leaflet with a brief thought and prayer for each of the stations.

Could you let me know, in principle, whether you might be willing to take on one of these stations? - it might not be possible to choose who does what, so that the route flows naturally from station to station. The displays can be whatever you like - as realistic or as figurative as seems right to you.

The stations are:

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
Jesus betrayed by Judas and arrested
Jesus condemned by the Sanhedrin
Peter denies Jesus
Jesus judged by Pilate
Jesus crowned with thorns
Jesus carries the cross
Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross
Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
Jesus is crucified
Jesus promises the kingdom to the penitent thief
Jesus on the cross, his mother and his friend
Jesus dies on the cross
Jesus laid in the tomb
Please could you let me know if you are interested in taking part by 1st March.
Many thanks.
Revd Mary

Daily Hope

is the Church of England's 24 hour free telephone line for music, prayers (including prayers from the MU), reflections (including mental health reflections voiced by Pam Rhodes) and full worship services. Callers to the line are welcomed with a short greeting from Archbishop Justin Welby, before being able to choose from a range of options.
Ring **0800 804 8044**

Ashby Churches Prayer Meeting via Zoom

◆ Sunday 24th January
◆ 2:30 pm (for 30 min) - The Zoom room will open at 2:25 p.m. There will be three guest speakers representing Local Government, Education and Ashby foodbank and following each 1-2 minute introduction we will have 7 minutes in small groups to pray.

To join click on the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87812621948>

Enter the Meeting ID: 878 1262 1948, in a Zoom App or webpage
Or you can use a landline phone by calling 0131 460 1196 and then enter Meeting ID: 878 1262 1948.

Yours in Christ
Tim Phillips

Parish Magazine

A reminder that the church magazine is available on-line under the What's-On tab on the St Helen's Church website (www.sthelensashby.net) or by clicking the link https://www.sthelensashby.net/Groups/339405/Parish_Magazine.aspx
Back copies going back to April 2020 can also be found there.

PRAYER

The Sick

Pray for those who are sick, disabled or housebound.

The bereaved

Pray especially for the families and friends of anyone known to you who is recently bereaved, and for all families for whom the funerals of their loved ones have taken place during the pandemic.

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

- ◆ Joanna Louise Wirgman Slovak
- ◆ Brian Russell Lofty
- ◆ Margaret Witton
- ◆ Stephanie Hilary Roberts
- ◆ Doris May Hill
- ◆ Millie Murrey Light

◆ St Helen's Prayer Chain:

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

◆ Notice Sheet Prayer requests:

Jill Chapman on 07725 519453
or sthelensashby@gmail.com

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