

St Helen's Magazine

May 2022

50p



St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch



Loving God, loving others, loving the world

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♦ Instagram:

♦ Twitter: @sthelensashby

♦ Website: www.sthelensashby.net

Giving

You can make donations to the work of St Helen's via our website - <https://www.sthelensashby.net/Groups/327469/Giving.aspx>

Front cover: Part of a photo by Martin Vaughan

Editor Writes ...

Have you watched the tv series *Anyone Can Sing*? It's on Sky Arts (a Freeview channel) and if you can access it on demand, or when they repeat it – which they surely will – I'd recommend it. In the meantime there are clips on YouTube.



In the first episode the less-than-great singers arrived in London to have their voices assessed by three English National Opera voice coaches, who then provided a three month “musical SAS” to the six best ... er ... worst. The hope was to demonstrate that, as the title proclaims, anyone can sing. Unlike so many conventional tv talent shows it wasn't competitive and no one was eliminated. Instead it was collaborative and kind; but it was hard work. As one of the singing coaches said, “It's like putting your soul on a dinner plate in front of you.”

One participant was Ellen Clark-King, a priest and the first female Dean of King's College London, who admitted she hadn't sung in front of anyone for 30 years. Her verdict after lesson one - “They say anyone can sing ... I'm not yet convinced.” Although none of the participants could be described as a good singer at the show's outset, I suspect it was probably Ellen who most audibly challenged its headline premise.

In one programme we met Ellen's husband Jeremy, also ordained. I wonder, does the name Jeremy Clark-King ring a bell for anyone? Some of you will remember Jeremy because he served as our curate here at St Helen's from 1990 to 1993. We caught up with Jeremy and Ellen's story via this magazine in September 2012 at which point they were living in Canada. Their article was part of a series called *Home Thoughts From Abroad*, where former members of St Helen's told us about their lives away from Ashby and reflected on their time with us. (Not many were actually 'abroad.')

It did set me wondering whether we should have another catch up series – do let me know what you think.

Another item we used to have intermittently was a book review, and I'm really pleased to see one this month – it's on page 28.

The magazine's current regular strand is thanks to Julie Starkey, who is looking back at former St Helen's incumbents. This month's is a particularly fascinating character from the beginning of the nineteenth century (page 14). We're also travelling through the year in poems penned by Chris Lewis – the latest is on page 13. Other regulars include Wendy Freer, who this month explores some almost overlooked local landmarks on page 24, MU news on page 27 and an AYFC update on page 32, with our new regular, our gardening guru, on page 22.

And of course our letter – thank you to the ministry team for keeping this going for us during the interregnum, and to Judith Lewis for this month's contribution, which is over the page.

Jill Chapman





Judith Lewis Writes ...

Dear Friends, the calendar for May contains a surprising number of events, not all of which I shall be marking. International Dawn Chorus Day on 1st May – I'm sure that I should get up around 5am to appreciate this, but, alas, I am not a morning person. Screen-free week is between 2nd and 8th May, when we are encouraged to ditch the digital and reconnect with each other in person - not a chance in my case, although the

thought of a break from the tyranny of emails is very tempting...

International Gilbert and Sullivan day sounds quite fun, though, as does Towel Day, in memory of Douglas Adams, of Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy fame. It would be rude, I think, not to celebrate National Doughnut week [7th – 15th May, if you're interested] and National Biscuit Day on 29th May – it's clear my diet is



going to be severely challenged this month. And I love the thought of Elmer Day on 28th May, billed as a celebration of reading, of elephants and of accepting yourself and others, just like Elmer the Patchwork Elephant, star of the Elmer books by David McKee [some good sermon material there].

But the event that really stands out in the May calendar is – wait for it – St Helen's APCM! Yes, it is that time of the year again, and an opportunity for our first APCM in person since 2019. It's also our first APCM since we have been in vacancy. That's not something we anticipated a year ago, and we are still adapting to both the practicalities of having no incumbent, anxieties about our future and our personal feelings of loss now that Reverend Mary Gregory has moved on, even though her role as Canon for Arts and Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral could have been designed with her in mind. I'd like to share with you a part of a verse that I have found helpful over the past few months, Colossians 1 v17 – in Christ, all things hold together. Which means that, if it is part of God's design that Mary should be in her new role, it is equally part of his design that we should be in our current situation, and that he has plans for what he wants to do with us, through us and in us. As Andy Smith wrote in his magazine letter last month, "The Mission & Ministry team talked of seeing the vacancy as a time when we could develop and grow, individually and collectively, in our faith

and in our witness to the communities we serve, not a period to mark time.”

I am quite sure that we should see this period of vacancy as one of opportunity and potential, one that should excite us rather than leave us filled with apprehension. To that end, then, let me encourage you to come along to our APCM on Tuesday 17th May, at 7:30pm in the Heritage Centre. Yes, there are a certain amount of legal formalities to deal with, but the reports will have been circulated in advance, not read out at the meeting. And at the heart of the meeting we will be able to reflect on all that God has done over the past year, despite and sometimes because of the restrictions of the past 2 years, and to have some time to talk and share together about where we envision him leading us over the next year.

We will also be electing new members of PCC at the APCM – please consider whether this is something God might be calling you to, in his plans for us at St Helen’s. It is the responsibility of the PCC to deal with matters relating to church governance, but that very much includes prayer, listening to and discerning God’s plans for us over the next year and how they should be implemented. It would be lovely to have new faces and fresh voices contributing to this. Which brings me back to the story of Elmer, the patchwork elephant, who reminds us that we are all unique and bring our distinctive and unique gifts to everything we do – what can you bring to this journey on which God is leading us, his people at St Helen’s?

Judith Lewis

Christian Aid Week



This year’s Christian Aid Week is 15th to 21st May.

Conflicts in Ukraine, Afghanistan and Ethiopia (amongst many others) in addition to the climate crisis, and on top of the Covid-19 pandemic means a further 130 million people are expected to be pushed into poverty. Christian Aid wants us to help ‘turn hunger into hope.’ The person who is the focus of this year’s campaign is Jessica who lives in Zimbabwe, who no longer has the power to provide for her children. Read her story at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>. We have, as in previous years, set up an e-envelope if you prefer to make your donation on line. It is at <https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/envelope/sthelensashby>

As there is so much new housing in Ashby, we are combining with Holy Trinity, to distribute flyers of welcome and introduction to our churches throughout Ashby, particularly to the new estates, at the same time as posting the Christian Aid envelopes. If you are able to help with this, please contact Shân Dyer on 07368615406 or at shandashby@hotmail.co.uk

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Update on asylum-seekers and refugees



Many people, given the invasion of Ukraine and the horror of the unfolding refugee crisis there, have asked me for an update on the work of 'Loughborough Town of Sanctuary' and have expressed the wish to do more to help.

First, let me explain that Ukrainian nationals seeking sanctuary in the UK (unlike those asylum seekers we meet and greet in Loughborough each week) will not be required to report at immigration centres; nor will they go through the process of applying for the right to remain and hence the right to work in the UK. Ukrainians, once they have negotiated the visa application system, will be offered the automatic right to remain in the UK for three years and also to apply for employment here.

However, the government's 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme seems to be very slow moving. Many of those who have applied to be hosts, including from within the Flagstaff family, are still waiting for their chance to help. Meanwhile, the diocese is exploring potential partnerships with other agencies who may be able to assist with the process of matching sponsoring hosts with Ukrainian families and with transit arrangements across Europe. We, in our wider church family, are keeping in touch with these developments and actively pursuing possible ways to support both hosts and refugees when and if they arrive in our parishes.

So, in terms of Ukraine, we wait in frustration, anticipation and earnest prayer.

Back in Loughborough, our work with other nationals caught up in the asylum system continues. I thank you once again for all your gifts of hats, scarves and gloves - but with warmer weather on its way, we don't of course need any more of those for the moment. When the school summer holidays arrive, there may be more opportunities - with your help - to support young families, but for the moment ... watch this space!

Of course, the need for a hot meal, a voucher for essential toiletries, pointers towards expert advice and - most importantly - a smile, a friendly chat and a listening ear, are ever present. We get to know some of those who are reporting regularly quite well and we do get to share some of the high and low moments on their journey through the seemingly interminable asylum system. Some of the decisions seem indescribably harsh, but at other times the judge's signature on a 'right to remain' document is proudly shared and enthusiastically celebrated!

So, please do keep all those people seeking help - and all those seeking to help - in your prayers. Thank you!

Pat Stafford



The
**What's
On**
Notice board



en's Hidden Nature Trails

School holiday event - free
Are you up for a challenge?

Would you believe that in St Helen's
Church we have a hidden bull, two lions
and an eagle?

Monday, 30th May,
9am – 12noon

- Self-guided children's nature trails in church and graveyard – 2 nature trails and 3 mouse trails
- Refreshments and ice creams



Facebook: St Helen's Ashby de la Zouch

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Email: sthelensashby@gmail.com



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St Helen's Church
Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Monday 30th May
9am – 12noon

Plant Sale

in the churchyard

Refreshments and ice creams



Facebook: St Helen's Ashby de la Zouch
Website: www.sthelensashby.net



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Please send any articles,
jokes, book reviews,
photos etc to
jill.chapman12@btopenworld.com

Thanks



St Helen's Church & Heritage Centre

4 Church Yard, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE651AA



We're In
Stitches

It's 'knit & natter' but so much more ...
Bring your own textile project

including crochet, embroidery, sewing, weaving
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On the First Wednesday of the month 2pm - 4pm

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First meeting on May 4th 2022

In the lovely Hastings Hall at the Heritage Centre
If you'd like to contact Anne beforehand ...

Tea and coffee available
she's on Instagram: [@new_vintage_sewing](https://www.instagram.com/new_vintage_sewing)



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“Remembrance”

by Bill Brookman

A World War 1 play with music,
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Al fresco weddings

Outdoor weddings were given the legal go-ahead in England and Wales in March of this year.

Prior to last summer, wedding ceremonies at a licensed wedding venue had to take place indoors or within a permanent outdoor structure, such as a bandstand, or a permanently moored boat. However, temporary measures brought in during the Covid-19 pandemic permitted outdoor weddings and, following consultations, they are set to continue indefinitely.



The change received overwhelming support from the public, every major faith group, and the wedding industry.

Justice minister Tom Pursglove said: “A wedding is one of the most important days in a person’s life and it is right that couples should have greater choice in how they celebrate their special occasion. These reforms will allow couples to hold more personalised ceremonies.”

But we won’t be having outdoor weddings at St Helen’s just yet. With the exception of Jewish and Quaker weddings, which can already take place outdoors, legal religious weddings will continue to take place in certified places of worship which are also registered for marriage. The question of outdoor religious weddings was included in the consultations, and 93% of respondents also supported the proposal to permit outdoor religious ceremonies in the grounds of places of worship such as churches. All representatives of religious groups who responded to the

consultation were in support of this proposal. However, because these changes would require amendments to primary legislation and associated procedural requirements it isn’t possible to include this in the current changes.

An ongoing Law Commission report into marriage laws is due to be published in July. It is exploring how to ‘modernise and improve marriage law into a simple, fair and consistent legal structure.’ This includes widening the choice of locations that people can get married at and whether more types of weddings should be legalised. In due course, it is expected the government will put forward a Legislative Review Order to allow for outdoor religious weddings.

Jill Chapman

April

April is the cruellest month
April is the sweetest month
Which line you prefer depending your preference for the sweetness of Chaucer,
or the starkness of Eliot in his Wasteland, written exactly 100 years ago.

For me April is the month of promise, the budding of spring, where in every wood, in every spring, as Tolkien says, there is a different green.

April is a month of hope, from the day we celebrated Christ bursting forth from His winter tomb to the eternal spring of everlasting life.

New life is everywhere, lambs gambolling in lush green fields,
Carpets of iridescent bluebells blooming beautiful blueness
And slowly the day lengthens and the sun strengthens heralding the full riot of triumphant spring!

Chris Lewis
28.4.22



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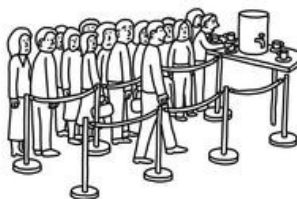
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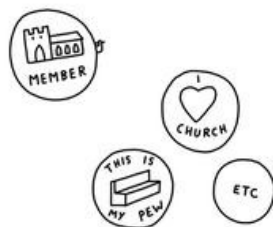
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ROTA FREE' CARD



PRIORITY LANE AT
AFTER-SERVICE COFFEE



A BADGE, AND
SOME STICKERS

CartoonChurch.com

William McDouall (1775-1849)

Vicar 1804-1827

William McDouall's life spanned a time of great change, huge industrial development, improvements in transport and scientific discovery. The Napoleonic Wars were fought whilst he was in Ashby, Jane Austen's novels were published, the first railway opened between Liverpool and Manchester in 1830. In 1831 HMS Beagle set sail with Charles Darwin on board as ship's naturalist and Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837. Britain in 1849, when McDouall died, was a very different country to the one he entered in 1775.

McDouall was born in Scotland, to John McDouall of Glasgow and his wife Mary Isabella McCulloch. His mother died in childbirth in 1878, bringing his sister Isabella into the world. McDouall's uncle, his father's brother, was the 6th Earl of Dumfries and he was related to the Marquess of Bute, McDouall's patron in Luton. McDouall's family is listed in Debrett's Peerage.

William McDouall entered Balliol College, Oxford in 1791, aged 16, graduating with a BA in 1795. He was ordained deacon in London in

December 1798 by the Bishop of Coventry & Lichfield and priest on 19th May 1799 at Eccleshall, Staffs. Until 1860, Eccleshall was a residence for the Bishops of Lichfield.

His first posting, in December 1798, was as stipendiary curate of Darley, which may have been St Helen's Church in Darley Dale, but this is not clear. On 14th January 1804, he was instituted vicar of St Helen's Church, Ashby, by George Pretyman, Bishop of Lincoln, under the patronage of Earl Francis Rawdon Hastings, Earl of Moira. He held this post until 1827 and added to it the perpetual curacy of Smisby in 1812.

Little is known about his first ten years in Ashby, but on 7th February 1815 he married Euphemia Gaudin by licence. Euphemia was the daughter of John Gaudin, a wine and brandy merchant in the town, who was born Jean Gaudin in Switzerland in 1741. Gaudin was butler at nearby Calke Abbey in 1778 but disappeared from the account books there in 1782, though he returned to Calke to marry Euphemia KcKinsie in 1790, by which time he was in partnership with John Slater in the wine and brandy business. He later bought his partner out. When he died, in 1817, he left all his money and assets with his son in law, the Rev McDouall, to be managed on behalf of

Lillian McDouall	Card	of this Parish
a Bachelor		
and Euphemia Gaudin		of this Parish
and a Bachelor		
were married in this Church	by Licence	with Consent of
	this Twelfth	Day of
February	in the Year One thousand eight hundred and fifteen	
By me Lillian Southworth	Ministry	
This Marriage was solemnized between us	{ William McDouall	
	{ Euphemia Gaudin	
In the Presence of	{ John Gaudin	
	{ Mary Barnell	
No. 83.		

Record in St Helen's Parish Registers of the marriage of McDouall with Euphemia Gaudin²

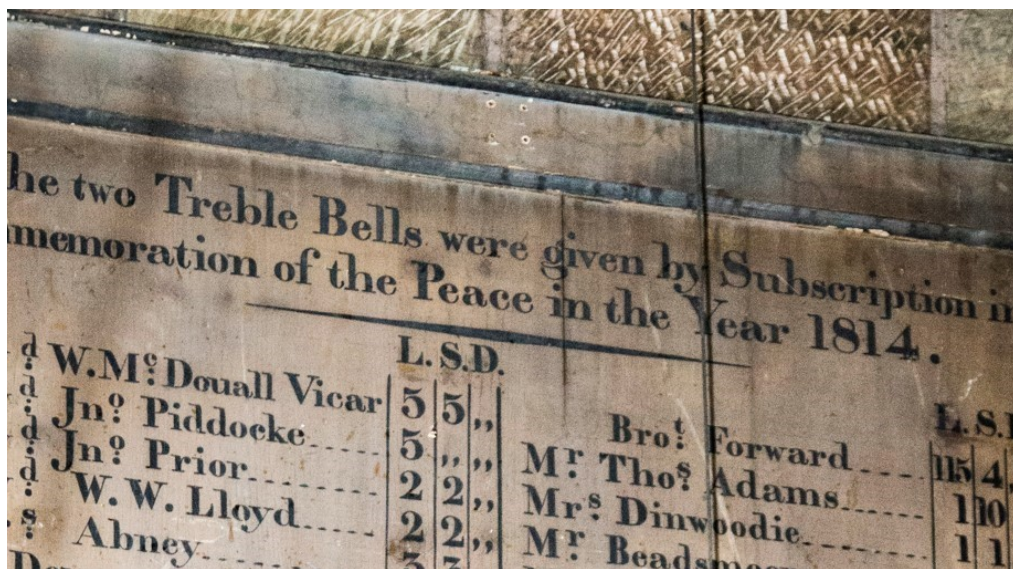
his two daughters. His eldest daughter, Euphemia after her mother, was baptised at Calke on 7th August 1791.¹

Nine children were born to William and Euphemia McDouall in rapid succession. Flora Euphemia was baptised on 26th May 1816, Mary Isabella

on 6th July 1817, John Crichton Stuart on 12th July 1818, Elizabeth Caroline on 12th June 1819, William Sutherland on 7th July 1820, Penelope Eleonora on 12th October 1821, Patrick George on 29th September 1822 and twins Hastings & Rawdon on 21st September 1823. The twins must have been named for their father's Patron, Francis Rawdon Hastings. From the point of her marriage, the longest time between the births of Euphemia's babies was 15 months. Mostly, they appeared at 12 month intervals and the arrival of the twins in September 1823 was evidently the final straw for Euphemia, who was buried at St Helen's on 9th January 1824. She was just 32 years old.

All of the McDouall children survived to adulthood apart from the eldest, Flora Euphemia, who was buried, aged 9, at St Helen's on 31st August 1825. If gravestones were installed for Flora and her mother, neither survives and there is no memorial to them in the church.

McDouall was vicar at St Helen's at an interesting time in the town. Many French prisoners of war were billeted with Ashby families and there were several marriages, baptisms and funerals of French prisoners at St Helen's, all but one conducted by McDouall. McDouall's name is on the board in the Ringing Chamber at St Helen's as a donor of five guineas towards the two



The two Treble Bells were given by Subscription in
memoration of the Peace in the Year 1814.

	L. S. D.			L. S. D.	
W. M ^o Douall Vicar	5	5	Bro ^t Forward	11	4
Jn ^o Piddoeke	5	"	Mr ^s Tho ^s Adams	1	10
Jn ^o Prior	2	2	Mr ^s Dinwoodie	1	1
W. W. Lloyd	2	2	Mr ^s Beadsmo		
Abney	2	2			

Detail from a board in St Helen's Church Tower, showing donations for the purchase of new bells.

new treble bells which were installed to give thanks when the Napoleonic Wars ended in 1814. His future father-in-law, John Gaudin, donated £5.

A Terrier for 1825 survives in the Lincoln Records Office. It records the

details of vicarage, church and church owned land in the parish of Ashby, giving a value of '*Glebe, tithes and profits of the vicarage*' at £300 per year.³

William McDouall appears to have carried out his basic duties as a parish priest in Ashby. His handwriting and his signature dominate the church registers from 30th January 1804 to his leaving at the end of 1827. There are also several entries in January and February 1828 signed by McDouall as '*Vicar of Luton Bedfordshire.*'

He was appointed vicar of St Mary's, Luton, on 20th December 1827, acquiring the post due to being a relative of the patron, the Marquess of Bute, who had a residence at Luton Hoo. St Mary's was at that time the largest parish in Bedfordshire, with a diameter of approximately thirty miles. Like St Helen's, it was also at that time in the enormous Diocese of Lincoln. In 1837, Luton became part of the Diocese of Ely whilst Ashby moved into the Diocese of Peterborough. McDouall became a Canon of Peterborough Cathedral in 1831.

McDouall left Ashby for his new home at Copt Hall, near his patron's home just to the south-east of Luton. Both are now separated from the town by the runway of Luton Airport. His curate, Thomas Sykes, lived in St Mary's vicarage and appears to have done all the work whilst McDouall lived the life of a gentleman, travelling around the district '*in a large yellow carriage featuring a coachman up front and two footmen in the back.*'⁴

McDouall's life in Luton is better documented than his life in Ashby, but he isn't viewed in a positive light. Shortly after he arrived, the parish church of St Mary's was re-pewed. The old high square pews were removed and oblong pews were installed, some with and some without doors. Although the 600 'sittings' created in the church were declared to be 'free' some were freer than others. The better pews were appropriated by the better off and poorer people sat on narrow benches in the centre of the nave and towards the west end. The vicar and squires kept their private pews.

Dr Hall, who preceded William McDouall as vicar of Luton, was officially in charge for 23 years, but he was absent and the curate did the work. McDouall's tenure appears to have been similar. By 1847, the church was

'in a most disgraceful condition ... If any one were to ask us which of the Bedfordshire churches exhibits most completely everything that is distressing to a true churchman, we should answer, 'the most beautiful one,' and continue, 'Go to Luton, and as you pass along the town you will see in the vast piles of buildings recently raised for the purposes of trade and commerce evidences of increasing wealth and prosperity, and you will find the inhabitants showing forth their gratitude to Him from whom these blessings come, by erecting for themselves spacious and substantial mansions, furnished with every contrivance for comfort that the extravagant luxury of the nineteenth century has called forth, and with cold indifference

*leaving the House of God to crumble into ruins ... surely there must be some great dereliction of duty in any pastor who suffers so many of his flock to desert the true fold.*⁵

Apparently, when gas lighting arrived in Luton McDouall was urged to install it in the church as many of St Mary's parishioners were beginning to attend evening services in churches which already used gas lighting. McDouall didn't trust the technology and vetoed the idea.⁶

McDouall died in office on 22nd December 1849 after 22 years as vicar of St Mary's and was buried *'in the family vault in the chancel of Luton church.'*⁷ Among the mourners were his two sons, Rev William Sutherland McDouall and Rev Patrick McDouall, his son in law and his curate, the Rev Thomas Sykes, who was to succeed him and become the first active vicar of St Mary's for half a century.

Thomas Sykes preached a sermon of tribute to McDouall on the following Sunday, describing him thus:



Detail from McDouall's grave slab in St Mary's Church, Luton. He was buried alongside his sister, Isabella McDouall and his aunt, Elizabeth McCulloch, who had both been living with him at Luton Hoo. The grave slab was moved from the Chancel to the South Transept during late 19th Century Church Renovations.

‘... as a friend he was faithful, honest and sincere; honourable in every transaction of life; courteous to all; and of the strictest probity and integrity. Collectively, we have lost a friend, in whom we could place the utmost confidence – whose word was his bond, and who never swerved from the straight line of truth and equity; and I feel individually that, under any circumstances, I should belie my own proper feelings if I were not to drop one word on this occasion as a tribute of deep respect, to the memory of one with whom I was happily and intimately associated in the bonds of friendship for upwards of twenty years. Such I know was the benevolence of his disposition that he could not do an unkind act to any one – no one could ever approach him without being impressed with this – an enemy he had not I am sure in his own breast. His charity was unostentatious, and his benevolence extended to all classes; he wished the welfare of all; he was firmly and sincerely attached to our scriptural church and liturgy, and in his dying hours evinced to me this attachment by his enjoyment of her services. As a magistrate and a subject he was upright, loyal, steady and consistent. He was, in a word, a Christian, in whom there was no ‘guile.’ As a parent he was considerate, tender and most affectionate.’⁸

It all sounds a bit tongue in cheek.

Julie Starkey
January 2022

I am indebted to Peter Adams, Director of St Marys Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in Luton, for sending me information, maps and the photograph of McDouall’s grave. Thank you.

¹Thanks to Karen Kreft, Calke Abbey researcher, for this information.

²St Helen’s Parish Records. Accessed via Find My Past.

³Terrier (1825). Lincoln Records Office.

⁴The Stories and Secrets of Luton’s Medieval Jewel by Katheryne Rogers (2000). P102.

⁵Northampton Mercury, 27 February 1847. Written by W.A. Feb 22nd 1847

⁶The Stories and Secrets of Luton’s Medieval Jewel by Katheryne Rogers (2000). P102.

⁷Hertford Mercury and Reformer, 29 December 1849.

⁸Hertford Mercury and Reformer, 29 December 1849.

Our Worship on Sundays in May

Week	8.30am	10.30am	pm
1 1 st May	Staunton Holy Communion	St Helen's All Age	6.00pm St Helen's * Evensong with Civic Service Isley Walton Holy Communion
2 8 th May		St Helen's * Holy Communion	12.30pm St Helen's Baptisms
3 15 th May	Staunton Morning Prayer	St Helen's * Morning Prayer Breedon Holy Communion	
4 22 nd May		St Helen's * Holy Communion	3.30pm Coleorton Messy Church
5 29 th May		Team Service— venue to be confirmed	



* - denotes services at St Helen's which are streamed live to Facebook, on the Flagstaff Family of Churches Facebook page, and later on the website - www.sthelensashby.net

Other Worship: 26th May 7.30pm

Ascension Day Holy Communion at St Mary's Coleorton

Other Regular Services:

- **Wednesdays - Holy Communion - 10.30am**
 - First Wednesday of the month - Holy Communion - in church
 - Second Wednesday of the month - Holy Communion - at Prior Park Community Centre
 - Third Wednesday of the month - Service of the Word - in church
- **Saturdays - Parish Prayers - 9.30am in church (Hastings chapel)**

Regular activities:

Monday mornings, term time

First Tuesday of the month

Third Tuesday of the month

Third Tuesday of the month

Fourth Tuesday of the month
(October to March only)

First Wednesday of the month

Thursdays

– Little Fishes

– MU meeting 7pm - 9.30pm

– MU branch meeting 10am - 12.30pm

– PCC meeting 7 - 9.30pm

– Heritage lectures 7pm - 9.30pm

– 'We're In Stitches' Knit & natter 2 - 4pm

– Choir practice 6.30-8.30

Palm Sunday Procession



May Gardening Tips

Now we are coming into May, we all hope that we have seen the last of the night frosts. The end of April has been particularly warm and dry this year but please do not be fooled by planting out young courgette plants and annuals just yet. Wait until the end of May. In the meantime, harden off all young plants and vegetables and, when big enough, plant out.

Don't forget – resist cutting down Spring bulbs until they have died down completely (you can dead head them). Also add a little liquid fertiliser all around the clumps in preparation for a great display next year.

For greenhouse owners, make sure you open vents, windows and doors; especially on warm days. Also dampen down the inside so as to increase humidity and deter red spider mites. Optimise your watering of plants by doing it earlier or later in the day to ensure maximum efficiency.

This month should see the completion of potato planting. Those that are showing green shoots above the soil must be earthed up regularly to prevent the crop forming on top of the soil surface.

Start planting directly into the ground succession crops such as; chard, lettuce, spinach, rocket, parsnip, turnip, carrots and peas etc. Prepare the ground for runner beans early in the month by digging the soil well and incorporating a little garden compost. Also put your supporting canes and nets in place.

Blossom Caring

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At the beginning of the month plant out your strawberry plants preferably in large pots and place nets over them to protect the fruit from the birds. Put straw, small stones or black plastic around the base as well.

Herbs can make a good addition to the vegetable plot but not all are ready yet. You can now plant outside mint, rosemary, parsley and thyme, but tender ones like dill, coriander, basil and tarragon need to be planted in protected pots (preferably inside) to plant out later.

Spraying roses is a necessary evil if they are to be kept free of pests and

diseases. Emerging hostas also need to be kept pest free; the culprits primarily include slugs and snails. We grow ours mainly in pots to deter them.

Continue mowing the lawn regularly and feed with fertilizer. Check for moss and large leaved weeds and then treat accordingly. If you would rather not use chemicals then you're going to have to get your hands dirty.

A job for May, whatever the weather, is to stake perennials. Don't leave this job too late as it's easy to damage the plants.

If you planted Dahlias earlier in the year the growth takes about 6 weeks to reach the soil surface so they may still be damaged if there is a late frost.

May is the time to prune early spring flowering shrubs, such as Forsythia, Broom, Escallonia and Weigela.

An important piece of advice – take time out of your hard work to relax and enjoy the fruits of your labour when the warmer weather arrives. Place a small table and comfortable chairs in a position in the garden which provides a satisfying view.

Drinks are Allowed!



Alan Cross

Locked up

Most of you will have come across the curious little lockups which still survive in Packington, Smisby, Ticknall, Worthington and Breedon. They are not unique. Village lockups survive elsewhere and at one time most towns and villages would have had one.

Not very much is known about them, but I am grateful to Mike Mee for giving us the benefit of his extensive researches on the subject during a recent online lecture. Although some lockups in other parts of the country may be earlier, it seems that most came into existence near the end of the 18th century. In Derbyshire, an order was issued by the quarter sessions on 12th January 1790 that every village should provide a designated secure place where people who needed to be locked up could be placed.

Before the lockups themselves appeared, drunks and people awaiting removal to the county jail could be locked up in barns or inns or even in the village constable's own house! Mike told us that by the end of the 18th century, the charge for locking

someone up in a barn was about one or two shillings per night per prisoner. This would be paid by the parish or the court, depending on what stage the judicial procedure was at. Mike thought that the expense of this, falling on the parish, might have been part of the reason for providing purpose-built lockups. Another reason could have been that people locked up in inns sometimes got so drunk, as did the people supposedly looking after them, that it took several days for them all to sober up!

Village lockups were only ever temporary places of confinement, perhaps one or two nights, until the prisoner could be brought before a magistrate. When no prisoners were inside, the building was sometimes used by the village watchman. This was the case at Ticknall where the lockup contains a fireplace and ceiling vent. The Ticknall lockup was built in 1809 at a cost of £25 19s 11d. Before that, a room was set aside in the village workhouse.

The situation in Ashby in the 18th century was similar. Although there was



Father Christmas escaping from the Smisby Lockup in December 2016

no lockup, Ashby Place, a building once attached to the castle, part of which was used as the first workhouse, was also used as a jail.

Ashby Place was demolished shortly after 1826, when the new workhouse was built on Nottingham Road. It may have been about then when a jailhouse, with two cells, was built in the centre of The Green in Ashby. The Green had previously been an open space. An early map shows that at the back of the jail was the pinfold where stray animals were kept before being claimed by their owners. It was common practice for the pinfold to be next to the lockup. This was the case in Smisby, Worthington and Breedon, and the pinfold in the latter still survives.

In 1851, the jailer in Ashby was Thomas Price, who lived in at the jail on The Green with his wife and four children. He was still there in 1861 and 1871 but was no longer described as the jailer. In 1862, the police station in South Street, with its accompanying cells, was built at a cost of £2,000. Those cells were still in use well into the 20th century and were still there when the building ceased to be a police station and was converted to offices.

The workhouse on Nottingham Road also had cells but the workhouse was not a prison. People went there of their own free will, although most would not have chosen to go if there had been an alternative. Adults could also leave whenever they wished as long as they gave a few hours' notice.

Vagrants, however, were housed separately from regular inmates, and in the 1870s, the Poor law authorities introduced a new way of dealing with them. Vagrants applying for overnight accommodation at the workhouse were given a bed for the night and a hot meal, but in exchange would have to work at breaking up stone for road building use. The system brought in the 1870s was to place each man in a single cell with a pile of stone to be broken up. The cell would have a window, covered with a grill. The man would be required to push the pieces of stone that he had broken through the holes in the grill to ensure that they were sufficiently broken down for road mending use. Only when he had finished breaking up his pile of stone would he be released.

The lockups that have survived in the villages around Ashby are well looked after by the local people but, as far as I know, not put to any use these days. In other places this is not the case. The lockup at Quorn has previously been used to store the village fire engine, as a public toilet, and is currently in use as a take-away pizza outlet. There is one in Castle Cary, Somerset where you can even arrange to hold your wedding. One way of keeping down the number of guests I suppose!

Wendy Freer

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Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

The St Helen's branch of Mothers Union met on April 12th to hear the readings at each of the Stations of the Cross followed by Communion.

As the church had been placed back into the pre Covid layout with the choir stalls and pews back in their correct places, it enabled Julie Ann & Eileen Mary to plan our new service, of Stations of the Cross, which was appropriate as we haven't been able to hold one for two years. This year our stations were new and modern, bright pictures portraying the Easter story. Having placed the pictures at relevant places around the church, as we assembled at each one, we were able to quietly look at the picture, listen to the reading and feel what it was telling us. Various members read, and the twelfth & final reading:

"Then Joseph brought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb." took place beneath the large wooden cross. We were then led back to the Pilgrim Chapel where we all took part in a shortened Communion service.

We sang When I survey the Wondrous Cross which brought our meeting to a prayerful and quiet end. After this members went across to the Heritage Centre to enjoy Coffee & Hot Cross Buns.

Our next meeting is 17th May at 10.30 in the Heritage Centre. Our speaker is Margaret Rouse, & her subject is Modern Day Slavery. We look forward to seeing as many as possible attending.

Adrienne Sedgman





Book Review – Undivided by Vicky Beeching

I first came across Vicky Beeching in around 2009, when she was leading worship at Spring Harvest, a large Christian festival, and looking not entirely dissimilar to Suzy Quatro with her low-slung guitar and black leather jacket. She was an inspirational leader of worship, including using her own songs, which deeply and profoundly expressed her faith and commitment to God. I learned that she was a highly successful Christian musician and worship leader in the United States, where the Christian music scene is a huge and influential business.

Not much later she went very quiet. News started to trickle out through various channels that she had come out as gay. This was complicated enough in the UK, but even more so in the US, where the churches and organisations with which she was involved have a very traditional perspective on sexuality. "Undivided" is her autobiography. It is a moving and disquieting account of what it can be like to be a Christian who does not fit in.



Vicky Beeching was born in southern England in 1979 and brought up in a Christian family. Faith and a whole-hearted commitment to Jesus were part of her life from early childhood. This became complicated in her teens when she realised that, unlike her friends, she was attracted to women, rather than men. The churches in which she grew up had a traditional understanding of sexuality and she felt far too ashamed to disclose her orientation, other than once anonymously to a Catholic priest and once at a Christian rally, where an attempt was made to exorcise her – neither made any difference, nor did frequent and heart-felt personal prayer. Once she had become well-known on the Christian music scene in America, it became even more necessary to hide her orientation,

to bury it deep within her and pretend it wasn't there, otherwise her job, her income and her reputation would all be lost. She immersed herself in work to a level where finally her physical and mental health broke down.

Over the next few years, Vicky spent time exploring different theological perspectives on what the Bible says about sexuality and how to interpret it in the light of the wider message of scripture. She summarises much of this in the book, but essentially this is not a work of theology but a story of one woman's journey towards an acceptance of her sexuality and being a whole, undivided, child of God.

Her story is an important and disturbing contribution to the debates in the church on sexuality. Her feelings of shame about her sexual orientation, in response to traditional teaching, brought her close to suicide. The judgemental attitude in the churches to which she belonged also contributed to this, and since she has come out as gay, she has been persistently vilified in much traditional evangelical Christian media, and horribly abused on social media. Many churches stopped singing her worship songs, even if they had previously been regularly sung. Attempting to lead worship, at which she is so gifted, leads to flashbacks and such traumatic and distressing associations that she is no longer able to do this, even in more inclusive churches.

Vicky understands that there will always be differing interpretations on how to reconcile specific verses in the Bible with the overall scriptural message of God welcoming all who come to him. But, having read her account of her own painful journey, it seems to me that those who hold to a traditional understanding of how to live as a gay Christian, obliged to be celibate in a culture that is highly sexualised and that assumes that singleness is abnormal, need to be very aware of how unsafe, excluded and second-class gay Christians can feel. And how a God-given ministry can be destroyed.

Judith Lewis

DC WOODWARD, MRCVS

Veterinary Surgeon

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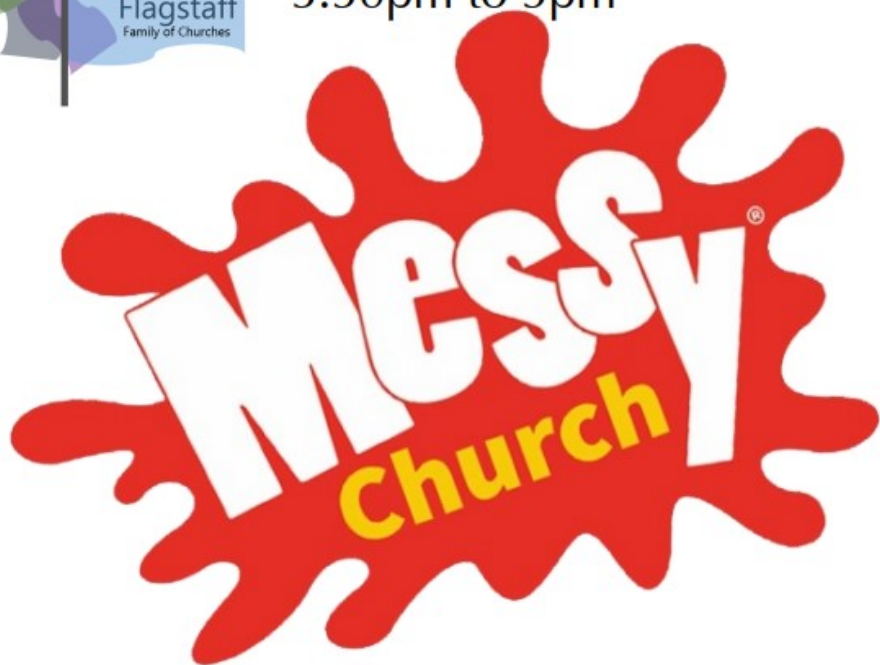
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St Mary's and St John's, Coleorton

St Helen's Ashby de la Zouch

Easter Celebrations at Messy Church

So much fun was had at Messy church with an Easter egg hunt and a range of other Easter related activities. At the beginning of our worship, the children were very surprised to crack open a big Easter egg, only to find its promised contents were not at all what they expected. We then heard the story of Mary Magdalen's surprise on that first Easter morning and learnt a very active celebratory song. Prayers were equally surprising - involving a pair of socks and a bag of assorted jelly beans!

Not quite the sort of church service you are used to? Well, it may not be 'conventional', but adults and children would be most welcome to come and find out more at our next session on Sunday 22nd May - venue to be confirmed.

Pat Stafford





Football

Our numbers were ideally low as we embarked on our new timetable. I presume this was thanks to weather that involved wind rain and sleet. The younger, 17:00 - 18:00, session was made up of our regular under 16's from the previously all age game plus a couple of their chums. We had a fun small game that I felt gave them a chance to consolidate their sense of ownership of this session. Please pray that, into the future, numbers grow and that our regulars retain their sense that this is their session.

The 18:00 - 19:00 game was well attended despite the weather, and the mood was grateful - they appreciate the later kick off because it gives them more time to get from work to the game. We read parts of Isaiah 55 and the perils of believing that satisfaction, contentment, fulfilment... will come once we have more money, better relationships, career success... We confessed that our behaviour shows we believe this, hence our striving and covetousness. Then we considered the alternative - the bread of life - and I prayed that we would accept this free gift and become ever hungrier for him.

Please join me in praying the above prayer for these young men (and shivering girl supporters). Please thank God for his richly evident love for these young people.

The Easter vacation saw the return from university of previously weekly regulars. It was interesting to see how some of them had changed. Some changes were very apparent. Some had grown fitter. Some had grown less fit. Their condition revealed their term time weekly habits. I think it was a revelation for them too. Gradual change can be hard to notice. A sudden reminder of a past us can be enlightening.

Our habits or ways change us. What habits or whose ways we adopt

The logo for Blue Little Birdie features the text 'BLUE' in large, bold, sans-serif letters, with a stylized bird icon to its right. Below 'BLUE' is the text 'LITTLE BIRDIE' in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom, in a smaller font, is 'DESIGN - COPY - PRINT'.	<p>76b Market Street</p> <p>01530 411510</p>	<p>BUILDING REPAIRS</p> <p>No job too small</p> <p>Telephone Keith: 01530 412404 07747194021</p>
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determines where we end up. When Jesus invites us to follow him he isn't just inviting us on a wild trek. Please pray that these girls and lads will hear Jesus' claim to be the Way not as a call to a dusty ordeal but a call to an identity transforming relationship.

We have been thinking about our spoken words (and noises). Luke 6:45 '... the mouth speaks what the heart is full of...'. Football is a powerful emetic for expressing the contents of the heart. Sophistication, reserve and bonhomie evaporate in the grunting, sweaty arena of physical competition. Football has a knack of bringing out the worst in people. For this reason it is often condemned or avoided. It's safer to avoid activity and people who rob us of our ability to present our nice face. Safer but also impoverishing and enervating. This laying bare is tremendous surgery. Exposed we can humble ourselves to give (and receive) grace and mercy. We can know the riches of God's kingdom. After one particularly clumsy aerial challenge one player was floored for some time. He was angry and in pain. When he finally got up he turned to the player who had tackled him and offered him his hand. They shook hands and all of us were blessed.

We also read James 3: 4&5

'... take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts...' We considered what power our tongue gives us to direct the passions that arise from within our hearts and I challenged us to use our words carefully. The game was considerably less aggressive that week - verbally and physically.

Thank God for his grace and mercy. Thank you for your prayers. Please continue to pray that these young men would come to trust the one who blesses (and challenges) us so richly.

Hims ancient and modern. On the last Wednesday evening of April the gate allowing access to the school grounds was locked. I went to the leisure centre office to ask for help. Passing through the foyer I met a group of year 8 lads who recognised me from primary school assemblies. One of them asked me for a selfie with him. I declined explaining he'd have to talk to my agent to arrange this sort of thing. He understood. I asked if they'd like to join us for a game of football. They accepted and our game grew. We had a sunny time of testimony to God's goodness in providing us with the Bible and the gift of prayer, we prayed and then we had a happy game until a mum called with the news that it was dinner time and 2 players had to go and the rest realised they were hungry. This sort of thing never happens in the Premier League.

Our second (16+) game of the evening was a vigorous 7 (eventually) a-side spectacle. We were joined by a player we'd never hosted before and one

who hadn't played with us for 10(?) years.

Thank you for your prayers. It is a privilege to be a part of this outstretching arm of Christ's Church, a humbling blessing to witness God's concern for these young men (and one woman this week) and glimpse his Spirit's glorious power moistening their lives.

Vernon

Sk8ers

Thank you so much for all your prayers for our Sk8ers group. We have had fun learning a new game, 'exploding kittens'. It started a very interesting conversation about what happens when it all gets too much, and we explode. We chatted on tables about behaviour, fun and all things youth - and it was a pure joy to see our young people engaging with the leaders, volunteers and each other.

At our last session before Easter, we had 19 young people! A record number, and many of whom were brought by their friends as they love being at Sk8ers that much!



Thank you for the kind offers of support and volunteering we have had; we aren't full, so do keep offering if you feel God is leading you to come and love this lovely bunch in person every now and then. It has been really wonderful to respond to people and say, 'yes' come along and see what we are all about!

Please pray for our volunteers, new and old, that they may be challenged to speak out to our lovely Sk8ers and share what God has done and is doing in our lives.

We're feeling challenged as to how best to Demonstrate and Declare who Jesus is to our young people. Are we good examples to them; can they see that we are set apart? I'm not sure how we each individually answer this, but what I do know is that God is love, and if we partner with him and hand our lives over to Him again, He will use us for his good purposes.

Pray that we might hand ourselves to God each week and be amazed at what we see Him doing through us. Pray that the young people come along open to hear what we have to say, willing to share with us what they need, and ask us about our faith.

Our Amazon wishlist is still live, please take a look and see if you can help us in any way by purchasing one of the items on our list.

Thank you for your support and prayers.

**The Sk8ers team,
Katie, Vernon, Eileen, Mike & Debbie**

Rock Solid

At the beginning of April we cancelled Rock Solid. We couldn't find another suitable responsible adult to fulfil our safeguarding commitments. That didn't mean Rock Solid didn't get to meet up at all. I met with the Rock Solid (Year 9 up) apprentices / disciples in a tea / coffee / very sticky things shop. This is always a humbling and exciting time. We meet on Wednesdays and talk over the previous week's Friday meeting, plan the coming week's meeting and think together about safeguarding. We 'reflect theologically': We ask questions like, 'How did the disciples feel when Jesus asked them that? How do you feel when you read Jesus asking that? How can we support each other as we struggle with this?' It's humbling as I realise how relatively insignificant the few minutes we share is - relative to the rest of their week. It's exciting to see the grace of God nudging, enlightening and awakening their hearts as responders to his invitation to 'follow me'. Serving at Rock Solid gives them the opportunity to do this in a real, sacrificial way. The mysterious Kingdom advances.

During the last meeting of term, before taking a break for the Easter holidays, we thought about Easter. The wonder of Jesus' death and resurrection, our impossible becoming possible through Christ's faithfulness. We shared testimony about his power in our 'impossible' if only we would trust and obey him. We also shared poor jokes, shot people with chocolate, rerolled toilet tissue, played egg hockey with our noses and enjoyed Gregg's bounty.

Thank God for Gregg's - for the end of trading leftovers they so generously give us; for His invitation to be disciples; and for those adults who have volunteered to be on a rota of responsible adults for Friday evenings. next term. Please pray that God would continue to recruit loving, Spirit irrigated adults to serve these young men on Friday evenings.

When people talk about respect they are usually concerned about people respecting them or about people who are worthy of their admiration. When we are not respected it's easy to adopt the 'Those that matter don't mind and those that mind don't matter' approach. However this tends to lead to echo chambers, factions, parochialism, nationalism, racism... To respect people who don't respect us requires grace and even if we know this is a good ideal we struggle to find it in our hearts.

Rock Solid is all about building our lives on the foundation of Christ's teaching. He had remarkable compassion for people who had little or no respect for him. Please pray we would become like this. His Spirit allows us to know compassion welling up from within us and to know the Father whose compassion was such that he sent his only son to die for us while we hated or disregarded him. Please pray that all of us at Rock Solid would invite Him to change us from within and to build his Church against which the gates of Hell will stand no chance.

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Quotes for the Month

'Delighted to announce that the Archbishops have appointed me to a new role in the Church of England as Pioneer Minister to the Animal Community. I'll be developing ways for the church to become more animal inclusive and grow our mission and ministry to the animal kingdom.'
The Church Mouse, Twitter, April 1st

"Did you see the Bishop of Woolwich on tv the other day? "God is Dead"
The Mary Whitehouse Story, BBC 2, April 5th

'Savile believed in hell and spoke often – without naming his debts – of his hope that his charity work would balance the books. Never. Let us hope hell exists.'
TV review of Jimmy Savile: A British Horror Story, The Guardian, April 6th

'Why is it always "god made male and female so no trans people" and not "god separated the land and seas so no swamp"?'
Revd Vic Van Den Bergh, Facebook, April 6th

'I have measured out my life in Hallelujahs.'
Archdruid Eileen, The Beaker Folk of Husborne Crawley, April 8th

'Clergy and church workers – here is your annual reminder: Jesus will rise from the dead even if you forgot to print out the right hymns, even if the lilies arrive already wilted, even if the whole choir gets food poisoning. Nothing will keep the stone from rolling away. You are loved.'
Revd Nadia Bolz-Weber, Sad Jesus Facebook page, April 8th

'Whilst all of creation praises God with 'silent voices,' humans have been given the ability to give expression to creation's voice. It's our job to lead the singing of creation's praise, and it's our job to express its pain too.'
Andrew Grayston, Greenbelt preview, www.greenbelt.org.uk, April 14th

'Fellow Christians - Do NOT fear to flip the tables as needed to right societal injustices.'
Liz Hance, Liberal Christians Facebook page, April 14th

'Her name is Mary of Magdala, but it could easily be Natasha of Kharkiv or Lyudmilla of Bucha or Magda of Mariupol.'
Right Revd Nick Baines, sermon broadcast from Leeds Minster on BBC1 tv, April 17th

'Sub-contracting out our responsibilities, even to a country that seeks to do well like Rwanda, is the opposite of the nature of God who himself took responsibility for our failures on the cross.'
Most Revd Justin Welby, Easter Sunday sermon, April 17th

'I have never been especially threatened by atheism. For one thing, atheism is good for business: it helps maintain the tension. Indifference is the real enemy.'
Revd Giles Fraser, Unherd blog, April 18th

'Here we are celebrating Easter this weekend. The life and times of Jesus Christ who himself was a refugee ... if he arrived in the UK today, Jesus would be sent to Rwanda. Would you send Jesus to Rwanda?'
Adil Rey, question to government minister Greg Hands on GMB, April 18th

'What the archbishop can't seem to get his head around is this: the British believe in queuing.'
Allison Pearson, The Telegraph, April 20th

'You'd think those in the Glass House of Bishops might reflect more on the quality of mercy before throwing stones in Boris Johnson's general direction, wouldn't you?'
Archbishop Cranmer blog, April 20th

'The assertion that the Church should "keep out of politics" is a tired, old canard. It comes out of the Enlightenment belief in a split universe, where "God" is detached from this world, leaving us, rather like an elderly aunt, to look after ourselves and visit him on Sundays.'
CEO of London Institute of Contemporary Christianity Paul Woolley, Daily Express, April 23rd

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