



# St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Loving God, Loving Others, Loving the World



# Parish Magazine

December 2024

# PARISH DIRECTORY

**General inquiries: in the first instance, please contact the parish office.**

Parish office: [sthelensashby@gmail.com](mailto:sthelensashby@gmail.com) // 01530 411607

Community Heritage Building, 4 Church Yard, South St, LE65 1AA

Opening times: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 10am - 1pm

**Website: [www.sthelensashby.net](http://www.sthelensashby.net)**

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Team Rector	Rev. Sue Field	<a href="mailto:flagstaffrector@gmail.com">flagstaffrector@gmail.com</a>
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St Helen's Church is part of the **Ashby Churches**

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Ashby Congregational	01530 563301
Ashby Methodist Church	01530 412298
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Donations can be left in the boxes at the back of St Helen's Church, in the porch of Holy Trinity or the Congregational Church, or at any of Ashby's Co-ops. Thank you to everyone for the continued support.



## FROM THE MINISTRY TEAM

Dear friends,

I wanted to write this month about events that have rocked the Church of England to the core in recent weeks.

The Makin report analysing the events and actions around the serial abuser, John Smyth, has sadly endorsed the view that victims and survivors of abuse have not been listened to carefully or seriously enough and that changes need to be made and made urgently. As a result of this and his own actions, the Archbishop of Canterbury has resigned and there

clearly needs to be many further significant changes to do all we can to ensure that such abuse cannot happen again and to ensure that survivors of this and other abuse are given all the support and care they need.

This reinforces the requirement for all of us in any leadership role to do the necessary safeguarding training. Anyone can do this by registering for a portal on the Church of England website but it needs to be done by those on PCCs and by others leading ministry in our churches. This is not simply a 'tick box' exercise but is part of our care for others. We never know when someone is vulnerable and when there might be a disclosure, perhaps from a visitor to our churches, and we need to respond in an appropriate way.

All of this causes me to reflect on our use of power and authority in the church and in other situations. In the case of John Smyth and of Peter Ball before him, people seemed to assume that, because of their status in the organization, they were above question, but both of them used the power that came with their status to perpetrate the most awful abuse which has deeply affected the lives of so many in such a tragic way. It seems that neither of them was accountable to anyone else in a way that might have uncovered the abuse sooner.



Our Bishops in this Diocese put out a statement following the resignation of the Archbishop. Bishop Martyn recorded a video and subsequently gave a very good Presidential address at Diocesan Synod recently. All of these are available on the Diocesan website and in these he emphasizes the way in which he is accountable to the Safeguarding Team in the Diocese. This is vital if we are to become a safer Church – everyone in a leadership role should be accountable.

Liz Smith has been speaking to all of our congregations about Safeguarding – she will soon be at Coleorton and Isley Walton. In that talk she listed some commitments she asked us to make – these appear elsewhere in this magazine.

We also need to remember that abuse is not just physical or sexual but can be emotional or spiritual abuse – instances where power is used to control or coerce others.

As we move towards Christmas, we are reminded that God was born as a human baby to very young parents and in lowly conditions. He did not come as a powerful King or warrior. This turned the world's ideas upside down in its understanding of what is at the heart of God. Blessed are the poor, the meek etc, said Jesus and we know that he frequently reached out to those on the margins of society.

The message of Christmas is that God came in his vulnerability to be alongside us and love us. May we be those who walk alongside others, and particularly those who are hurting, offering welcome, care and love in our churches and beyond and may we do all we can to ensure the Church is a safe place for everyone.

With my prayers,  
**Sue Field**

# CHRISTMAS CRACKER

New for this year:

Please join us on Wednesday 11th December for an informal evening of Christmas readings and carols. You will be welcomed by mulled wine and mince pies before enjoying some festive fun!

We meet in church at 8pm and will finish at 9pm. Tickets are £3 and are available from Shan Dyer and our rector, Sue.

We hope you can make it!

**Alison Andrews**



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# MESSY CHURCH

‘Stir up Sunday’ is the last Sunday before Advent and we celebrated it in style this month at Messy Church– by making a Christmas cake that will be shared at our Christmas Eve services at St Helen’s and St Mary’s.

The name originates from the traditional book of common prayer, in which the prayer for the day begins: ‘Stir up, we beseech thee oh Lord, the wills of thy faithful people’. Since Victorian times it has been the day when we are supposed to make our Christmas puddings– and everyone is supposed to have a stir and make a wish.

We made Advent Calendars and little gift boxes, helping us to look forward to Christmas– and our story reminded us that Mary must have had a bit of a shock when she was told to get ready for a very special birth.

Why not join us on Christmas Eve and enjoy a slice of that very special cake?!

**Pat Stafford**

## THE NEXT BISHOP OF READING

Officially announced on the 27th November, some exciting news about our former rector:

‘The King has approved the nomination of The Reverend Canon Mary Gregory for nomination to the Suffragan See of Reading.

The King has approved the nomination of The Reverend Canon Mary Gregory, Canon Residentiary for Arts and Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral, for nomination to the Suffragan See of Reading, in the Diocese of Oxford, in succession to Bishop Olivia Graham, following her retirement.

[...] In 2015, Mary was appointed Team Rector of the Flagstaff Family of Churches, in the Diocese of Leicester, also serving as Diocesan Rural Mission Enabler from 2020. Mary has served in her current role as Canon Residentiary for Arts and Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral since 2022.’

**[Taken from Gov.uk]**



St Helen's Church & Community Heritage Centre

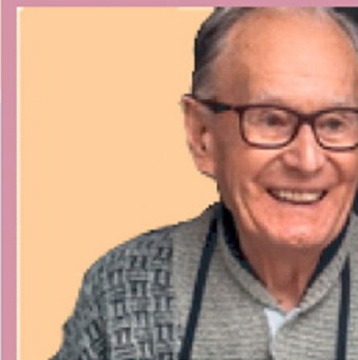
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## A LIGHT IN THE WORLD

The second in a new column highlighting the various initiatives we are connected with as a church and how being involved in these helps us to live out our faith. This month we hear from Pat about how we can all get involved with Loughborough Town of Sanctuary's initiative this Christmas...



Having grumbled recently that one of the shops in Ashby was almost entirely taken up with Christmas merchandise in early November, I've realised that planning ahead is not entirely a bad thing and that I really should have got my act together sooner! I'm referring to our Christmas appeal - for asylum seeker children currently housed in Loughborough -

which we are running again this year. Last year, these gifts were so very much appreciated by the recipients and indeed, by their parents.

The process of applying for asylum in the UK is long and slow, meaning that even those who will eventually be given Leave to Remain (because of the dangerous circumstances from which they have had to flee) have to wait around two years for that permission to be given.

In the meantime, those who don't have friends or family to support them are fed and given basic accommodation by the Home Office, but having arrived with nothing but the clothes they are wearing, their allowance of £8.86 per week per person, which doesn't cover many pairs of socks, or even basic necessities - certainly doesn't stretch to toys or gifts for their children!



*Last year, delivering gifts from the Flagstaff family of churches*



Meanwhile, those children who are attending school will be taking part in all the usual pre-Christmas events and will be given to expect - by all the usual Christmas hype - that gifts are something they might look forward to at this time of year! And whatever your views on immigration, these children did not ask to be here!

So here's how you can help!

Please would you donate a small gift (no more than £10 in value), wrap it and add a discrete label saying for what age of child it would be suitable and adding, if you think necessary, whether you think it would be suitable for a girl or boy. Every donation will be appreciated and we have potential recipients from babies to teens!

We will provide a box for donations at the back of St Helen's Church and display a list of the ages of the children, but please only use this list as a rough guide as Liz and I will collate all the parcels and fill in any gaps. Many thanks in anticipation of your usual incredible generosity!

**Pat Stafford**



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## ASHBY CHRISTMAS IN THE 1950S

Some of us are old enough to remember Christmas in the 1950s so for us this might be a trip down memory lane.

When I started to research this, the first thing I noticed was how different the newspapers were from the 19<sup>th</sup> and even the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. I have written about Ashby's Christmases in the past before and there were always detailed descriptions of the decorations in St Helen's Church and the services there. 1950s newspapers don't even mention the church, although I am sure there would have been plenty going on there as now.

Throughout December there were plenty of notices about fat stock markets and poultry sales. Rushton's famous shop took out quite a big advert in the Burton Observer and Chronicle on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1957. It invited customers to come and view the turkeys, geese, ducks, hares and pheasants before buying and assured them that there was no shortage.

The Ashby de la Zouch Licensed Victuallers' Association wished their customers a very happy Christmas and New Year in the same paper in 1959, reminding them that they could purchase their wines and spirits from any local licensed House (i.e. pub) at the same price as elsewhere. "Support your local landlord," they urged "where you will always find a welcome."

For entertainment you could go to the Ashby Picture House which in the week running up to Christmas 1959 advertised 3 pairs of films, each showing for two days: Randolph Scott in *Buchanan Rides Again*; also Dennis O'Keefe and June Lockheart starring in *Craft and Corruption*.

For the 21<sup>st</sup> December for two days you could have seen Al Hedison, June Laverick and David Farrar in *Son of Robin Hood*, (Cinemascope colour) along with John Agar, Joyce Meadows and Barton MacLane in *Frontier Gun*. For the last two days before Christmas Eve, it was Alan Lad and Patricia Medina in *The Black Knight* with Jim L Brown and Lee Asker in *The Challenge of Rin-Tin-Tin*.

If you fancied getting away for Christmas there were bargain holiday breaks to be had in 1959. A train departed from Ashby station at 1.22pm on Christmas Eve to Blackpool, returning on 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> December with return tickets at 29/6 (£1.50).

The Burton Observer and Chronicle actually issued an edition on Christmas Day in 1958. In it, leading members of the Ashby Urban District Council wished residents an enjoyable Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year. The Chairman also gave a review of the previous year, notable features of which were “the successful visit of the Band of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment to beat Retreat, the trial period of an indoor market at the Town Hall and especially the restoration of the Loudoun Memorial to its former glory.”

The newspaper item that I found most amusing was an advertisement in the Leicester Daily Mercury on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1952. How would you feel about finding this under the Christmas tree?



Wendy Freer

## OUR WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

	am	pm	Wednesday
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday</b> 1st December		<b>3.30pm</b> All age <b>6.30pm</b> Advent Carol Service	1st Wednesday-4th Holy Communion 10.30am In Church
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday</b> 8th December	<b>10.30am</b> Holy Communion		2nd Wednesday 11th Holy Communion 10.30am Prior Park Community centre
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday</b> 15th December	<b>10.30 am</b> Morning Worship	<b>3.30pm</b> Christingle service	3rd Wednesday-18th Morning prayer 10.30am In church
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday</b> 22nd December	<b>10.30 am</b> Holy Communion	<b>6.30pm</b> Service of Nine Lessons and Carols	<b>4th Wednesday– 25th Christmas Day Communion 10am St Helen’s</b>
<b>5th Sunday</b> 29th December	<b>10.30 am</b> <b>Team service at Worthington</b>		

### Regular activities:

- Monday mornings      - Little Fishes 9.30 - 11.30am during term time
- Mondays                - Pilgrim group
- 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday        - We’re in stitches – 2 till 4pm
- Thursdays            - Choir practice – 6.30 till 8.30pm
- Fridays                 - Heart- warming Space 2-4pm
- Saturdays              - Parish Prayers – 9.30am in the Hastings chapel
- 1st Saturday          - Pause for Paws– 10.15-12.15 at the tower door.



# **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY// DECEMBER**

## **Tuesday 24th December–**

ALL AGE CRIB SERVICE– 5PM

MIDNIGHT COMMUNION– 11.30PM

## **Wednesday 25th December-**

CHRISTMAS DAY ALL AGE COMMUNION– 10AM

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## **Friday 6th December-**

STAUNTON HAROLD CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT– 7PM

## **Saturday 7th December–**

CRACKERTERIA–10am-2.30pm- Ashby Baptist Church

## **Sunday 8th December-**

CHRISTMAS CONCERT BY ASHBY STRINGS—7PM

## **Wednesday 11th December-**

CHRISTMAS CRACKER– 8PM

## **Friday 13th December-**

CAROLS AT ISLEY WALTON– 6.30PM

## **Saturday 14th December-**

CONCORDIA CHOIR CHRISTMAS CONCERT WITH DERBY  
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## **Saturday 21st December-**

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*Thank you for all your prayers and support.*

During a recent Rock Solid meeting we celebrated about 30 years of young people (and older ones) building rock solid foundations on Jesus and his teaching. Thanks to those of you who joined us and thanks to those of you who, though absent physically, were doubtless joining us in giving thanks to God for his tender mercy through Rock Solid.

One way we expressed this gratitude was by writing thank yous on strips of paper which will be joined into paper chains and hung at Crackerteria next Saturday. If there are any words of thanks to God you'd like including in this chain do send them to me by return and we'll make sure they are added. So far...

- Thank you for providing a safe and joyful place for young people
- Engaging with young people
- I'm thankful for all the conversations about God that I've had with my daughter after Rock Solid
- Making friends with people they wouldn't normally meet
- Rock Solid people dream big dreams
- Join us together
- Teens fellowship with Christian friends
- Making a 'link' with young people
- Time on Fridays! He loves God and Greggs
- God Spot
- Fun games
- Take these chains to heart
- Playing whacky games
- <Apprentices> going on with God
- Looking forward to new tomorrows
- Young people are the future
- An opportunity for <apprentices> to blossom - in faith and fun...

**Ashby Youth For Christ's**

# **Christmas Crackerteria**

**07.12.2024**

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# SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY

Following on from Safeguarding Sunday, which we marked in November, please be advised of the new contact email for any safeguarding queries or concerns. Elizabeth Smith, Parish Safeguarding Officer, should be contacted at [safeguarding@sthelensashby.net](mailto:safeguarding@sthelensashby.net) in this capacity.

Liz would like us all, as a church, to be reminded of the commitments she asked us to think about in our recent safeguarding services. So that we can grow our safeguarding culture within ourselves and the church, we need to think about and commit to:

- treating everyone with respect and dignity and seeking to never knowingly hurt or harm others by what we say or do.
- actively supporting the work of safeguarding in our church.
- using our voices to speak up about the injustice of abuse.
- making space to listen to those who have been hurt and harmed in our community.
- committing to never knowingly hiding or keeping quiet about abuse that we know of or suspect.
- calling on the wider church to take steps towards change in this area.

## A prayer for safeguarding

*Lord, help us be people who demonstrate our faith through the way we love and care for one another.*

*Give us grace as we work to make our church a safe place for all.*

*Help us have the courage to follow Christ's example and to love as he first loved us.*

*Amen.*

**Elizabeth Smith (Parish Safeguarding Officer)**



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# O COME, EMMANUEL

‘O come, O come, Emmanuel,’ is from the well-known carol, and soon we’ll be singing it again. Emmanuel simply means ‘God with us,’ although it’s not that simple.

The parties, the presents, and the carol service with its heart-warming readings are all part of our life in December – Christmas time. With all this dazzle, it’s easy for ‘God with us’ to quickly appear then disappear without a trace. But let’s for a moment cling on to this idea. At the birth of Jesus, we are introduced to God the baby who soon becomes a man, as recorded in the gospels. Then his death. Why should all that happening so long ago make any difference to us today?

Go back to the start of 2024 and think what’s happened to you this year. An illness may have struck, either you or a family member or a friend. Can the God who is with us make an impact? In theory, yes, since God remains the same across the ages. Therefore the help and healing that Jesus brought when on earth should still be available today. On the other hand, is it a step too far to hope for God to heal anyone today? Have we missed anything in the gospel story?

Firstly, notice Emmanuel means God with us, so it’s not only Jesus who is with us. God is also our Father, the name Jesus used. If we call him our heavenly Father, then it implies he is not only with us, but also very close to us, like a good father is. Previous to Jesus, the Lord God was a distant person who mainly comes to help if the situation gets really bad. For instance, when the Israelites had to cross the Red Sea while being chased by an angry Egyptian army sent by Pharaoh.

Secondly, when Jesus died on the cross, did the God-with-us concept evaporate? No, because there now happens the most amazing thing of all. The Holy Spirit appears like a flash of blue lightning to power the disciples, so they can carry on where Jesus left off. The story is now almost complete. God-with-us is really the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three, equally, with us. Admittedly, these days we hardly hear about the Holy

Spirit, and it's Jesus who takes centre stage. What, you may be asking, is wrong with that? At least we can picture Jesus as a person. Is there a further message for us?

The phrase God-with-us includes God-with-me. It's me who's seen some troubles in 2024, and for God to have been with me might have helped. Where is God? I need to find him. I must keep looking.

We all have our own way of being a Christian, and our own way of praying. As I pray, I realise something, a clue. The God who's not there for me is the Holy Spirit. Perhaps I should call to him for help. It's worth a try. Maybe the Father will forgive me for ignoring the person Jesus promised - the Holy Spirit of truth and love. I imagine him as a dove, flying towards me.

**Richard Vann**

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# GARDENING TIPS FOR DECEMBER

December is a quiet month in the garden, but there are more things to do than you might think. With limited daylight hours as we approach the shortest day of the year, this month's Wintery weather can be lovely as well as cold in equal measure.

If you have not done so already, dig over empty borders, raised beds and prepare the soil for the next growing year. Group potted plants together in a sheltered spot in the garden to protect them from the harshest Winter weather. You may have to cover the more tender plants with fleece. Preferably, put them a heated, or unheated, greenhouse if you can.

Get pruning! Wisteria, climbing roses, fruit trees and Japanese Maples are some of the plants which benefit from a Winter prune. Leave the faded flower heads on any Hydrangeas until Spring as they provide frost protection to the swelling buds further down the stems. Keep checking your stored Dahlia tubers and keep an eye out for rot. Harvest Holly with berries for making Christmas garlands and wreaths. Stand the berry covered twigs in a bucket of water until you are ready to use them.

In the vegetable garden, lift any leeks, parsnips and carrots before the soil is frozen. They can easily be stored either inside or outside. Don't forget to cover Winter Brassicas with netting to protect them from pigeons and have fleece handy for hardy salad crops.

Replace all strawberries that are over three years old as these can harbour diseases and tend to lose vigour and productivity. Now is the perfect time to prune fruit trees to maintain an open, balanced structure. The exception is Plums, Cherries and other stoned fruits that should not be pruned until the Summer to prevent Silver Leaf Fungus. Use clean, sharp secateurs to avoid damaging your trees. Lift and divide established Rhubarb clumps but take the outer sections preferably as these are generally healthier.

If you haven't done so clean out the greenhouse thoroughly. Wash the glass, the floor and the staging with horticultural disinfectant to remove any over Wintering pests and diseases. Clear away any snow at the tops of greenhouses to protect the glass. Ensure the gutters are clear of dead leaves and insulate any water butts and taps.

Keep clearing away dead leaves on your lawn to allow light in and stop dead patches appearing. If possible, avoid walking on the lawn when blanketed by heavy frost or snow as this will damage the grass. Keep spiking lawns to improve drainage and aeration.

On a clear day clean out the garden tool shed in preparation for Spring. Clean all tools and give them a wipe of linseed oil on wooden and metal areas to prevent rotting or rusting. Wash and disinfect bird feeders and tables as well as clearing out the bird baths. If you have a pond, then cover it with fine netting to catch any debris / leaves and remove filters and pond pumps so that they don't suffer damage from freezing.

If you only do one thing in December, then hang out a bird feeder in the garden where you can easily see it but cats and squirrels cannot get to it.

Finally, from your armchair plan your vegetable garden crop rotation, order your flower and vegetable seeds and take an inventory of tools and equipment which you need for next year. Add them to your Christmas list!

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You All!**

**Alan and Alison Cross**



**JP SPRINGTHORPE & C<sup>o</sup>**

## Funeral Directors

**Castle Lodge  
South Street  
Ashby de la Zouch  
Leicestershire  
LE65 1BR**

As the only privately owned, family run, Funeral Directors in Ashby de la Zouch, we are able to offer an extremely personal, yet professional service, and at a reasonable cost, both in Leicestershire and Derbyshire

**Under the personal supervision of John Springthorpe**

*Quotations given*

**Telephone: 01530 417310 anytime**





St Helen's Church & Community Heritage Centre

On the first Saturday of every month:

# Pause



# for



# Paws



Drop in on  
1st Saturday of the month  
between 10:15 & 12:15  
at St Helen's church  
(west door of the church)  
Refreshments will be provided

4 Church Yard, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE65 1AA



[Facebook.com/sthelenasheritage](https://www.facebook.com/sthelenasheritage)



[instagram.com/sthelenasheritage](https://www.instagram.com/sthelenasheritage)



[www.sthelenasashby.net](http://www.sthelenasashby.net)



# Christmas Services

## **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December**

3.30pm Christingle service

## **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

10.30am Holy Communion

6.30pm Nine Lessons and Carols

## **Christmas Eve**

5pm Crib Service

11.30pm Midnight Communion

## **Christmas Day**

10am All age Communion service

## **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December**

10.30am Flagstaff Team service

at St Matthew's Worthington