

*Pastoral Letter and Church Notices*  
**ST. HELEN'S CHURCH, LOW FELL**

22.03.2026

*5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent*

**Readings**

**Ezekiel 37. 1-14**

**Romans 8. 6-11**

**John 11. 1-45**

**Collect**

Gracious Father,  
you gave up your Son  
out of love for the world:  
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,  
that we know eternal peace  
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

Dear Friends,

We are delighted this week to see the final touches being administered to our accessible entrance and ramp. I imagine some of you will have followed the progress of the building work- a journey of highs and lows. We are soon approaching Easter, this week is Passion Sunday, and we move towards Palm Sunday, then Holy Week itself.

Those who have taken on some sort of action for Lent, whether that be a giving up or a taking up, will be ever mindful of the journey they have undergone. There is no doubt that Lent has its ups and downs but we move steadily towards Easter Day and the promise of new beginnings. Resurrection, -hope, grief that turns into joy and new life where it seemed only death prevailed.

Journeys are important, life is not static, it never stays the same. In such a volatile world it is understandable that people seek stability and long for a settled life.

This is clear when we consider how many people are on the move seeking new beginnings and fleeing war zones, searching for stability. We may not be living in a war zone but we may be suffering loss and dealing with change and seeking stability and support in our lives.

Our life circumstances can change overnight with the loss of a job or home, even a devastating diagnosis. At such times where might we turn or who might we call on. Many of us are fortunate to have a family and good friends. In our Gospel reading this week we hear that Jesus' friend Lazarus has died. His sisters, Martha and Mary, are devastated; not only that they are angry with Jesus, their friend whom they dearly loved, for not being there to prevent this from happening.

I wonder how many of us have been or even are in similar circumstances. Our faith may be deeply challenged, we may even have lost all hope. I have a sense of this as the two sisters already mourn their brother's passing. Yet the raising of Lazarus is at the centre of John's gospel; it is the pivot on which all else turns. As Jesus says to Martha and Mary before he raised Lazarus: 'I am the resurrection and the life,' and as he will say to his disciples at the last supper: 'I am the way, the truth and the life.'

Lazarus was raised by the voice of Jesus- what a friend we have in Jesus, who calls each of us into life. When we hear Jesus' words and respond in faith, we enter into eternal life, here and now.

As we approach Passiontide we will hear how the authorities turned on Jesus, how almost everyone did, even his friends and we will hear how he responds with death defying love. You are welcome to join us as we journey and walk the Way of the Cross. Come and hear this life changing story. This week we will still be entering church by the side door but next Sunday is Palm Sunday. We will gather at the hall at 9.15am to journey through the main entrance together, up the newly refurbished ramp and steps through beautiful glass doors.

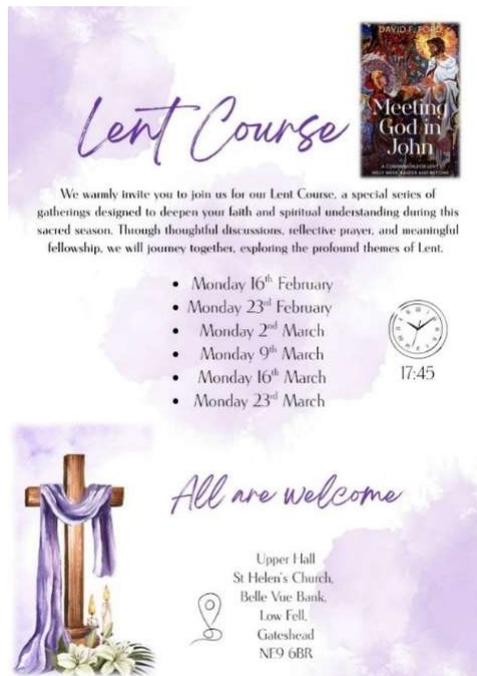
Journeys are important, coming and going is important, we do not journey alone.

What a friend we have in Jesus, who brings life from death and decay and offers a prophecy for the future.

With every blessing Yvonne

## **Post Communion Collect**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you have taught us  
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters  
we do also for you:  
give us the will to be the servant of others  
as you were the servant of all,  
and gave up your life and died for us,  
but are alive and reign, now and for ever.  
Amen



The poster features a purple and white background with the text 'Lent Course' in a large, elegant script. To the right is a small book cover titled 'Meeting God in John' by David. Below the title, an invitation reads: 'We warmly invite you to join us for our Lent Course, a special series of gatherings designed to deepen your faith and spiritual understanding during this sacred season. Through thoughtful discussions, reflective prayer, and meaningful fellowship, we will journey together, exploring the profound themes of Lent.' A list of dates follows: Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February, Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March, Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March, and Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. A clock icon indicates the time 17:45. At the bottom left is an image of a wooden cross with a purple cloth draped over it, and at the bottom right is the text 'All are welcome' in script, followed by the address: Upper Hall, St Helen's Church, Belle Vue Bank, Low Fell, Gateshead, NE9 6BR, accompanied by a location pin icon.

## **A prayer for peace**

We pray to you O God  
the lover of all  
for those whom we have named our enemies.  
Deliver us from the hardness of heart that keeps us locked in confrontation.  
Deliver us from the hatred that binds us in old ways.  
Grant unto all your people the blessing of your love.  
And grant unto us such transformation of our lives  
that we make peace with our enemies  
and that together we might make this world  
a safer, kinder place for all.  
In Christ's name we pray.  
Amen

**Safeguarding Contacts**

**To discuss any safeguarding concerns please contact either**

**the Parish Safeguarding Churchwarden 07505105184**

**or the Parish Priest, Rev Yvonne Greener on**

**0191 [4911317greener.yvonne@gmail.com](mailto:4911317greener.yvonne@gmail.com)**

**Concerns can also be raised with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, Mrs**

**Beth Miller**

**Email: [beth@bethmillerisw.co.uk](mailto:beth@bethmillerisw.co.uk) or [beth.miller@durham.anglican.org](mailto:beth.miller@durham.anglican.org)**

**Mobile: 07968 034075.**



**INEQE independent safeguarding audit**

**Please see attached information and link to the full report.**

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**Worship and notices week beginning Sunday 22nd March 2026**  
**Services and Prayer**

**9.30am Sunday Service at St. Helen's**

**[Access will be through the Vestry Door to the right of the church whilst the building work to make our church more accessible is taking place.](#)**

**Wednesday 25th March**

*Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

**Eucharist 12noon St Helen's - access to the church as above**

**PLEASE NOTE THE CHURCH WILL BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC ON WEDNESDAYS AND FRIDAYS DURING THE BUILDING WORK**

**10.30am Eucharist on Sunday at Bensham and Teams,**  
**St. Chad's**

*Revd Margaret Mackay presiding*

All are welcome to join in worshipping at St.Helen's and St.Chad's, we hope to see you soon. We will offer wafers and wine (optional) during the Eucharist and will, for the time being, stay in our places and share the Peace in non-physical ways.

There are services of morning and night prayer available on the website with attached readings and prayers. Alternatively, you may participate in worship with Songs of Praise BBC1 at 1.15pm or Morning Service with BBC Radio 4 at 8.10am, or on line each weekday and Sunday via Durham Cathedral worship online [www.durhamcathedral.co.uk](http://www.durhamcathedral.co.uk)

### **Prayer and Evening Prayer**

We usually meet each Wednesday, Friday and Sunday morning for morning prayer in church, you are welcome to join us from 8.45am, to begin at 9am, and at 3.45pm, to begin at 4pm. **However, due to building work please join Durham Cathedral on line as above.**

### **Stations of the Cross**

Do join us for Stations of the Cross each Friday in St. Helen's Church at 12 noon.

### **Lent Group**

**Next meeting: Monday 23 March** in St. Helen's Upper Hall at **5.45 pm**.

If you are hoping to come

**Please read Meeting God in John**

**Part 2 The hour happens**

**Thursday beginning page 71**

**All are welcome**

**Please see information and poster above.**

### **Holy Week and Easter Services at St Helen's 2- 5 April**

2 April **Maundy Thursday** 7pm Eucharist, Foot Washing and Vigil  
at St Helen's

3 April **Good Friday** Walk of Witness at St Chad's 10.30am followed by hot  
cross buns in St Chad's church hall  
**Good Friday** Liturgy 2pm St Helen's

4 April **Holy Saturday** Easter Eve Liturgy 7pm St Helen's

5 April **Easter Sunday** celebration Eucharist 9.30am St Helen's

***Please also see attached poster***

## Carlin Peas, A Northern Tradition — Heritage and History

Carlin peas (*cajanus cajan*) are a traditional northern food eaten during Lent on Passion Sunday, the Sunday before Palm Sunday.

Legend has it that a French ship managed to dock at Newcastle with a cargo of Maple Peas. Other tales, tell of a ship, laden with peas, which became stranded at South Shields a fortnight before Easter Day. The peas were washed ashore and salvaged by the locals.

The real story is lost in time but for centuries, Passion Sunday (the fifth Sunday of Lent), in some Northern regions of England, became known “Carlin Sunday” and the small brown peas became popular at this time.

*Thank you to Christine Lorraine for providing the carlin peas.*

### **Deanery Confirmation 9<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

We will be holding a Deanery Confirmation on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May.

If anyone wishes to be baptised or confirmed or want to know more about this, do speak with Reverend Yvonne.

### **Visit/Pilgrimage to Holy Island**

**PLEASE NOTE THIS DATE IS TO BE REARRANGED**  
**Please look out for a new date to be confirmed soon**

## **The Upper Room – The Last Supper**

### **Wednesday 25 March 6.30pm Beacon Lough Baptist Church**

Storyteller, photographer and violin player, Christian Stejskal walked in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and photographed the cultural landscape in Israel and Egypt in search of biblical visual symbols and metaphors, illustrating the ‘Upper Room’ – the Passover meal Jesus celebrated with His 12 disciples before going to the Cross. Experience the faithful memorisation of the Gospel of John (Chapters 13-17) while listening to original solo violin pieces and viewing black and white photographs from the Middle East on a screen.



### **Embrace the Middle East**

As we no longer receive a hard copy of the magazine from Embrace the Middle East, please follow this link to read the newsletter and view other resources.

[Resources from Embrace — Embrace the Middle East](#)

### **Cake Stall Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March**

£100 was raised for Embrace the Middle East from the bring and buy cake stall held on Mothering Sunday. Thank you to everyone who generously donated and bought the cakes.

### **Mothers Day – Fun with Flowers 14<sup>th</sup> March**

32 children attended, making posies and cards for Mother's Day. Thank you to everyone who helped on the day and attended this lovely event. Donations from refreshments will go towards Project 150.

## **St Helen's Church Celebration of 150 years – Save the Date!**

Saturday 18 April St Helen's Church Hall Users and Open Day 1.30-3.30pm. *(more details will follow soon)*

Monday 11 May Pie and Pea Supper with a Quiz and Bingo. At the Gateshead Arms 6.30pm for 7pm. *(more details will follow)*

Sunday 17 May Durham Cathedral Choir in St Helen's Church from 3.30pm

Saturday 6 June Grainger Singers in St Helen's Church from 7pm *(Further details will follow)*

Saturday 13 June St Helen's Church Summer Fair



### **Wedding Dress Exhibition**

As part of the 150 Anniversary Project we will be hosting a Wedding Dress exhibition in Church between 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September, to coincide with Open Heritage week. We are looking for anyone who was married at St Helen's and still have their wedding dress or photographs/ memorabilia from their special day and would be willing to lend us these items for display.

Please contact Lynn Oliver Mob: 07902648959  
email [kevlynoliver58@outlook.com](mailto:kevlynoliver58@outlook.com). Please ask your friends/relatives for any items. Thank you.

**Thursday Luncheon Club at St. Chad's Rawling Road Bensham**

**Thursday Luncheon Club Time 11am -1pm**

Join us each Thursday for a freshly cooked two course lunch Cost £6.00

Tea, coffee and biscuits on arrival

Each week there is a quiz, coffee and a game of bingo.

A chance to meet people and enjoy different company. All are welcome

**Contact Ron Bellinger 078470967**

**Wednesday Warm Welcome Drop In at St Helen's**

**Every Wednesday morning 10am-12noon** - there will be tea and coffee freely available and a warm welcome at St Helen's church hall for any who wish to come in for a cuppa and a chat, or who simply want a warm space to relax in for a few hours.

No need to be at home alone, you will be made welcome at St. Helen's. We are pleased to be part of Gateshead Council's Warm Spaces Charter.

**There will be a variety of opportunities on offer for you to join in with if you come along to this Drop In.**



**Come and join us for  
Coffee and Company at  
St Helen's Church Hall  
Sundays from 10.30am to  
12noon.  
Everyone is Welcome**



**Extension of Warm Welcome Space**

As part of our warm welcome work we have agreed to invite the community to join us for coffee after church every Sunday without the requirement for them to come to the service. There are already some people who do this occasionally linked to our congregation. Please make any visitors welcome when they do join us and ensure they are aware that the coffee is donation only as they can afford.

**Crafts**

You are welcome to join us for crafts and projects in the Warm Welcome Drop In from 10am. each Wednesday in the hall. Everyone is welcome.

## St Helen's Toddler Group

St Helen's now has a thriving toddler group which meets every Friday afternoon from 1pm-3pm. It is very much appreciated by families, carers and, of course, the children.

Joan and Elaine have helped this group to grow, offering a warm welcome and building relationships with all who come along.

We would really value more help for this group, if you might have a couple of hours to spare on a Friday afternoon and are interested to volunteer, please be in touch via email:

[office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com](mailto:office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com)

Do please also remember the ministry to family and young people in your prayers.



Dear Supporteres

This week 98 people representing 57 families/couples and 41 single persons attended the Food Co-op (149 adults and 89 children). Donations were gratefully received from several local churches, a local school, Gateshead Foodbank, the Salvation Army, a local food waste champion and individual supporters. The Salvation Army had an unexpected surplus of onions and tea bags that they willingly shared with other local organisations distributing food. The Fareshare allocation comprised of a varied selection of fresh food including raspberries, cauliflower and cucumbers. The donations and food from Fareshare enabled us to offer food to all who visited today.

Our members and volunteers reflect the diversity of our local community. Several of the volunteers have been observing Ramadan and are looking forward to celebrating Eid at the end of this week. Consequently, all members and volunteers received an extra treat of either honey, oil or peanut butter. This was very much appreciated.

**We will close for the Easter break after the session on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, when we will distribute the chocolate eggs, and re-open on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April for donations and Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April for the Food Co-op.**

Thank you for your continued commitment.

Kind regards Kath

## THE PARISH GIVING SCHEME A BETTER WAY TO GIVE

The Church of England, in the Diocese of Durham, has a vision to Bless our Communities in Jesus's name for the transformation of us all. This means having a Christian presence in all our communities.

In turn, your church blesses our community by sharing our faith and values, in worshipping together in our wonderful buildings. For the Church to grow and plan for the future we rely on your regular gifts.

If you would like to consider joining the Parish Giving scheme, which runs as a monthly direct debit, please see **Tony Gunning Churchwarden**

### Our Christian Giving

We express our Christian Discipleship in part through the financial support of our Church Family. The life, work, witness, and ministry of our Parish costs £762.00 every week, our weekly income does not currently reflect this.

If you value the witness, worship, and support that we offer please help us to enable this to continue by giving generously.

Forms to set up regular giving can be found near the church door or from [office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com](mailto:office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com)

One-off donations are always welcomed, no matter how big or small, and can be deposited by electronic transfer to St Helen's bank account:

**Sort code. 20-33-51    Account number 70684449 Account name. P.C.C. of St. Helen's** or into the in-wall church deposit box, by the door. Thank you.



### Intercessions Sunday 22nd March 2026

Sick	Sick	Sick/Other needs
Maria Barrell	Amelia Grace	Sarah Hamilton
Mark Adams	Felicity	Michael
Lucy	Margaret Clayton	Maryam
Roger Barrell	Ollie Sutcliffe	Sienna
Joyce Rowell	Tom Spence	Eddie Clark
Ann	Les Gibson	John T
Stan Conway	Carole	Helen
Niraj	Pauline	Gordon
John	Joe	Rowan
Ritchie Robson	Sharok	Rob
Valsa		

### Anniversary of Death

William Clifton	Joshua Wallwork	Fred Webb
John Batey	Mary Snaith	Fr Ray Knell
Alan Patrick	Peter Hepplewhite	Dora Stephenson
June Wilson	Ivy Lough	Matthew Allan

### Church

Please pray for our current Deanery vacancies  
 Bensham and teams St. Chad  
 Eighton Banks St. Thomas  
 Gateshead St Edmund and St James and St Bede

### Local Projects

Gateshead Care Homes, Bensham Food Co-op, Gateshead Food Bank, Oasis, Changing Lives. Kells Lane, Kelvingrove & St Aidan's Primary Schools.

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## **St Helen's Church Monthly Diary March 2026**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March Second Sunday of Lent St Helen's 9.30am Eucharist**  
**St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am** (*Archdeacon Katherine Bagnall presiding*)

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March Lent Course Session 3 Desire: What are you looking for?**  
St Helen's Church hall from 5.45pm.

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March St Helen's 12noon Eucharist**

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March St Helen's Social and Pastoral Committee 11am** in the church hall

**St Helen's Stations of the Cross 12noon**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March Third Sunday of Lent St Helen's 9.30am Eucharist**

**St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am** (*Revd Canon Yvonne Greener presiding*)

**Swing Bridge Singers 2pm-4.30pm** St Helen's church with interval refreshments in the church hall, and raffle.

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March Lent Course Session 4 Home: Where are you staying?**  
St Helen's Church hall from 5.45pm.

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March St Helen's 12noon Eucharist**

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March St Helen's Stations of the Cross 12noon**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March Fun with Flowers for Mother's Day 1-3pm** St Helen's Church Hall

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March Mothering Sunday St Helen's 10am Family Service**, followed by brunch in the church hall.

**St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am** (*Revd Dorothy Snowball presiding*)

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March Lent Course Session 5 Glory: Meeting God in John**  
St Helen's Church hall from 5.45pm.

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March St Helen's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting 6pm** in the upper church hall

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March St Helen's 12noon Eucharist**

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March St Helen's Stations of the Cross 12noon**

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March Fifth Sunday of Lent St Helen's 9.30am Eucharist Service**  
**St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am (Revd Margaret McKay presiding)**

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March Lent Course Session St Helen's Church hall from 5.45pm.**

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March Social & Pastoral Committee 11am in the church hall**  
**St Helen's Stations of the Cross 12noon**

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March Palm Sunday St Helen's 9.30am Eucharist**  
**St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am (Clergy tbc)**  
**11am St Helen's APCM in the church hall**

**Morning Prayer/Evening Prayer Readings – 22<sup>nd</sup> March**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**

Day/ Date	Morning Prayer	Psalm	Evening Prayer
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	John 12. 20-33	86	Matt. 20. 17-end
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Heb. 11. 17-31	73	John 11. 28-44
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> Walter Hilton of Thurgarton, Augustinian canon, mystic, 1396; Paul Couturier, priest, ecumenist, 1953; Oscar Romero, archbishop of San Salvador, martyr, 1980	Heb. 11. 32- ch12. V. 2	35	Gal. 4. 1-5
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary	Rom. 5. 12-end	111, 113	Heb. 2. 5-end
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> Harriet Monsell, founder of Community of St. John The Baptist, clewer, 1883	Heb. 12. 14-end	40	John 12. 12-19
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Heb. 13. 1-16	22	John 12. 20-36a
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup>	Heb. 13. 17-end	23	John 12. 36b-end



**Here is the QR code for St Helen's church website**

**To contact St Helen's church to book the church hall or for all enquiries please email: [office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com](mailto:office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com)**

**To make initial enquiries or book a baptism or a wedding please come along to a Sunday service – check our website for times.**