



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

21.12.2025

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Readings

Isaiah 7. 10-16

Romans 1. 1-7

Matthew 1. 18-25

Collect

Eternal God,

as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,

so we wait for his coming in glory;

bring us through the birth pangs of this present age

to see, with her, great salvation

in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Dear Friends,

Christmas is almost upon us, do come and join the celebration. The dates and times of our services are included in this newsletter, we look forward to seeing you.

We gather at 4pm on Christmas Eve to dress the crib. All are welcome to participate in the wonderful Christmas story, come as a Shepherd or an Angel before you settle down on this Holy Night.

We meet at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve for the first mass of Christmas and blessing of the crib. Alternatively, join us on Christmas morning for our All Age Eucharist. Children - do bring your Christmas gift to show.

If you know of anyone who is housebound and unable to join us but would like to receive communion over the Christams period please contact office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com. Our church is open this Friday from 9am until 3pm for any one who would like to enjoy the peace and the beauty of the space.

As we continue through Advent this week we will light our fourth candle which is symbolic of Mary, the one who said 'Yes'. We give thanks for her trust in God and her desire to do his will. In this time of Advent with Mary we wait with longing for the joy and the hope of new birth.

Amen

O wisdom Lord and ruler.

Root of Jesse

Key of David

Rising Sun

King of the Nations

Emmanuel

Come Lord Jesus

Have a very blessed Christmas

Revd Canon Yvonne

Post Communion Collect

Heavenly Father,

who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary

to be the mother of the promised saviour:

fill us your servants with your grace,

that in all things we may embrace your holy will

and with her rejoice in your salvation;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

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

- the Parish Priest, Rev Yvonne Greener on

0191 4911317 greener.yvonne@gmail.com

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

Email: beth@bethmillerisw.co.uk or beth.miller@durham.anglican.org

Mobile: 07968 034075.



INEQE independent safeguarding audit

Please see attached information and link to the full report.

Worship and notices week beginning Sunday 21st December 2025

Services and Prayer

9.30am Sunday Service 21st December at St. Helen's

Christmas Eve

Family Carols and Building the Crib 4pm

Come dressed as Shepherds and Angels

Everyone is Welcome

Midnight Mass 11.30pm

Christmas Day **Family Eucharist 9.30am**

**Please find attached details of St Helen's All Age (Family Services)
for 2026**

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

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.

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.



ST HELEN'S & ST CHAD'S ADVENT COURSE 2025

ADVENT THROUGH ART
*held at St Chad's Church, Rawling
Road, Gateshead, NE8 4QL*

3pm Course Session
4pm Sung BCP Evening Prayer
Followed by a simple soup supper

Sunday 21 December – Blessed Virgin Mary



Evensong at St Chad's Church

Sung evening prayer according to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer has started at St. Chad's every Sunday. **Evensong now starts at 4pm.** Everyone is warmly welcome for traditional worship for modern life.

Revd Hannah

Many will know Revd Hannah's last service in St. Chad's is on Christmas day. There is an opportunity to say thank you for her time in St. Chad's, and to wish her well in her future ministry, this Sunday after the service.

Anyone who would like to, are welcome to come and share a cup of tea and a piece of cake at 12 noon in St. Chad's

With thanks

Revd Yvonne

Thursday Luncheon Club at St. Chad's

Rawling Road Bensham

Thursday Luncheon Club Time 11am -1pm

PLEASE NOTE THE LUNCH CLUB WILL BE CLOSED FROM 18 DECEMBER – THE DAY OF THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH - RETURNING ON 8 JANUARY 2026

Then 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 07847096709

St Helen's Church Celebration of 150 years

We have now held two meetings regarding the celebration of the anniversary of St Helen's. Along with the alterations to the building which we hope will enable more of the community to be able to access and enjoy this sacred space, some of the confirmed celebrations and events for next year include:

- History of the church – tours and photographs
- Photographs of the building stages for Phase 1 of the project
- Musical/choir events in March, May, June, October and November (so far!)
- Wedding Dress Exhibition
- Pie and Pea Supper, with a quiz and bingo
- Garden projects in the church grounds
- Children's Activities and events.
- Pilgrimage Walks
- Events in the church hall – Open Day for current and potential users

There will be more to follow.

Forms are available in church for you to complete to let us know if you can help – to be part of the Project 150 Group, helping with events and refreshments, advertising and publicity, and fundraising. The form is also attached here, please complete and return to:

office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com

Double Century Club 2026

Thank you very much to everyone who has supported the Double Century Club in 2025.

Almost £1,000 has again been raised this year towards church funds. It is now time to start preparing for next year. Hopefully everyone will renew their shares in the club.

Prize money for 2025 was, winner £50 and runner up £25. We do need more new members in order to keep the prize money the same. So please ask family and friends if they would like to become shareholders.

Please see attached information and application form

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](#)

Beyond Food Banks Summit 2026

Communities Together Durham and Food Durham are co-hosting a Food Summit on 14 March 2026. The Summit will explore alternative food provision which goes 'Beyond Food Banks' and gives churches and charities a menu of opportunities to investigate different approaches to meet the local needs of those experiencing food insecurity.

Second Course: December 2025 – February 2026 'Do Something'

The 'Do Something' £200 grants are now open. Application form attached along with the Food Summit information and the booking link below. These mini grants are **The Second Course on the Menu to The Food Summit**.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/beyond-food-banks-summit-tickets-1436758917599?aff=oddtcreator>

An Advent/New Year challenge to 'Do Something' with food within your community – grants of £200 will be available from Communities Together Durham to 'do something' that can go beyond a foodbank. We encourage you to have a go at doing something, possible ideas could be: Community advent meal, Christmas Hampers, Christmas meals, supporting current food work, run a coffee morning with recipe boxes, literally anything....Then tell us what you did... tag us on Facebook or email us.

Click here for the application

form <https://communitiestogetherdurham.org.uk/beyondfoodbanks/> - then email your application to Claire.estall@communitiestogetherdurham.org.uk **no later than December 8th 9am**, a new round of applications will open in January.

Third Course – The Food Summit Saturday 14 March 2026 9.30am The Sjovoli Centre, Framwellgate Moor

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.

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



Dear Supporters

Today was our last session of 2025 at the Food Co-op. One hundred and fifty-seven people came through the door, representing 99 families/ couples and 58 single people (242

adults and 174 children). As you can imagine it was a very busy session, but we were well supported by all the volunteers. This morning, 27 volunteers from many countries assisted - Sudan (5), Congo (2), Albania(1), Nigeria (1), Honduras (1), Afghanistan (2), Eritrea (2), Ethiopia (1), Kurdistan (1), Turkey (2), El Salvador (2), Palestine (1), Namibia (1) and the UK (5). Several of the volunteers, who are working, arranged to have the time off ensuring we had plenty of help.

Donations were received from several local churches, a primary school, individual supporters and Cardinal Hume School. Through Faith in Action the young people collected toiletries and delivered them to Corpus Christi Church. With the Food Coop volunteers, they helped with sorting them into packs and also willingly helped with other tasks that needed completing before the end of the year. It was a pleasure to meet them and hope it helped them gain an understanding of the Food Co-op.

We received an unexpected donation of Christmas items that had been surplus to the Christmas Fayre at St Chads. Items were put into small gift bags and distributed today, proving very popular.

Many thanks to all who donated to the appeals for items for the Christmas Bags. Thanks also to all who put the bags together and delivered them to Corpus Christi Church. All members were very thrilled to receive a bag of treats today. Despite the numbers, no one left empty handed. There were even enough selection boxes to pass on to all children in the families, which was amazing. On Monday, all volunteers were overwhelmed with the generosity and kindness of our local community as donations came through the doors. Thank you to all for your steadfast commitment to our community.

Please note : We will reopen on Monday 12th January for donations and Tuesday 13th January for our first session of 2026.

A date for your diary: On Monday 19th January between 2.00 and 3.30 we invite all supporters to an 'At Home' for refreshments. It is an opportunity for the Food Co-op to show our gratitude and for our supporters to meet some of the volunteers.

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, worshipping together through 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

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.

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Intercessions Sunday 21st December 2025

Sick	Sick	Sick/Other needs
Maria Barrell	Amelia Grace	Lena
Mark Adams	Lesley Baister	Sarah Hamilton
Lucy	Felicity	Maryam
Roger Barrell	Margaret Clayton	Sienna
Joyce Rowell	Emily	Michael
Ann	Ollie Sutcliffe	Joe
Stan Conway	Tom Spence	Pauline
Niraj	Sharok	
Revd Bernice Broggio	Les Gibson	
	Eddie Clarke	
Recently Departed: Cindy Edge		

Anniversary of Death

Thomas Carr Lough	Pat Dunwoodie	Angela Jeffries
Norman Pattinson	Jim Dunwoodie	Maureen Hart
Maureen Tuson	Mary Grey	Samuel Ancrum
Barry Snaith	Jean Clarke	

Church

Please pray for our current Deanery vacancies

Local Projects

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

St Helen's Church Monthly Diary December 2025

Tuesday 2nd December St Helen's Project 150 meeting 6.30pm in the church hall

Wednesday 3rd December St Helen's Eucharist 12noon

Francis Xavier, Apostle to the Indies, 1552

Saturday 6th December St Chad's Drop In and Cuppa 2-4pm

Sunday 7th December Advent **St Helen's** 10am Family Service, followed by refreshments in the church hall

St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am

St Chad's Advent Course 2025 Prophets 3pm Course Session, 4pm Sung BCP

Evening Prayer

Tuesday 9th December – St Helen's PCC meeting 6pm in the church hall

Wednesday 10th December St Helen's Eucharist 12noon *Ember Day*

Saturday 13th December St Chad's Christmas Fayre 1-3pm

Sunday 14th December Third Sunday of Advent **St Helen's** Eucharist

10am Christingle St Helen's followed by brunch in the church hall

St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am

St Chad's Advent Course 2025 John the Baptist 3pm Course Session, 4pm Sung BCP Evening Prayer

Tuesday 16th December **Community Carol Service** 7pm in church, followed by mince pies and mulled wine in the church hall

Wednesday 17th December St Helen's Eucharist 12noon

Eglantyne Jebb, social reformer, founder of 'Save The Children', 1928

Sunday 21st December Fourth Sunday of Advent **St Helen's** 9.30am Eucharist

St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am

St Helen's Church Baptism 11.30am Henry William Carss, Nellie Grace Carss

St Chad's Advent Course 2025 Blessed Virgin Mary 3pm Course Session, 4pm Sung BCP Evening Prayer

Wednesday 24th December, Christmas Eve

St Helen's Church Dressing the Crib 4pm

St Helen's Church 11.30pm Midnight Mass

Thursday 25th December Christmas Day **St Helen's** 9.30am Family Eucharist

St Chad's Family Eucharist at 10.30am

Sunday 28th December Fourth Sunday of Advent **St Helen's** 9.30am Eucharist

St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am

Wednesday 31st December St Helen's Eucharist 12noon

John Wyclif, reformer, 1384

Morning Prayer/Evening Prayer Readings – 21st December
4th Sunday of Advent

Day/ Date	Morning Prayer	Psalm	Evening Prayer
Sunday 21st	Luke 1. 26-38	144	Luke 1. 39-45
Monday 22nd	Matt. 19. 1-12	124	1 Peter 1. 1-15
Tuesday 23rd	Matt. 19. 13-15	130	2 Peter 1. 16-23
Wednesday 24 th Christmas Eve	Matt. 19. 16-end	45	Rev. 1. 1-8
Thursday 25 th Christmas Day	Matt. 1. 18-end	110	Luke 2. 1-20
Friday 26 th St. Stephen, first martyr	Acts ch. 6	13	Matt. 23. 34-end
Saturday 27 th John, apostle, evangelist	1 John 2. 1-11	21	1 John 5. 1-12



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

To contact St Helen's church to book a baptism, wedding, book the church hall or for all enquiries please email: office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com