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## *Pastoral Letter and Church Notices*

### *ST. HELEN'S CHURCH, LOW FELL*

**26.3.23**

**Ezekial 3. 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 may know eternal peace  
through the shedding of our saviours blood,  
Jesus Christ Our Lord  
Amen**

Dear Friends,

In John's Gospel we see Jesus preparing his disciples for his last days. We read today of his deep friendship with Martha, Mary and Lazarus, how he weeps with them at their brother's death and how he raises Lazarus to life. This sets the seal on his future as he sets his face to Jerusalem and the authorities condemn him to death.

Jurgen Moltmann tells us, 'Friendship is no passing feeling of affection. It combines affection with faithfulness. Between friends there rules only the promise to walk with each other and to be there for each other, a faithfulness not to do with acting and possessing but with the individual person and with being.'

If these are the dynamics of human friendship they may also be a clue to friendship with God.

Our parishes take time to reflect on John 15 as we begin each PCC meeting. In John 15, the True Vine, Jesus begins to prepare his disciples for his last days. In it, Jesus talks of connection and a new community which can be formed like the metaphorical vine – a healthy plant with branches growing and supporting one another. Then he talks about love, but a love that is like no other. Not an optional extra but a commandment, for which there is no alternative but to put it into practice.

Jesus spells out to the disciples that they are no longer servants, but friends. Friends are trusted with often confidential information, at that time, precious wisdom that forms the basis of the new vision God has for the world. They (and we) are the conduits through which the kingdom will be promoted and established through the work of the Holy Spirit working through them and in the world.

That commandment to love continues through us, it isn't an option. To cultivate the ability to be friendly, to be sensed as a person who carries an aura of welcome is perhaps a quality that most Christians can aspire to. It helps the world feel a gentler, more hopeful place when there is so much desolation and loneliness and it can offer life-giving emotional support and witness extraordinary results. We have seen some of this in the relationships that have formed in our Tuesday and Wednesday Drop In's and many have commented how friendly these spaces are as people have taken time to get to know one another.

Last week we were delighted to have our Uniformed Organisations in church. Friendship is so important to children, many of us have friendships that remain since childhood. We have also heard of the resilient steadfastness of John, Jesus's friend, and the women at the foot of the cross where the first Christian community was formed. 'Being with', is important.

It is never too late to cultivate new friendships. Friendship is built from relationship and has the capacity to transform life. Jesus not only offers us new life in him, but lasting friendship. In him we find a forever friend.

AMEN

Every blessing

Revd Yvonne

#### **Post Communion Prayer**

Lord Jesus 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.

## Safeguarding Statement

The Parochial Church Council is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for everyone, especially for children, young people and vulnerable adults. It has adopted and approved the Church of England policy for promoting a safer church. This policy deals with all aspects of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

To discuss any safeguarding concerns relating to St Helens please contact either

- the Parish Safeguarding Churchwarden 07505105184
- 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 - she can be contacted as follows: Address: Cuthbert House, Stonebridge, Durham DH1 3RY

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. For further information please also see the Diocese of Durham safeguarding pages: <https://durhamdiocese.org/category/safeguarding/>

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## **Worship and notices week beginning Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

### **Services and Prayer**

**All are welcome**

**9.30am Eucharist Sunday St. Helen's, Low Fell**

**10.30am Eucharist Bensham and Teams St. Chad**

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 8.10 am or join us online.

### **Morning Prayer**

We are meeting each Friday and Sunday morning for morning prayer in church, you are welcome to join us from 8.45am to begin at 9.am

### ***A message from the Right Revd Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham, on behalf of the Church of England...***

I am writing to ask if you would join with us in praying for **Doubling the number of children and young active disciples in the Church of England by 2030**, the first stated bold outcome of the Vision and Strategy. Of course, this isn't about numbers – it's about young lives being won and shaped by the goodness, beauty and truth of Jesus.

**Throughout 2023 the prayer meeting will be every Tuesday on Zoom from 10/1/23 for 20 mins from 1pm - 1.20pm.** The link you'll need for the Zoom

(<https://cofe.io/doublecyp>) is the same every week. All are welcome to join in.

### **Stations of the Cross**

Stations of the Cross will take place each Friday at 12noon beginning Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at St. Helen's, do join us.  
These will be led by members of our Congregation.

### **Easter Garden**

All are welcome to join us in building our Easter Garden on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April 11am to 12.30, with a picnic lunch. Meet together in the Church Garden at 11am.

***Please see attached posters for more information about the garden and Easter Services.***

### **Lent Course**

#### **Called to fruitfulness**

7pm at St. Chad's Church each Wednesday St Chad's Church Dunsmuir Grove Bensham  
Do join us. All are welcome

Please feel free to attend any session, there is no obligation to attend all.

### **Dust and Glory**

Why not download Dust and Glory Daily Lent reflections from the Church of England now available as an app via Google play.

## **Wednesday Drop in at St Helen's**

**Every Wednesday morning 9.30am-12.30am** - 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 Space Drop In from 10am. Everyone is welcome.

## **Tuesday Drop in at St Chad's**

**Every Tuesday afternoon 1:30pm – 4:30pm** - there will be a warm space, tea and coffee or a bowl of soup freely available and a welcome at St Chad's church for any who wish to come in for a cuppa and a chat, or who simply want company or to relax for a while. .

Volunteers also very welcome to help us facilitate both places of welcome. We are pleased to be part of Gateshead Council's Warm Spaces Charter

### **St Helen's Church Garden**

As the weather, hopefully, improves, we are considering the work to be carried out in St Helen's garden. Last year we usually met in the garden on Sunday afternoons from around 2pm. Please let us know if this is a good day and time for you, or would you prefer another day/time. We would welcome your thoughts and would be so pleased to see more volunteers. Please either speak to Helen at church regarding the day/time or email:

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

### Thanks to Lynn

On Sunday 2nd April we will be meeting at 10.45 after church and before the Annual Meeting to say thanks to Lynn (and Kev) for all the great work that did with us during the Lottery Project. We all know the difference Lynn has made to the church and the local community over the past 18 months. We hope as many people as possible will be able to join us for this occasion.

### Bensham Food Coop

Dear Supporters.

This week 54 families and 36 single people attended the Food Coop to choose and collect food (127 adults and 98 children). Donations were received from several local churches, a primary school and individual supporters. The Fareshare allocation included strawberries, tomatoes and celeriac, enabling a colourful and varied selection of fruit and vegetables for members to choose from. All members left with bags of dried, tinned and fresh food.

There was a good turnout of volunteers from various countries. This week volunteers from El Salvador, Namibia, Iran, Eritrea, Sudan, Congo, Cameroon, and the UK were all assisting. The volunteer from Iran had recently celebrated the Iranian New Year and brought in sweets that she had made to share with all the volunteers. It was really heart-warming that she wanted to share this special occasion with the other volunteers.

We are intending to celebrate Easter by providing chocolate eggs for children attending during the holidays. Any donations of eggs would be most appreciated.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the Food Coop.

With kind regards,

Kath

### 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 generously to enable this to continue.

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 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 26.03.2023

Sick			Other Needs
Maria Barrel	Roger Barrell		
Hilda Branch	Frank Morton		
Mark Adams	Amilia Grace		
Tom Spence	Julie Hillan		
Jessica Johnson	Lesley Baister		
Diane Dunwoodie	Marilyn Reay		
Lucy	Aimee		
Joan Huddleston	Joan		
Jamie Lee Slassor	Felicity		

**Baptisms:** Please pray for Luca Curtis Hope and his family as he is baptised at St. Chad's today.

### Recently Departed

Anniversary of Death		
Ivy Lough	Margaret Mallaby	
Fred Webb	Arthur James	
Fr Ray Knell	Stan Gribbim	
Dora Stephenson	Mary Wilkinson	
Matthew Allan	Dorothy Reay	

### Church

Please pray for our current Deanery vacancies especially Bensham and Teams St. Chad

### Local Projects

Gateshead Care Homes

Bensham Food Co-op, Gateshead Food Bank, Oasis, Changing Lives

Kells Lane, Kelvin Grove and St Aidan's Primary schools

### Morning Prayer/Evening Prayer Readings – 26<sup>th</sup> March 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent

Day/ Date	Morning Prayer	Psalm	Evening Prayer
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> of Lent Passiontide begins	John. 12. 20-33	86	Matt. 20. 17-end
Monday 27 <sup>th</sup>	John 11. 28-44	73	Heb. 11. 17-31
Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup>	John 11. 45-end	35	Heb. 11.v 32- 12.v2

Wednesday 29th	John 12. 1-11	55	Heb. 12. 3-13
Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup>	John 12. 12-19	40	Heb. 12. 14-end
Friday 31 <sup>st</sup>	John 12. 20-36a	22	Heb. 13. 1-16
Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> April Frederick Denison Maurice, priest, teacher of the faith, 1872	John. 12. 36b-end	23	Heb. 13. 17-end