



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

11.1.2026

Baptism of Christ

Readings

Isaiah 42. 1-9

Acts 10. 34-43

Matthew 3. 13- to end

Collect

Heavenly Father

at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:

may we recognise him as our Lord

and know ourselves to be your beloved children;

through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen

Dear Friends

Today Jesus is standing in the synagogue; he is handed the scroll from Isaiah, he doesn't read the first line but searches for the passage that expresses 'who' he is and 'why' he has come. Once he finds it, he proclaims the words that set the tone for his entire ministry.

Good news for the poor, freedom for those in chains, sight for the blind, lifting up those who are crushed. And announcing a time of God's boundless favour. Words from our Old Testament reading this Sunday, familiar words for those hearing them in the synagogue that day.

For Jesus this was an Epiphany; a revelation - a revelation he shared with those around him, an affirmation of his own mission which caused him to act.

It would be a mistake to believe that we are only passive recipients of Epiphanies. We cannot create them but like the wise men who awaited the sign in the sky - a star to guide them on their journey - we can respond to them and remain spiritually alert for their arrival. Revelations can be missed if we are not attuned or attentive to the possibilities of sacred surprise.

This Sunday we celebrate the Baptism of Christ. John recognised who Jesus was, he too had an Epiphany. Jesus responded to his own call, his Epiphany, by being baptised and affirming his identity as the Christ.

Epiphanies grab hold of us, they beckon, the star invites, the light shines in the darkness, it calls to the attentive to do something.

As we reflect on our own baptisms, as we affirm our identity in Christ, how might we live more fully into it.

God beholds the world as it really is and invites us into that beloved community, a feast of abundance, sparkling in the light and glory of love, to look beyond and through.

As a follower of Christ, baptised into him, we are called to reflect his light, to reach into the dark places of this world, to be his hands and his feet, ready also to receive in humility, others as his hands and feet to us. For he is the light.

'I am the Lord I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you'
...Isa 6

Amen
Revd Yvonne

Post Communion Collect

Lord of all time and eternity,
you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father
in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son:
by the power of your Spirit
complete the heavenly work of our rebirth
through the waters of the new creation;
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 4911317greener.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 11th January 2026
Services and Prayer

9.30am Sunday Service at St. Helen's
Revd Barry Abbott presiding

There will be no Wednesday Eucharist this week Wed 14th January for health and safety reasons whilst the initial building work takes place.

10.30am Eucharist on Sunday at Bensham and Teams,
St. Chad's
Revd Dorothy Snowball 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.

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.

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 07847096709

St Helen's Church Celebration of 150 years –

A meeting of the Anniversary Committee was held on Saturday 10 January. We hope to confirm dates for events and provide an update very soon.

The idea of a Pledge Auction was put forward at the meeting. We would be pleased if anyone would like to step forward to help to organise this event. Please contact: office.sthelenschurch@gmial.com in the first instance. Or speak to Tony Gunning in church.

Safeguarding Meeting Thursday 15 January

The next meeting of the Safeguarding Committee will be held on Thursday 15 January. Please let us know of any issues you would like to be raised at the meeting. Speak to Helen Jones, or email office.sthelenschurch@gmial.com

Safeguarding Training 26 January

Basic Safeguarding Training and Foundation Course training will be held at St Helen's church hall on Monday 26 January, 1.30-4pm. The courses are for our PCC members who require this training, or who completed it over three years ago.

Anyone is welcome to attend, please contact the Parish Office to book your place: office.sthelenschurch@gmial.com as we need to advise the trainers of numbers.

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=oddtdtcreator>

There will be a second round of grants in January 2026.

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

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



Dear Supporters

The Food Bank is now closed and 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, 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

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 11th January 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	
Ann	Les Gibson	
Stan Conway	Carole	
Niraj	Pauline	
Revd Bernice Broggio	Joe	
Recently Departed:	Cindy Edge	

Anniversary of Death

Eric Rimer	Betty Smith	Edward Carson
Margaret Armstrong	Frank Malcolm	Joan Douglas
Sid Atkinson	Howard Gibson	
John Lisle	Betty Hailes	

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 January 2026

Sunday 4th January St Helen's 10am All Age Service Epiphany
St Chad's Service of the Word at 10.30am

Wednesday 7th January St Helen's Eucharist 12noon

Saturday 10th January St Helen's 150th Anniversary Group Meeting
10am Church Hall

Sunday 11th January Baptism of Christ St Helen's 9.30am Eucharist
Revd Barry Abbott presiding
St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am (*Revd Dorothy Snowball presiding*)

Wednesday 14th January No Eucharist due to building work taking place in church

Sunday 18th January Epiphany 2 St Helen's 9.30am Eucharist Service for
Christian Unity *Revd Barry Abbott presiding*
St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am (*Revd Margaret Mackay presiding*)

Wednesday 21st January Chapter meeting 9.30am St Andrew's Lamesley
St Helen's Eucharist 12noon. Agnus, child martyr of Rome, 304

Sunday 25th January Epiphany 3 St Helen's 9.30am Eucharist Service
St Chad's Eucharist at 10.30am

Wednesday 28th January St Helen's Eucharist 12noon
Thomas Aquinas, priest, philosopher, teacher, 1274

Morning Prayer/Evening Prayer Readings – 11th January
The Baptism of Christ

Day/ Date	Morning Prayer	Psalm	Evening Prayer
Sunday 11th	1 John 5. 6-9	89 v. 19-29	Heb. 1. 1-12
Monday 12 th Aeired of Hexham, Abbot of Rievaulx, 1167; Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Wearmouth, scholar, 689	Mark 1. 14-20	2	1 Cor. 1. 1-17

Tuesday 13 th Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, teacher, 367; Kentigern (Mungo) missionary bishop of Strathclyde and Cumbria, 603; George Fox, founder of the Quakers, 1691	Matt 21. 18-32	9	1 Cor. 1. 18-end
Wednesday 14th	Matt 21. 33-end	20	1 Cor. Ch2
Thursday 15th	Matt 22. 1-14	21	1 Cor. Ch3
Friday 16th	Matt 22. 15-33	67	1 Cor. Ch4
Saturday 17 th Antony of Egypt, hermit, 356; Charles Gore, bishop, founder of the Community of the Resurrection, 1932	Matt 22. 34-end	33	1 Cor. Ch5



[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.sthelenchurch@gmail.com