



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

09.03.2025

First Sunday of Lent

Deuteronomy 26.1-11

Romans 10.8b-13

Luke 4.1-13

Collect

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

This week you are invited to reflect on this poem by Jan Robinson, which was discussed at recent safeguarding training for leaders in the Diocese.

THE YEAR AS A HOUSE

A Blessing
think of the year
as a house:
door flung wide
in welcome,
threshold swept
and waiting,
a graced spaciousness
opening and offering itself
to you.

Let it be blessed
in every room.
let it be hallowed
in every corner.
let every nook
be a refuge
and every object
set to holy use.

Let it be here
that safety will rest. Let it be here
that health will make its home.
let it be here
that peace will show its face.
let it be here
that love will find its way.

Here
let the weary come
let the aching come
let the lost come
let the sorrowing come.

Here
let them find their rest
and let them find their soothing
and let them find their place
and let them find their delight.

And may it be
in this house of a year
that the seasons will spin in beauty,
and may it be
in these turning days
that time will spiral with joy.
And may it be
that its rooms will fill
with ordinary grace
and light spill from every window
to welcome the stranger home.

Lent

Throughout church history Easter has been the principal date for baptism. Adult candidates for baptism would undergo a period of instruction and preparation in the weeks leading up to Easter- a period that became known as Lent.

Lent is a time when we reflect upon our lives, a time when we are reminded that we are utterly dependent on God.

Everything we have comes to us as a gift from God. Lent is a time for us to reconsider how we live as Christians in the world.

Lent began on Ash Wednesday, when many received the Imposition of Ashes on the forehead to these words:

‘Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return, turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.’

Sometimes we forget that we are mortal, we don’t like to think of death, but it comes to us all.

As we journey into Lent there is the opportunity to draw closer to God, to journey with Jesus through death into fullness of life as we prepare ourselves for Good Friday and Easter. There are many opportunities to journey together.

Each Friday throughout Lent, at 12noon, members of our church will be leading us in the Stations of the Cross.

Each Monday evening, at 6.30pm, you are welcome to join in the Lent group: ‘How shall we live.’ This will meet at St Chad’s Church each week, until Holy Week, when we will journey with Jesus throughout his Passion.

You may wish to come into Church for some quiet time, remember church is open each Wednesday and Friday.

Lent, a time of prayer, fasting and Giving Alms, offers us an opportunity to slow down, to spend time with God, to rekindle our relationship and consider what is important in life as we approach Easter.

‘Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return, turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.’

May you be able to embrace a Holy Lent and know the nearness of Christ as you journey.

With my continuing love and prayers
Revd Yvonne

Post Communion

Lord God,
you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven;
by it you nourish our faith,
increase our hope,
and strengthen our love:
teach us always to hunger for him
who is the true and living bread,
and enable us to live by every word
that proceeds from out of your mouth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

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*

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 or 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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A Prayer for Peace from Sanctuary Foundation

Lord God protector of widows and orphans, may you bring your comfort to every family and every child that is grieving, frightened or homeless because of the conflict in Israel and Gaza.

Jesus wonderful Counsellor, may you give the wisdom and grace to all
who are working to find a peaceful resolution.

Spirit of peace may you change people's hearts and minds so this conflict can end quickly
for your names sake.

Triune and Almighty God, help us to trust you at this time and serve you by showing
compassion to all those around us.

Amen.

Please see below a message, regarding deeply disappointing news, from Sarah Jarrow, Acting Bishop of Durham and James Morgan, Diocesan Secretary.

Revd Yvonne



**Update on Durham Crown
Nominations Commission process
from Bishop Sarah and Diocesan Secretary, James Morgan
Monday 17 February 2025**

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

As a diocesan family we have received difficult news today (Monday 17 February) concerning the appointment of the next Bishop of Durham. The National Church has released the following statement:

The Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) for Durham met and nominated a candidate for the See of Durham, with interviews taking place in November 2024. However, the candidate has decided to withdraw from the nomination.

Having decided in November not to nominate a reserve candidate, the CNC has agreed to reconvene later in the year to continue the process of discernment.

A further update on the timescale for the Durham CNC will be offered in due course.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said: "I want to thank The Bishop of Jarrow, Sarah Clark, for her ongoing service as acting Bishop of Durham, and everyone in the Diocese who is undertaking additional responsibilities during the vacancy. I will be praying for them, and please pray for the CNC as they reconvene to seek God's discernment for the next Bishop of Durham, and for everyone served by The Church in the Diocese."

Clearly this is both unexpected and disappointing news. As the statement makes clear, this is the nominated candidate's decision. Even though the candidate's identity will remain unknown please do pray for that person and all those affected by this decision. The CNC process for the appointment of the next Bishop of Durham has now recommenced and a timetable for the appointment process will be given in due course. These are unusual circumstances so please pray for the whole CNC and especially for the six members from our Diocese representing us – Val Barron, Jamie Harrison, Mark Miller, Rick Simpson, Frances Stenlake, Mags Vaughan. They have

already invested themselves in giving their time and energy to this process and now they have this fresh responsibility that has come so unexpectedly. Please do not ask them to comment as they are under strict obligation to keep confidentiality. We must trust them, the process and the Holy Spirit in this matter. Further information will be given, including the new timeline, as the future becomes clearer.

Throughout the Vacancy in See process and especially during the period of interviews last November we have prayed together. It therefore is right that we turn intentionally to the Lord Jesus in prayer at this difficult moment in our journey. We will be holding an evening of prayer at St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth, Durham (DH7 8DF) on Wednesday 19 February between 7 and 9pm and warmly invite you to join us if you are able to. This will be an opportunity to share thoughts and concerns together before spending time in prayer for our Diocese. The prayer time will include silence and spoken prayer and will be open ended, so you may stay as long as you wish. The evening will conclude with Compline. If you are unable to be physically present that evening please do spend some time in prayer that evening wherever you are.

The scripture that has particularly come to me, +Sarah, at this time has been Matthew 14: 22-32, when the disciples are afraid, Jesus shouts to them though the strong winds across the water, *'Take heart; it is I; do not be afraid'*. Taking heart is a call to courage and hope; to take courage because Jesus is with us even in the most unlikely situations when we cannot see clearly. In such stormy conditions we look to Christ who calls us on in faith and trust. Please be assured that the Bishop's Leadership Team and all who serve the parishes and diocese will continue stewarding our diocese through this unexpected situation with the steadfast hope and purpose that we have worked with throughout these past twelve months. God is faithful and the future will become clearer in time.

+ Sarah Jarrow; Acting Bishop of Durham
James Morgan; Diocesan Secretary

Worship and notices week beginning Sunday 9th March 2025
Services and Prayer

9.30am Sunday Service at St. Helen's
Due to a bereavement, Revd Hannah Richardson is presiding

Eucharist at St Helen's on Wednesday 12th March
Revd Hannah Richardson presiding

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

Lent Group from 10th March at St Chad's Church

A Lent Group, How Shall We Live, will meet from Monday 10 March for five weeks, at St Chad's church.

Jesus says: 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.' John 10:10

The sessions, which will be informal and interactive, **start at 6.30pm**, with refreshments.

Everyone is Welcome.

Wings for Worship

Wednesday evenings from 6.30pm for refreshments,

starting at 7.00pm till approx. 9.00pm

12th, 19th and 26th March, 3rd and 10th of April.

St. Peter's Church Centre, York Avenue, Jarrow, NE32 5LP

This five week course is available to all who attend our church. It will help you to lead all or part of a service, and will include reading the Bible, leading prayers and conducting a Service of the Word. It would be wonderful to develop the ministry and life of St. Helen's as we look to the future .

All are welcome. Anyone who is interested, please contact Revd Canon Yvonne asap.

Pse see attached poster for further details and how to book.

St Helen's Church Electoral Roll

Under the Church Representation Rules, a new Church Electoral Roll has to be compiled this year.

Every person who wishes to have his or her name entered on the new Roll, whether it is on the present Roll or not, **must submit an application form no later than the 29th March.**

Application forms will be available from Church and on the Church website.

Completed forms can be brought to church or emailed to ppppmcampbell@hotmail.com

Pauline Campbell (Electoral Roll Officer)

AN EVENING WITH
GRAEME DUFFIN



GUITARIST WITH WET WET WET
SONGS - STORIES - FAITH - JAZZ
In conversation with Rob Halligan
SUNDAY 11TH MAY 2025
LOW FELL - GATESHEAD
Strongpoint Centre
660 Durham Road - NE9 6JA
7:00pm - TICKETS and info
Andrew.motisi@Chowdene.co.uk

graemeduffin.com

"An Evening with Graeme Duffin" Sunday 11th May

Please join us at the **Strongpoint Centre**,
660 Durham Road, NE9 6JA, Low Fell, Gateshead. Doors
will open at 6:00 PM,
with the event starting at **7:00 PM**.

Tickets are priced at **£3 each or 4 for £10**, making it a
fantastic opportunity to enjoy a great evening with friends and
family. For those who purchased tickets before the
postponement, we are happy to confirm that your tickets are
still valid for this new date.

Safeguarding Training

Church of England basic training on safeguarding is available to anyone who is interested. If you require further information please ask Helen Jones.

Lone Worker Safeguarding Policy

A reminder that St Helen's has a Lone Worker policy in place for anyone who works/volunteers in any capacity for the church on their own. A paper copy of the policy is available from Helen Jones or for an electronic copy, please email:

office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com

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

Toy Donations

The box of toys which is left outside of church is proving very popular. We would be grateful for any donations of clean toys in good working order please. These can be left in church on Sundays, Wednesdays or Fridays or in the church hall on Wednesday mornings,

Thank you!

St Helen's Church Hall

A reminder that the church hall is available to hire for birthday parties/events on Saturdays and Sunday afternoons. We also have space for regular bookings (exercise classes, book club, craft activities etc) during the week. For further information contact :

office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com



We Buy Vintage Roadshow
St Helen's Church hall
Thursday 20th March
10am to 4pm

Come along to the hall and bring your unwanted valuables, jewellery and antiques for a valuation and same-day cash.

Hot drinks and sweet treats will be available.

You may have received this leaflet through your door, check it out for more information

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 £5.

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

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.

**Fire safety talk by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service in
Community Engagement
Wednesday 12th March from 10am.**

The organisers of the Warm Welcome Drop In have arranged a talk with Tyne and Wear's Fire and Rescue Service regarding their free 'safe and well visits' for residents. This will be on **Wednesday 12th March from 10.00am in St Helen's church hall**. Everyone is invited and welcome to attend.

There will be Tea and Coffee available on the day.



Dear Supporters

This week 105 people representing 68 families/couples and 37 single persons came to the Food Co-op to choose and collect food (160 adults and 119 children). Donations were received from several local churches, a primary school and individual supporters. We were the fortunate beneficiary of a substantial donation from a small family-run business, Sporting Icons. They kindly shopped for and delivered the items to Corpus Christi Church. All donations to the Food Coop are really appreciated by the trustees, volunteers and members as without them we would not be able to continue our weekly distribution.

This week we met several new families who had recently been accommodated in the community. With the aid of the multilingual team of volunteers we were able to welcome them and show them how the Food Coop works and direct them to other sources of support in our local community. People who we've supported over the years often call in, not for food but to update us on their circumstances.

Today, one gentleman came with his wife who had recently arrived to introduce her to the volunteers. Another came to tell us of a planned move after a very long and uncertain period. Another came with a very new baby. People frequently share difficult life experiences so good news is always welcome. All volunteers are genuinely delighted to hear when members come and share their news.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment.

Kind regards,

Kath

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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 9th March 2025

Sick	Sick	Sick/Other needs
Maria Barrell	Amelia Grace	Lena
Mark Adams	Lesley Baister	Sarah Hamilton
Lucy	Felicity	Maryam
Diane Telfer	Margaret Clayton	Sienna
Roger Barrell	Alan Brownlee	Atila
Emma	Mark	Niraj
Joyce Rowell	Joyce Tindale	Michael
Ann	George Lackenby	Nicola
Stan Conway	Carole	Joe
	Emily	
<p>Baptism: Please pray for Sonny Walker Potts, and his family and friends, on the occasion of his baptism on Sunday 9th March. The baptism service will be conducted by Revd Dorothy Snowball.</p>		
<p>Recently Departed: John Rook, Hilda Branch</p>		

Anniversary of Death

Lesley Dodman	Kathleen Dolman	Kate Rimer
Jean Graham	Linda Dellow	Norman Harrison
Alice Elizabeth Lorraine	Robert Blenkinsopp	
Lily Robson	Sheila Jobes	

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, Kelvin Grove and St Aidan's Primary schools

Morning Prayer/Evening Prayer Readings – 9th March First Sunday of Lent

Day/ Date	Morning Prayer	Psalm	Evening Prayer
Sunday 9th	Luke 5. 27-end	50 v. 1-15	Luke 18. 9-14
Monday 10th	John 5. 1-18	11	Gal. 3. 23 – Ch4. 7
Tuesday 11th	John 5. 19-29	44	Gal. 4. 8-20
Wednesday 12 th Ember Day	John 5. 30-end	6	Gal. 4. 21- Ch.5. 1
Thursday 13th	John 6. 1-15	42	Gal. 5. 2-15
Friday 14 th Ember Day	John 6. 16-27	22	Gal. 5. 16-end
Saturday 15 th Ember Day	John 6. 27-40	63	Gal. ch6

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

