

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

**18.5.2025**

***Fifth Sunday of Easter***

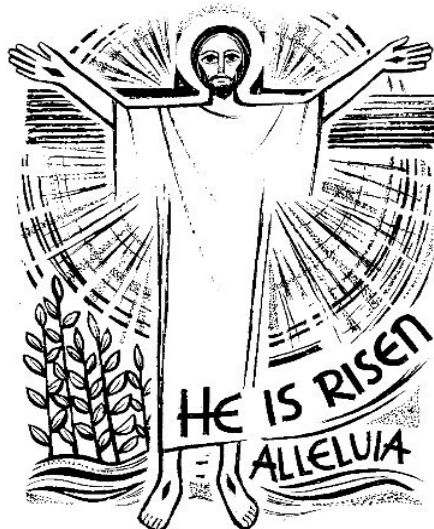
**Acts 11. 1-18**

**Revelations 21. 1-6**

**John 13. 31-35**

**Collect**

Risen Christ,  
your wounds declare your love for the world  
and the wonder of your risen life:  
give us compassion and courage  
to risk ourselves for those we serve,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
Amen



**Post Communion**

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ  
is the way, the truth and the life:  
grant us to walk in his way, to rejoice in his truth,  
and to share his risen life;  
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.  
Amen

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***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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***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.

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**Worship and notices week beginning Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2025**  
**Services and Prayer**

**9.30am Sunday Service 18<sup>th</sup> May at St. Helen's**

**Eucharist at St Helen's on Wednesday 21<sup>th</sup> May 12noon**

**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.

**Christian Aid Week is coming 11<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> May**

**Dying crops means food stops**

Uncertainty looms over Indigenous farming communities in the Alta Verapaz region of Guatemala, Central America.

In this forested area of mountains and rivers, the livelihoods, traditions and very survival of farmers and their families are threatened by deadly droughts, savage storms and monster monoculture plantations.

That includes Amelia, a resourceful and determined 24-year-old farmer who lives with her husband and their two children, 8-year-old Lázaro and 4-year-old Yakelin, on ancient and beautiful land that's been in Amelia's family for generations.

The family belong to the Indigenous Q'eqchi' community, who are close, and live by a blend of Mayan and Catholic traditions.

Amelia's farm, first and foremost, feeds her young children. She tries to grow a range of crops and root vegetables that will provide her children with a balanced diet, such as bananas, peppers and cassava. This way, Amelia can protect them from malnutrition.

But the climate crisis is ravaging farms like Amelia's, causing both the dry and rainy seasons that would once arrive with predictability to intensify and shift erratically. As the river runs dry and water becomes scarce, the vital crops that Amelia depends on wither and die before her eyes. Amelia's ability to protect Lázaro and Yakelin is slipping away. **Because dying crops means food stops.**

**‘My first priority is to feed my family,’ says Amelia. ‘I worry about what my children will eat.’**

These conditions are challenging enough, but Amelia and her community also have to cope with the impact of industrial plantations on their landscape.

Amelia’s community, like so many others, have done little to cause the climate crisis but they are paying the highest price.

Despite these challenges, Amelia’s faith keeps her strong. And her hope for a better future drives her to keep working to improve life for her family and community.



**‘I go to Catholic church,’ she explains. ‘For me, faith is very important, and a way for me to reach harmony in my life.’**

### **Pushing back**

As the community’s farms are devastated, the search for solutions becomes critical. **‘With high heat, there is little we can do but adapt,’** says Amelia.

When Amelia discovered the work of Christian Aid’s partner, Congcoop, she quickly put herself forward as a community representative who would attend the specialist agricultural training on offer.

With funding from Christian Aid, Congcoop support communities to return to Indigenous farming practices and adopt agroecological approaches that conserve their land, culture and livelihood. Agroecology, put simply, is farming in a sustainable way that works with, not against, nature.

By joining Congcoop, Amelia’s gaining the skills and knowledge to cultivate native seeds that are better suited to the changing climate. She’s planning planting schedules that will deliver multiple harvests throughout the year, making her own organic fertiliser, and constructing rainwater collection systems. By changing the way she farms, Amelia’s pushing back against the climate crisis.

Amelia is recognised as a leader in her community. Whatever she learns, she shares – confidently training other women to adapt their farming practices too.

Whatever the future may hold, Amelia remains resilient. As Programme Officer, Gerardo C. Tobar, says: **‘Amelia’s story is one of resistance, and it’s just beginning.’**

The unstoppable power of hope compels Christian Aid and its amazing supporters to stand up for communities in crisis and support people living in poverty.

The organisation, now in its 80th year, and its supporters are joining together once again during **Christian Aid Week (11-17 May)** to fundraise in all kinds of ways – from coffee mornings and craft stalls to hiking and biking for the 70k in May challenge.

With **7 days to make a difference**, every gift, act and prayer counts.

**Will you demonstrate the unstoppable power of hope and help fund vital tools and training, so farmers like Amelia can push back against the climate crisis and beat hunger?**

- £6 could pay for the seed trays that kickstart a plant nursery at someone's home.
- £10 could pay for the pruning scissors that mean a farmer can care for their cacao trees.
- £20 could buy two pounds of climate resilient seeds that diversify a family's crop.
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**Find out more about the campaign at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/>**

### **Myanmar Earthquake Appeal (from Christian Aid)**

Families and communities are in fear of their lives after a deadly 7.7 magnitude earthquake devastated Myanmar on Friday 28 March. A second 6.4 magnitude quake followed soon after, making the destruction even more widespread.

We don't yet know the full extent of the devastation, but we do know that huge numbers of women, men and children are without drinking water, food, shelter and power. Homes have been destroyed, access roads torn up, and we've had reports that the Kyaukse Kinta Dam in Mandalay has burst, flooding the surrounding lowlands.

We are working a great speed with our partners to identify the communities whose lives are now at most risk and in need of our immediate help. With your support today, we can provide water treatment kits, food parcels, shelters and cash for vital supplies, such as medicines for families who are fighting for their very survival.

***St Helen's will be supporting Christian Aid week as usual but if people would like to donate to Myanmar specifically please visit [caid.org.uk/HelpMyanmar](https://caid.org.uk/HelpMyanmar)***

### **Confirmation 2025**

If you are interested in exploring faith and becoming Confirmed, **please see the attached information and contact Revd Canon Yvonne for further information.**

Do come and join us for an informal conversation if you would like to know more, or have any questions. We meet this Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> May at 4pm in St. Helen's. All are welcome.

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com)

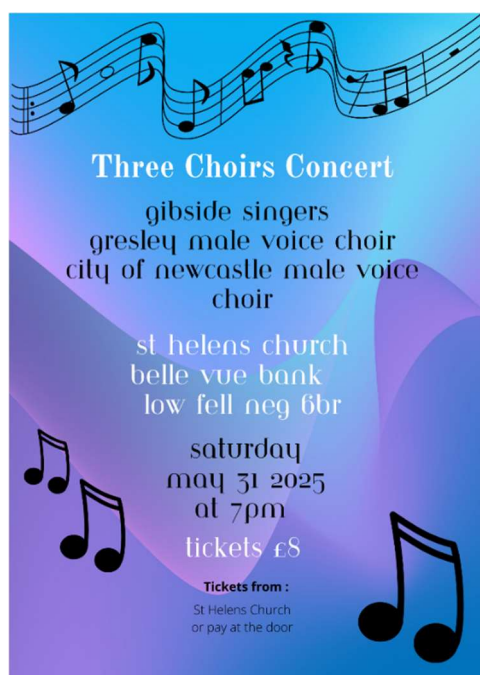
## Toy Donations

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



## 'SAVE THE DATE'

Please add these upcoming events at St Helen's to your diary

## Three Choirs Concert Gibside Singers, Gresley Choir and City of Newcastle Male Voice Choir

**Saturday 31st May 7pm**  
*With refreshments and raffle*  
**Tickets £8 - available on the night at the door**

## Performance by Scott Slapin Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June 1pm

***Followed by tea/coffee/cake in the church hall.***  
***Tickets - Donations on the day to St Helen's please***

## Programme attached

Scott is a recitalist and composer. His viola playing has received critical acclaim in Fanfare, Strad, Musical Opinion, Mundo Clásico, and the American Record Guide, and his popular recital compositions have been performed by hundreds of viola players worldwide.

***"Slapin is a real viola virtuoso..."***

**American Record Guide**

**[The Official Site of Scott Slapin](http://www.scottslapin.com)**







**St Helen's Church Summer Fair Saturday 14th June  
1-4pm**

*Join us for our Summer Fair in the church hall*

**Stalls Include**

<b>Jewellery</b>	<b>Home Crafted Cards</b>
<b>Jams and Preserves</b>	<b>Handicrafts</b>
<b>Cake Stall</b>	<b>Kiddies Corner</b>
<b>Pocket Money Gifts</b>	<b>Plants</b>
<b>Tombola</b>	<b>Raffle</b>
<b>Preloved toys and games</b>	<b>Tea / Coffee &amp; soft drinks</b>

**We would appreciate your help with raffle prizes, to include items for hampers. Please leave in the church or the hall by 7 JUNE.  
Thank you.**

**Performance by the Felling Male Voice Choir  
Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July 7pm**

*We are pleased to welcome back the Felling Male Voice Choir*

***Tickets £10 (children free)***

*With refreshments (wine, soft drinks, tea/coffee and snack buffet) Plus raffle*

**Christmas Fair Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 1pm to 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**

## **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.



Dear Supporters

This week ninety-eight people, representing 61 families and couples and 37 single persons attended the Food Coop (148 adults and 98 children). It was a steady session with many people queuing over 2 hours before the session opened. Donations were received from several local

churches, a primary school and individual supporters. The Fareshare allocation included leeks, cauliflower, carrots and parsnips which enabled members to choose a good selection of fresh food.

This week we were supported during the session by 17 volunteers. Thirteen of the volunteers were from the refugee community - coming from Namibia, Turkey (2), Iraq, Sudan (3), Albania, Congo, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Honduras and speaking an impressive array of languages. This enables us to welcome newcomers to the Food Coop in a common language with a volunteer assisting with the membership form and supporting new members as they choose their food.

Grateful thanks for all the donations and to those who deliver them to Corpus in time for the session on Tuesday. Your commitment is appreciated by all the volunteers and members.

Please look at the new website for more information on the Food Coop:

[www.soulfoodspaces.org.uk](http://www.soulfoodspaces.org.uk)

With thanks for your continued 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](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.

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### Intercessions Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May 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
Joyce Rowell	Joyce Tindale	Michael
Ann	George Lackenby	Joe
Stan Conway	Carole	Harry Palmer
Niraj	Emily	Eddie Clarke
Rowan James Johnson	Ollie Sutcliffe	Jimmy White
Marion Watson		
<b>Recently Departed:</b> Pat Manning, Joan Laidler, Hazel Gibson		
<b>Baptisms:</b> Please pray for Billie Catherine McClaren and Elsie Ann McKeown, and their family and friends on the occasion of their baptism this Sunday.		

### Anniversary of Death

Ethel Smith	Mary Atkinson	William Tindale
Frank Joseph Snaith	Joan Evans	Ethel Liddle
Arthur Jones	Tom Graham	
Joan Brown	Mary Robey Garrett	

### 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

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### Morning Prayer/Evening Prayer Readings – 18<sup>th</sup> May 2025 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Day/ Date	Morning Prayer	Psalm	Evening Prayer
Sunday 18th	Acts 2. 14a, 22-36	16	Mark 15. 46 – Ch. 16 v. 8
Monday 19th Dunstan, archbishop, monastic reformer, 988	1 Peter . 1-12	145	Luke 4. 38-end
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> Alcuin, deacon, abbot, 804	1 Peter 1. 13-end	19	Luke 5. 1-11
Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> Helena, protector of Holy Places, 330	1 Peter 2. 1-10	30	Luke 5. 12-26
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> .	1 Peter 2. 11-end	57	Luke 5. 27-end
Friday 23rd	1 Peter 3. 1-12	138	Luke 6. 1-11
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> John and Charles Wesley, evangelists, hymn writers, 1791, 1788	1 Peter 3. 13-end	146	Luke 6. 12-26

