



50p

# St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Loving God, Loving Others, Loving the World



# Parish Magazine

April 2024

# WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Hello and welcome to April's edition to the parish magazine.

A belated happy Easter to you all! Whether you find yourself rejoicing in the good news of Jesus' resurrection or filled with hope by the signs of new life all around us in the blossom and the daffodils etc (or both), this time of year always speaks of new beginnings. There is so much of God's glory to be seen around us.

There are new beginnings being celebrated in this month's magazine and more to come in the month ahead. Pat tells us about some long-awaited and hopeful new beginnings over at Loughborough Town of Sanctuary, Alan and Alison remind us to get planting and we look to the year ahead with our APCM and the potential to step into new serving roles.

Wishing you all a pleasant April, filled with opportunities and glimpses of the glory of God.

Emily

The logo for Ashby foodbank features the word "Ashby" in a small blue font above the word "foodbank" in a larger, bold green font. To the right of the text is a stylized green leaf with a stem and two smaller leaves below it.  
Donations can be left in the boxes at the back of St Helen's Church, in the porch of Holy Trinity or the Congregational Church, or at any of Ashby's Co-ops. Thank you to everyone for the continued support.

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## FROM THE MINISTRY TEAM

Dear Friends,

I hope you had a joyous Easter day and that the joy of Easter is spreading through the days to come. Certainly, as I write this the sun is shining and I have spring appearing and blooming in my garden. April always begins with mixed pleasures as we encounter *April fool's day*. When I started to think about this I was reminded of the year that Easter Sunday coincided with April fool's day and at that time at St Helen's, Brunch was served on the first Sunday of every month. It was the turn of the youth group - Priest Room Gang (PRG) to provide the breakfast that day and .....they served a rather confusing brunch!!! On the menu were "green eggs and ham" and apricots and yoghurt, masquerading as poached eggs. This led me to think a little more about the origins of April Fools day and if there were any connections with Christianity or Christian festivals. There are many references to fools in the bible and the majority of them are found in the book of Proverbs. One of the most well-known of these quotes is from chapter 18, verse 2: "A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion."



There is much more on fools to be found in the book of proverbs, but I leave you to explore that for yourselves. This did not help me greatly in my



A free phone line of hymns,  
reflections and prayers

pursuit of the origins of April Fools day and Christianity.

I did discover that although April Fools' Day is certainly not a religious holiday, it does, however, trace its origins to a Pope. It is believed that its origins date back to 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII decreed the adoption of the "Gregorian calendar" which moved New Year's Day from the end of March to Jan. 1st.

The change was said to have been published widely but as often happens, the information failed to reach everyone, and apparently there were people who didn't hear the message and continued to celebrate on April 1st. They were ridiculed because they were seen as foolish and were then called April Fools.

I think by the time you read this you will, hopefully, have survived April Fools day and are enabling the Easter message to once again take a key place in your life and heart. Having spent six weeks of Lent in a time of preparation for Easter and in reflecting on our discipleship, our prayer life and the time we set aside for God -it is now time for Easter and letting the good news of Easter take "centre stage" in our lives. Let us give it plenty of time. Easter is far more than one Sunday - Easter is a season.

My prayer this Easter season is that the Holy Spirit will lift our hearts in praise and celebration from now until Pentecost.

Let us rejoice in God's gift of salvation. Amen.

**Elizabeth Smith**

## HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT... THE PCC?

Continuing our look at the many and varied things God does within our church, we hear about what it means to be a member of the PCC...

You will, no doubt, have heard of the PCC (Parochial Church Council), but ahead of St Helen's APCM which is taking place on the 16th April, let's take a look at what being a member of it actually means.

At St Helen's, anyone who serves as a PCC member is officially a trustee of the charitable organisation, meaning that they have the responsibility of ensuring it operates correctly, of maintaining the building and grounds and of promoting the mission of the Church through prayer, worship, learning and action. PCC members serve for a term of 3 years before needing to be re-elected.

Last September, the PCC met for an 'away day' (in the heritage centre) to explore a little more about what it means to be trustees of a charity and also to set aside some time to reflect on where we, as a church, have come from and where we are heading. From these discussions, various working groups were formed to help us put our thoughts into action. These are centred around 'discipleship', 'pastoral care', 'outreach' and 'informal worship opportunities'. We are now beginning to see some fruit from these conversations.

The PCC generally meets once a month (11 times a year) to discuss an agenda set by the standing committee. Recent exciting advancements have been the formation of a new children's group— Stepping Stones— during the morning service at St Helen's which has been a real encouragement to us all, the proposal of a PRG trip to Amsterdam and subsequent planning and fundraising efforts by the group, and plans for a new outreach 'Pause for Paws' to commence after Easter.

At the APCM we will be electing new members to the PCC as well as re-electing those whose three year terms have come to an end. Perhaps serving in this capacity is something you could consider? Please do speak to Rev. Sue, a church warden or any member of the PCC if this is the case in order to be supplied with the necessary forms. Additionally, you may like to

consider serving in the role of Church Warden as Anne will be stepping down at the APCM. Please do speak to Anne or Judith for a no-commitment conversation about what this would involve if you think this could be for you.

We are so grateful for all the ways St Helen's is served by so many people giving their time and their gifts.

*<sup>10</sup> God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. <sup>11</sup> Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.'* (1 Peter 4:10-11 NLT)

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# THE ROYAL MAUNDY SERVICE

It's not every day that a letter from Buckingham Palace drops through our letter box.

Intrigued, I opened it. It told me that my name had been submitted by the Bishop to be one of the recipients at the Royal Maundy Service in Worcester Cathedral.



A whirlwind of thoughts went through my mind. Why had the Bishop picked me? There were so many folks who did far more for St Helen's than I do. How would they feel when they learnt I, rather than they, had been chosen for this honour? My only dealings with the Bishop had been a letter I sent him explaining why I thought "Shaped by God" was seriously flawed - so why would he have looked favourably on me?

I decided to say nothing. A month later Rev Sue gently enquired if I had had a letter from Buckingham Palace. I told her of the turmoil it had created and my decision not to say anything. She explained that each priest is asked for nominations of people over 70 who have roles in the community as well as the church. The Bishop then chooses from the names he has been sent. Rev Sue also thought that people at St Helen's would like to know of my selection and so I agreed that she could announce it. I was really moved by the kindness and graciousness of people's responses to the news.

As we had to be at the Cathedral from 8.45am we decided not to risk getting stuck in M5 traffic and so stayed overnight in Worcester. We had to show photo ID along with our tickets before being allowed in, but everyone was friendly and full of smiles. It was interesting to talk to the people sat nearby, all of whom had been through similar contortions of "why me?".

As the time crept towards 10am, activity levels increased. Crucifers and choristers assembled in cloisters. A quick trip to the loo ahead of the service produced some surreal moments. I narrowly avoided bumping into a huge bear like figure of a Beefeater emerging from the gents' toilet in full red and gold regalia! People juggling with swords, stirrups and robes in the toilets! Beneath all the pomp are ordinary human beings!!

The Bishop of Worcester addressed everyone prior to the service, explaining how the name Maundy had come from the Latin "Mandatum" - a commandment - and in particular, Jesus's words "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another."

The service was to honour those who had shown that love in practical ways in the church and the community. He told us how to address the Queen when given the gifts, and he went on to say that we weren't obliged to give her anything in return - not like one lady, who had given the late Queen a jar of marmalade in return for her purses of coins!

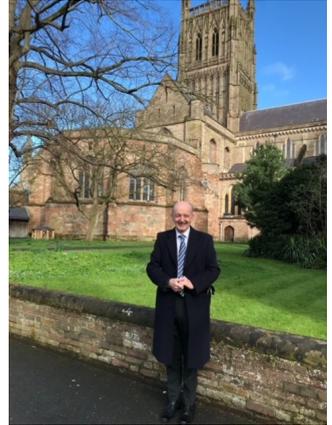
Next were processions of choirs, clergy, canons, chancellors and laity before the north doors were flung open, a spine-tingling fanfare rang out, and the Queen was processed in whilst the choir and congregation sang "Praise to the Holiest". When trumpets and descants augmented the last verse then I just dissolved. The King had recorded the first lesson - John 13 - where Jesus washes the disciples' feet. He could have been at the lectern reading, the sound quality was so good, and He then read a message, thanking the recipients for their work and emphasising the importance of the ideals of service.



This was followed by the distribution of the King's gifts. The Bishop led the Queen along the rows of recipients. She was followed by various dignitaries and then a row of Beefeaters bearing huge gold platters which held the purses. These were passed discretely from person to person in the

procession ending with the Bishop who then supplied them to Her Majesty. The platters must have been exceedingly heavy, because once empty, each Beefeater rested the front edge of the platter on the back of the Beefeater in front of him each time the procession was paused. Their arms must have ached !

When the Queen reached me, she thanked me for my work. In return I thanked her for the Maundy Gifts and asked her to convey my best wishes to the King. She was charming with everyone, and my overwhelming sense was of a woman who was serving others in the midst of huge family challenges and doing it with great dignity whatever the personal cost.



There was wonderful choral music sung throughout the distribution, culminating in “Zadock the Priest”.

The organ was accompanied by the Prince of Wales Band and the musical introduction built and built until an explosion of voices melted my insides and reducing me to tears.

The second lesson was from Mathew 25 and tells of people asking Jesus when it was that they saw him hungry, or thirsty, or naked and he replies, “Insomuch as you did it for the least of my brethren you did it to me”. When my faith is so uncertain, I love this story. It provides a balance to the emphasis placed on belief demanded by some parts of the church. Maybe I am in with a chance!

Magnificent singing of “When I survey” followed by the National Anthem and the Blessing brought us to the end of this unforgettable service and after some mutual photo taking with other recipients we emerged into the cold and rain.

So.... when you strip away the pomp and pageantry, what did it all mean to me?

The aspiration to be “living sacrifices” which we pray for after communion, is in constant tension with my desire for self-preservation and spending time doing the things I enjoy. This Maundy Service reaffirmed the values of service and sacrifice in making a better society, in being Christ to one another. The King himself was holding up Jesus’s example, and through his gifts was saying “Thank You” for the service I was giving. That is something very special to hold onto, when the going seems tough!

**Martin Vaughan**

## **A TOUCHING STORY**

‘A few years ago at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants, all physically or mentally disabled, assembled at the starting line for the 100 yard dash. At the gun, they all started out, not exactly in a dash, but with a relish to run the race to the finish and win. All, that is, except one boy who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times and began to cry. The other eight heard the boy. They slowed down and looked back. They all turned around and went back. Every one of them. One girl with Down’s Syndrome bent down and kissed him and said “This will make it better.” All nine linked arms and walked across the finish line together. Everyone in the stadium stood and the cheering went on for several minutes. People who were there are still telling the story. Why? Because deep down we know one thing. What matters most in this life is more than winning for ourselves. What truly matters in this life is helping others win, even if it means slowing down and changing our course.’

**Author unknown.**

**Submitted by Pam Watson**

## **LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN OF SANCTUARY**

Those of you following \*Basim’s story will be glad to hear that, having gained ‘Leave to Remain’ and later accepted onto the programme offered by Exaireo, (a Christian charity in Loughborough) he has now moved into a shared house and is engaging in regular meetings with his support worker. He’s actively looking for a job in order to support himself, move on with his life, and continue to contribute to community life in Loughborough. You and I would consider his accommodation basic, cramped and Spartan,

but it is clean, dry, warm and safe.

Our support for \*Basim, to bring him to this point, has been a real testament to what can be achieved when different caring agencies within the community come together. One of us from Town of Sanctuary tends to take the lead in supporting those individuals we have come to know through our various activities. But we can't do it alone and we are gradually extending our awareness of - and co-operation with - all the other voluntary agencies that can help.

Increasing numbers of those being given Leave to Remain are battling homelessness and struggling to find a way through all the complexities of our 'system' - and frankly the job is just far too big for a relatively small group of volunteers. So here's where more prayers are needed please! Together with the other voluntary bodies whose work overlaps with ours, we are currently applying for grants in order to be able to have a paid worker to co-ordinate and support what we do. Please do pray for the outcomes of these applications.

Be heartened too, as I have been, in the face of what sometimes seems to be a widespread lack of compassion in our national life, that there is actually SO much kindness out there and so many individuals and community groups working hard to support the vulnerable.

And make sure you enjoy the simple pleasures of life! A reply from \*Basim to my message (just after he had moved into his accommodation) made me determined to do so:

'Yes I go to the John Storer house' [community centre and food bank] 'to took breakfast. And I meet \*Amir and \*Yousuf and I bring them to my house and we enjoy lunch together. It's Nice day to *day*.'

*(\* Names have been changed to protect privacy.)*

**Pat Stafford**

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## OUR WORSHIP IN APRIL

	am	pm	Wednesday
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday</b> 7th April	<b>10.30 am</b> Team service at Breedon on the Hill	<b>3.30pm</b> All-Age Worship	1st Wednesday-3rd Holy Communion 10.30am In Church
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday</b> 14th April	<b>10.30 am</b> Holy Communion (with children's church)		2nd Wednesday- 10th Holy Communion 10.30am Prior Park Community centre
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday</b> 21st April	<b>10.30 am</b> Civic service at St Helen's		3rd Wednesday-17th Holy Communion 10.30am In church
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday</b> 28th April	<b>10.30 am</b> Holy Communion	<b>3.30pm</b> Messy Church Viscount Beaumont's school	4th Wednesday- 24th Morning prayer 10.30am In church

### Regular activities:

- Monday mornings - Little Fishes 9.30 - 11.30am during term time
- Mondays - Monday Group – 8pm
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday - PCC meeting – 7 till 9pm
- 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday - Knit and natter – 2 till 4pm
- Thursdays - Choir practice – 6.30 till 8.30pm
- Fridays - Heart- warming Space 1-4pm
- Saturdays - Parish Prayers – 9.30am in the Hastings chapel

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY// APRIL

**Tuesday 16th April– APCM– 7pm in St Helen’s Heritage centre.**

**Saturday 20th April– CONCORDIA CHOIR– 7.30pm**

Concordia Choir will be returning to St Helen’s, presenting ‘The Blue Bird’- Songs from the 20th century English Renaissance including Stanford, Elgar, Holst and Parry. Tickets £12, Under 18s free– available by emailing [concordiachoir@gmail.com](mailto:concordiachoir@gmail.com) or from the Tool Box (Market Street) and RedZ Café (Coxon’s Mews).

**Sunday 21st April– CIVIC SERVICE– 10.30am.**

At our 10.30 service we will be hosting the annual Ashby Civic Service and giving thanks for the work of the Town Council and Avril Wilson as Mayor over the past year.

## ASHBY YOUTH FOR CHRIST

*Ashby Youth for Christ are working across the area to see young people's lives transformed by Jesus. We would love to be able to share with you on a regular basis what we are doing.*

*If you would like to sign up for regular updates either follow this link <http://eepurl.com/dvVqri> or email [helen.davis@yfc.co.uk](mailto:helen.davis@yfc.co.uk). Alternatively you can scan the QR code.*

*Thank you for all your prayers and support.*



An invite to our AGM which will be taking place on Tuesday 16th April, 7pm at Ashby Methodist Church. This will be an encouraging opportunity to hear about our work over the past year and to thank God for His provision.

Drinks and nibbles will also be served.

We would love to see you there, but if not, please do continue to pray for all the young people in Ashby, and encourage those you know whenever possible.

## GARDENING TIPS FOR APRIL

Spring has arrived with late Daffodils, Tulips and flowering Cherries in full bloom. We can expect more sunny days, together with the inevitable April showers. Now is the time to turn our attention to the vegetable plot.

If you didn't do it in March, it is very valuable to prepare your beds and borders by improving the soil. Dig in around five centimetres thick layer of good multipurpose compost (peat free if you prefer) or well-rotted manure, as well as a small amount of all-purpose fertiliser (you now have some good organic choices).



Early April is the traditional month for planting out salads and early potatoes. Continue chitting second early and maincrop potatoes until the end of April. Potatoes take up a lot of space in borders, so consider growing them in large pots or sacks. Remember to keep potato growing areas moist and cover with fleece if frost is predicted. Finally, consider planting out onion and garlic sets, as well as broad beans which are the hardiest of the bean family. Also sow herbs like Dill, Fennel, Coriander and even Basil undercover this month. Sow outdoor varieties of Tomatoes, Chillies and Courgettes in pots undercover so they are ready to plant out in late May or June.

April is the time to feed your Roses with a high potash fertiliser to encourage healthier and stronger flowers. Don't forget to dead head faded Daffodils and Tulips but leave the green foliage in place as this will feed the bulbs next year. Rake any dead moss out of your lawn using a scarifier and apply lawn fertiliser. Also dig out any perennial weeds with a lawn weeding knife. Finally, mow your lawn but keep the blades high. Now is the time to plant Dahlia and Begonia tubers, Lilly bulbs and Summer-flowering bulbs but keep them sheltered in an inside space until the end of May.

Our Rhubarb plants have really come to life but be wary of Rhubarb flowers. These need to be cut off near to the base this month to stop them

stealing food and energy from the plant. Harvest any forced Rhubarb this month when the stems are about 25cms in length.

Spring is the key breeding season for birds and so this means that green hedges and trees must not be cut back to bare wood. You can however trim trees if absolutely necessary, but keep this to a minimum if possible. The RSPB state that bird nesting season is between March and September. Migratory birds are arriving back and so they require high protein feed such as Sunflower and Niger seeds after their long flight back to your garden. If you can, why not put up a bird nesting box (asap). Also ensure that there is a continuous supply of clean water for pour feathered friends.

Now is a good time to plant evergreen trees and shrubs. We have just put in two large Photinias and a Kerria by the side of our new wooden fence with more planting to come. General cleaning of paths, patios, decking etc, as well as frames and greenhouses, is a good way to start the season. One job we tend to forget is the cleaning and checking of garden tools such as lawn mowers and hedge trimmers before the season really starts. I find the most difficult but rewarding job for this time of year is weed control for driveways and borders. But remember ,weeding must be continued throughout the year.

There are some good bargains to be had from our local Garden Centres so they are well worth a visit.

**Alan and Alison Cross**



THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

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# MESSY CHURCH CELEBRATES PALM SUNDAY

Look who was invited to Messy Church to help us celebrate Palm Sunday! Add a donkey costume, an Easter garden, mini simnel cakes and the 'branch challenge' and THAT'S what you call a proper celebration!



The next Messy Church will be held at Viscount Beaumont's school on the 28th April, all welcome!

## PRIEST ROOM GANG

PRG would like to thank everyone who has already donated towards the cost of their upcoming trip to Amsterdam. There will be more fundraising efforts by them over the coming weeks so please do keep an eye on the notice sheets for more information. There will continue to be a book sale every Sunday after St Helen's morning service. On Sunday 21st there will also be another cake sale after church.

# FAMOUS PHRASES

The famous phrase, Jesus is fully God and fully man, seems to be a contradiction.

Nowadays we accept that Jesus is God, for that's part of our orthodox faith.

During his time on earth, the disciples could only see Jesus as a normal human, even if he was a cut above the rest in some respects.

With the hindsight of 2000 years, the part I query is 'fully man,' because certain situations recorded in the gospels make me stop and think.

Such as the passage often read out in church describing the transfiguration, as recorded in Matthew 17:1-13. It's also in Mark 9 and Luke 9.

In this drama, Jesus is for a short time in a different realm. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. As this hasn't happened to anyone in my lifetime, does it show that Jesus was not fully human?

Even theologians ponder and debate this question, namely, what is the nature of Jesus' humanity.

Other examples of Jesus demonstrating, or having access to, super powers are:

- Winning all the debates with the scholars of his time;
- Turning water into wine;
- Healing the sick;
- Raising the dead;
- Showing deep wisdom in difficult situations;
- Able to explain the Kingdom of Heaven as if he'd been there;
- Rising from the dead and staying around for forty days.

Now you could argue that Jesus was no longer fully human after rising on Easter Day. He could appear and disappear at will. He had a speaking part, which is not an ability of ghosts, if you believe in ghosts that is.

Finally, when the 40 days leading up to Pentecost were over, Jesus ascended into heaven. After this amazing event, there can be no doubt that Jesus has become the Christ and is fully God, at least in our belief. Is this a

lot different to those who die and go to heaven, even though it's not entirely clear what they become?

Both my parents are dead and I hope have gone to heaven. The difference with Christ is that he has a very powerful presence in my daily life, whereas my parents don't. Yes, I still think of them, and sometimes recall their words and deeds, but I don't call on them in times of trouble. Whereas I do feel I can call on Christ.

Some say this is the mystery of Christ, but it's more than a mystery – it's more like a personal closeness that cannot be quantified.

Possibly it's not so much about Jesus being fully human when he walked this earth, but more about his ability to be with me during my human existence.

Note, I don't get too obsessed by this. I'm not always saying to myself 'Gosh, Jesus is within me. That's fantastic!' Miracles aren't flying about in all directions, as you will have noticed. It's more like a quiet awareness of his presence. Quite subdued really, which may be more due to my personality type than anything else.

But I am confident that God can cope with all the different sorts of people on earth, and their thoughts, words, deeds, and beliefs. As with Jesus, no situation puts God in that awkward spot where he's flummoxed.

Hope you have enjoyed wrestling with this famous phrase, Jesus is fully man.

**Richard Vann**



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# Ashby Times

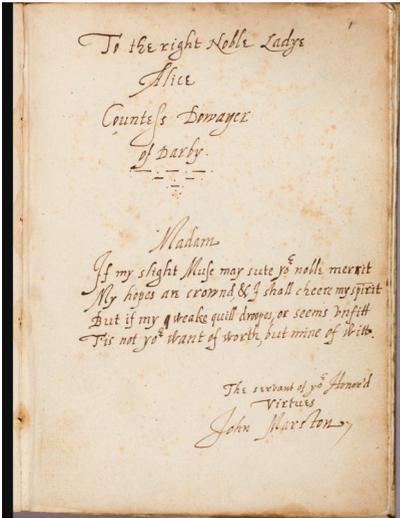
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reappeared at the top. She had changed into a white dress and declared that the spirit of the Countess's eyes had changed her.

The Countess and her party then entered the Great Chamber and the masque began. Hoboys (an old name for Oboes) played and the room was brought to order. The masque was presented by four knights and four gentlemen. Firstly, Cynthia the moon goddess appeared in her chariot, riding on a cloud. She looked down on the assembled ladies and gentlemen and demanded to know who had allowed light to banish the darkness which rightfully belonged to the night. Ariadne was also seated on a cloud and the two of them moved up and down the height of the great chamber, conversing in rhyme. At one point, Ariadne and Cynthia dismounted from their clouds and mingled with the audience singing.



The cover of the hand written script for the masque

Next, a curtain was drawn back to reveal eight male masquers in a woodland setting and dressed in classical armour like the Roman god Mercury. They waited to be called down by Ariadne, at which point violins started to play and Cynthia recited another poem. A shepherd sang a song and the masquers presented their shields and asked the ladies in the audience to dance with them. Finally, verses were given to 14 ladies to recite. Elizabeth Stanley was one of them. As the Countess departed through the castle grounds, a nymph presented her with a cabinet.

The script for the masque was written by John Marston, an English dramatist and according to the Britannica website “one of the most vigorous satirists of the Shakespearean era.” His best known work is “The Malcontent” written in 1604. The Ashby entertainment is his only masque and thought to be his last piece of writing before retiring. The script was never printed. Two handwritten copies have survived, one in the

Huntingdon Library in California, and a partial one in the British Library. The verses read out by the 14 ladies at the end were written by Sir William Skipwith, a local man in the Hastings circle.

Wendy Freer

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# FROM THE ALBUMS



We marked Mothering Sunday in our usual manner, giving out lovingly prepared posies to everyone at the service. This year we were also joined by two spring lambs to help us celebrate the occasion.



PRG hosted a very successful bake sale to raise funds for their upcoming trip. Thanks to all who supported.



Ashby's churches gathered together for a Good Friday walk of witness.



A donkey procession before the Palm Sunday service.

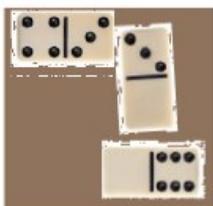




St Helen's Church & Community Heritage Centre

Every  
Friday

# HEART WARMING SPACE



All  
Welcome

1pm  
to  
4pm

Tea  
Cake  
Chat  
Cards  
Games



Includes a  
'children's  
corner'



Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE65 1AB



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The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Saint Helen, Ashby de-la Zouch. Charity Number 1200922