

# St Helen's Magazine

September 2020

Creator God,  
you loved the world into life.  
Forgive us when our dreams of the  
future  
are shaped by anything other than  
glimpses of a kingdom  
of justice, peace and an end to  
poverty.

Incarnate God,  
you taught us to speak out for what  
is right.  
Make us content with nothing less  
than a world  
that is transformed into the  
shape of love,  
where poverty shall be no more.

Breath of God,  
let there be abundant life.  
Inspire us with the vision of  
poverty over,  
and give us the faith, courage  
and will to make it happen.

St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch



Loving God, loving others, loving the world



# St. Helen's Hidden Nature

Sept 5th - September 20th

As part of the Hello Heritage & Heritage Open Days this year, please join us on Facebook, Instagram and our website to take part in our Hidden Nature event.

Did you know St. Helen's had strong Royal connections? Look out for the **'Heritage on your doorstep'** exhibition board on the church gates to learn more!



Even though we can't be inside the church, outside lies a treasure trove of natural images waiting to be discovered. From Sept 5th, download our **Nature Hunt** and take your time wandering the churchyard to see if you can find all the clues !



We will also be posting on-line articles exploring churchyard plant life and uncovering the natural iconography embedded on tombs and church monuments



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HIDDEN NATURE

Heritage on your doorstep...

North West  
Leicestershire



## Editor Writes ...

And so we have arrived at the Autumn Term and the children of Ashby who attend school have headed back there. You can read some of what Ashby Youth For Christ has been doing to help them prepare on page 32.



Sometimes this term is known as Michaelmas, named for the feast of Saint Michael the Archangel on 29<sup>th</sup> September. In most depictions in western art Michael is represented as an angelic warrior, fully armed with helmet, sword, and shield, although in late-medieval Western art he may have what are known as 'feather tights'. Now there's an image! This is the art historians' name for a sort of figure-hugging body suit with large scale-like overlapping downward-pointing elements representing feathers, worn in addition to having large wings. How tickled I am! See why Elizabeth Smith is tickled pink on page 6.

Archangel Michael is often shown standing over a serpent, a dragon, or the defeated figure of Satan, whom he sometimes pierces with a lance. The highest award given to British officials who work abroad is the order of St Michael and St George. This consists of a star and a little enamel painting, which shows St Michael standing on the neck of the devil, and the devil is a black man. Oh dear.

Interestingly, while reading about the voyage of the Mayflower in 1620, for an article on page 16, I discovered that the first year African enslaved people were taken to America by European colonisers was 1619 – i.e. the year before. No wonder change is so difficult. Read an uplifting story from Mandy McIntosh about change for the better on page 14. Women bringing about change is also Wendy Freer's theme this month – see her interesting article about an early 20th century Ashby figure on page 20.

Although Oxford and Cambridge Universities agree on the appellation Michaelmas for the first term of the academic year they then diverge, Oxford's Spring and Summer Terms being known as Hilary and Trinity, whereas Cambridge knows them as Lent and Easter. Is this a good example of how you can completely disagree with another point of view but still get along? Hmmm. I might be stretching that analogy to breaking point. On page 28 read about John Hume, a man who managed to take disagreements to breaking point and, ultimately, create an agreement. It's fair to say his thinking was flexible enough to handle different points of view – something Richard Vann is musing about on page 24.

John Hume believed in talking, and talking and talking, and Mary is instigating a conversation over the page.

Or we could just divide into two halves and shout at each other - See some liturgy which encourages this on page 13.

*Jill Chapman*



# Revd Mary Writes ...

**D**ear Friends

It's difficult to believe that it's September! There is a part of me still waiting to do an Easter egg hunt, or take a donkey ride on the sands, a handkerchief knotted jauntily to my head. (Vicars are not allowed to disport themselves in 'Kiss Me Quick' hats!) This disorientation, of course, is the seasonal variation of the more common 'What day is it?' affliction that has so beset us over these past months.

Although the rhythm of time in which we root ourselves appears to have gone AWOL, and our 2020 diaries have firmly established themselves as the least useful things we have ever bought, it is important, if we can, to live the distinctiveness of each moment, of each season; to find ways of marking the passage from day to night to day again, from month to month, summer to autumn, autumn to winter. This deliberate acknowledgment of time passing is what we read in *Genesis* as, after each day of creation, the writer repeats the refrain, 'There was evening, and there was morning, the first (second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth) day.'

I wonder how we might mark, usefully mark, the passing of time, might fully live each season in its distinctiveness? It might begin with pausing to think of what we associate with each month.

For me, September is 'back to school' (even if, in Leicestershire back to school is actually late August): shiny shoes, bright white shirts, a new pencil case full of sharpened pencils and fully charged fountain pens as smart as soldiers on parade, empty exercise books holding the promise of future brilliance just waiting to be captured. And September is blackberries ripening on brambles, apples falling from trees, chilly mornings, days often full of warmth, longer nights, the seduction of favourite winter jumpers beckoning.

September is, then, both about new beginnings and about preparing for more gruelling months ahead (of the 'all is safely gathered in, 'ere the winter storms begin' variety). How, then, might each of us live these twin movements of September? - what might we *begin* and how might we *prepare* for the days to come? To prepare, you might like to jam, pickle and preserve every fruit and vegetable in sight. To begin, you might want to buy a new exercise book to record your *magnum opus*, or (re)start the Couch to 5k, or sign up to an online course.

This beginning, this preparing, might also become spiritual disciplines, too. As well as preserving fruit and veg, what might you have discovered this



lock-down summer that you want to save and carry with you into the winter months? What have you discovered about yourself, or about your faith, that you don't want to lose? What do you want to capture now to look back on in darker, more difficult days. The poet TS Eliot wrote of 'the things I shore up against my ruins'. What are those things for you? How will you hold on to them so that they might shore you up? Journaling - a kind of reflective diary-writing can be helpful for this. (And - lo! - a use for that 2020 diary.)

And as for a new beginning, for that back-to-school vibe, why not join me in exploring what the Church of England has called *Pastoral Principles for Living Well Together*; a series of conversation-starters, helping us look at our communities of faith, especially the underlying prejudices which we might bring into our life together, prejudices which might effect, especially, our welcome of LGBTI+ people. These conversations will be held on Zoom on Wednesday evenings from 7.30-8.30pm on 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September, and 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> October (with 7<sup>th</sup> October a week off for good behaviour - and the Staunton Harold annual meeting). Please email me if you'd like to be part of this conversation; new pencil cases optional.



However you choose to mark this season of new beginnings and preserving, may God bless you and be close to you in the evening and in the morning, at the turning of each new day.

With love

**Mary**

## Shoes!

If you were perplexed by the image on this month's cover, it's lots of pairs of children's shoes held in pairs by rubber bands. The reason is Elizabeth Smith's Prayer for the Day when she spoke about shoe poverty. We heard how in the UK, 4 million children are living in shoe poverty, and yet, despite the overwhelming need for footwear, every single week in the UK 2 million shoes are sent to landfill, with each pair taking 100 years to biodegrade.

Three things Liz suggested we can do are to recycle, to re-use and to reflect in prayer, and Christian Aid's appropriate prayer also appears on the cover.

You might be interested in the work of Shoe Aid too - it's a charity which is working with some of the largest organisations in the UK to reduce shoe poverty, and reduce footwear waste and its impact on the environment. Their website if you would like to find out more is [www.shoeaid.co.uk](http://www.shoeaid.co.uk)

# One more step-and then another and then....

On 12<sup>th</sup> September I log onto a Zoom link and start my training for Reader ministry.

How did that happen?

## *Getting started*

I think my answer might go something like this. As part of the family of St Helen's, I am involved in quite a number of groups and activities. Without me really acknowledging it, I started to realise that God might be asking me to explore further my service with church activities, and be more involved with services and mission and ministry.

## *Next step*

The opportunity arose for me to share these thoughts with Reverend Mary Gregory and she suggested I attend a vocation day "Everyday Calling" at St Martin's House in Leicester. The day was for all those sensing God's calling in their everyday lives and how they should respond to that. In March I attended the day and was able to have conversations with people in specific roles including: Priests, Deacons, Ordinands, Readers, Pioneers, Pastoral Assistants.

Somehow I seem to take-

## *The Next step.*

I started the Discernment process for Reader ministry. There were forms to fill and references to be obtained, and a presentation to prepare.

On 11<sup>th</sup> July I attended the Discernment conversation on Zoom. The panel listened to my presentation and asked me many questions.

The *next step* was to wait patiently (or impatiently) for a week or two. It gave me time to reflect and ponder. What will be my next step? Will it be training for Reader ministry?

It was - It is, and now I need to follow the path and take each step as it appears. I know I am not alone.

Thank you to everyone who has supported me with prayer and encouragement.



**Elizabeth Smith**



## Gardening God's Way



Thank you to Kathy Hart, who shared this poem with us in one of her Prayers for the Day.



Plant three rows of peas:  
Peace of mind  
Peace of heart  
Peace of soul



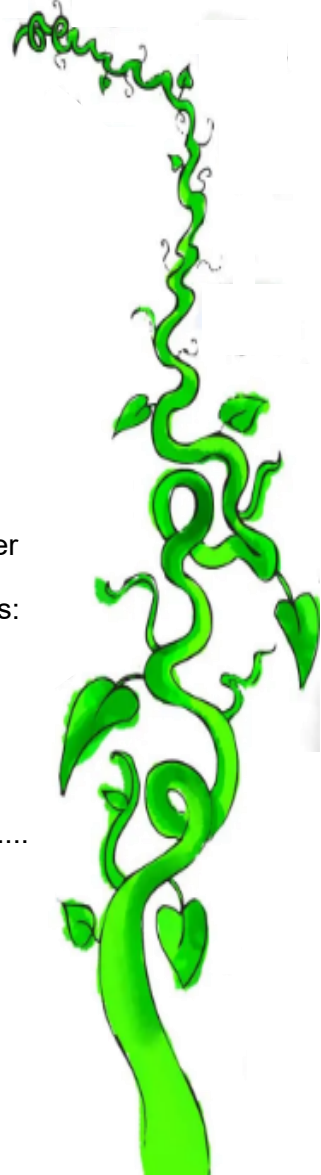
Plant four rows of lettuce:  
Lettuce be faithful  
Lettuce be kind  
Lettuce be obedient  
Lettuce really love one another



Water freely with patience and  
Cultivate with love.  
There is abundance in your garden....  
Because you reap what you sow.



Pretty nice garden!





## Making Connections

**W**e recently took a short break in the Churnet Valley, near the village of Alton, in North Staffordshire. The rolling, steeply swooping hills and valleys of the area are very different to the gentle landscape of North West Leicestershire and more reminiscent of the rollercoasters at nearby Alton Towers.

As we walked through the valley, we were struck by how familiar the sandstone bedrock of the area looked. We know that St Helen's Church is constructed of local sandstone and limestone and it is possible that the original 15<sup>th</sup> century stone came from the Alton area.

Quarrying in the area goes back at least to the 1600s and probably earlier. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were still many small quarries in the Alton area. The main one now is Staffordshire Stone, based at Hollington, which produces Hollington Red, Mottled and Cream sandstone. Hollington sandstone is fine grained and ranges in colour from a creamy white to various shades of pinkish brown.

Between the villages of Alton and Farley, the River Churnet cuts through steep sandstone cliffs. Farley parish has heavily quarried outcrops of carboniferous limestone, also known as 'Bath stone.' Both 'Bath stone' and 'Hollington' sandstone are recorded as having been used in the Victorian extension of St Helen's and Alton is mentioned as the source. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it's likely that the stone arrived in Ashby by train, though it would have been a much longer and more difficult journey in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Now, Alton, with its fairy tale castle and medieval houses, is less than an hour away from Ashby by car.



Alton Parish Church, which has 12<sup>th</sup> century origins, shows ashlar (dressed sandstone) blocks very similar to those used in the construction of St Helen's.



A sandstone outcrop  
in the Churnet Valley

**Julie Starkey**

# Taking Turns at Freaking Out

Nadia Bolz-Weber is an author, Lutheran minister and public theologian. She was the founding pastor of House for All Sinners and Saints, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Denver, Colorado, until July 8, 2018. This is one of her lockdown prayers.



**Sunday Prayers - August 16<sup>th</sup> 2020**

**Total freak-out edition**

**D**ear God.

We are going to just be taking turns for a while, if that's ok. Yesterday was mine. My turn to be depressed-as-hell about the closing of beloved, been-around-for-decades local businesses. My turn to be afraid because the wildfires are so bad that my eyes sting and the interstate is closed. My turn to be angry. My turn to indulge in post-apocalyptic future-casting. (OK maybe I shouldn't have watched Mad Max this week.)

Please help me not feel bad when it's my turn, Lord. And with your grace, may my turn to completely freak out not last one minute longer than necessary. But also may it last as long as needed in order to allow it to pass when it's time to move on and just go make the salad for dinner.

And Lord, may I be a non-anxious presence to the next person whose turn it is. May I not fear their fear so much that I fail to listen well. When I have even the tiniest extra bit of hope may I offer it without fear of being judged for "not paying attention".

And may I remember that my terror is not a sign of your absence and my hope is not a sign of your presence.

Because you never take turns.

Amen.

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# Life is a roller coaster?

I believe it was Ronan Keating who sang 'Life is a roller coaster' - quickly I must add that I am not a RK fan. What's more what a daft song title!!

Perhaps, I'm being rather grumpy after a family visit to Alton Towers last week. But if life was a roller coaster surely you'd queue for 2 hours and then finally get on for it to be over 2 minutes later. Therefore it is surely a weary cliché or at least a tired analogy... or is it?

I think the crux of the matter is the likening to the ups and downs of life.

Being a curate has certainly opened my eyes to the expanse of the ups and downs people go through, whilst also being on that roller coaster too.

Although this reveals yet another flaw in the analogy because different people will experience the ups and downs of varying severity at different times, so it is not like we are in the same car / train. We travel at different times. Often I have found that whatever I have been going through myself



somebody else has been worse effected.

So yes, life has it's ups and downs of different proportions. The book of Psalms in the bible is brilliant demonstration of these ups and downs, and the ups are tall and the

downs are deep. Yet the constant is God, God's presence is there whatever we are facing. The downs can still be deep but we are not alone in the those depths. The reality of some of these Psalms is pure suffering and despair, which reflects the harshness of reality we sometimes face. The idea of God being present in those times is not a sugar coated fantasy but a hope-giving sense of reality.

Whether our experience is one of pain and suffering, despair, despondency after getting things wrong, abandonment, disbelief, lament or anything else there is something in the Psalms that relates to where we are, there is also praise, thanks giving, jubilation, direction, progression through faith and hope. But the one thing the psalms share is that wherever you are they are a signpost to God.

Best wishes  
**Stewart Betts**



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# I Will Speak Out For Those Who Have No Voices

Judith Lewis used the words of this hymn in one of her night prayers during August. The text worked well spoken, and when I Googled it I found several suggestions of using it as liturgy rather than as a hymn, perhaps at the close of a service as a prayer of commitment, or by dividing up the lines between two halves of the congregation, with them facing each other as they exhort each other to action for justice:

L: I will speak out for those who have no voices;

R: I will stand up for the rights of all the oppressed;

L: I will speak truth and justice;

R: I'll defend the poor and the needy;

**All: I will lift up the weak in Jesus' name.**

L: I will speak out for those who have no choices;

R: I will cry out for those who live without love;

L: I will show God's compassion

R: to the crushed and broken in spirit;

**All: I will lift up the weak in Jesus' name.**

However, it has a catchy tune too - you can listen to it on the pipe organ on YouTube.

The hymn is based on Proverbs 31, verses 8-9:

<sup>8</sup> Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.

<sup>9</sup> Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. King James Version

<sup>8</sup> Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves;  
ensure justice for those being crushed.

<sup>9</sup> Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless,  
and see that they get justice. New Living Translation

<sup>8</sup> Speak out for those who cannot speak,  
for the rights of all the destitute.

<sup>9</sup> Speak out, judge righteously,  
defend the rights of the poor and needy. New Revised Standard Version

<sup>8-9</sup> Speak up for the people who have no voice,  
for the rights of all the down-and-outers.

Speak out for justice!

Stand up for the poor and destitute!

The Message

**Jill Chapman**



# The Power of Work to Change the Future



Ashalata\* lives with her husband, Benoy, their two daughters and her mother-in-law in a remote village in the north west of Bangladesh. When Benoy became sick, he wasn't able to provide for the family in the way he used to. Life became even more difficult for them. The dreams Ashalata had for her daughters were starting to dry up. But she wasn't going to give in without a fight.

The couple couldn't afford to send their daughters to school. Ashalata wanted better for them – a way out of the vicious cycle of poverty they were trapped in.

When she was a child Ashalata was taught to weave mats from dry reeds. She noticed that there was a demand for these mats at her local market. But a good idea only gets you so far.

Even though she had the skills and motivation to try and turn her family's fortune around, Ashalata had no money to buy the raw materials she needed to start this new business. Without this she had nothing. But Tearfund's local partner, World Concern, saw the potential in Ashalata and her idea.

They met with Ashalata and gave her the money and support she needed to get started. Within a week she was weaving mats at home. And then things really began to take off.

It used to take Ashalata a day to complete a mat. Now she can weave several a day. Inspired by his wife, Benoy has also taken up basket weaving. Working together, this home business has turned their lives around. They no longer go hungry – and best of all – they have enough money to send their daughters to school.

And it doesn't end there. When Ashalata's business began turning a profit she had a choice to make: what to do with the extra money. She could have saved it or spent it on her family. Instead, she's decided to invest it in other women, giving them the same opportunity she had to escape poverty. Even in these uncertain times

Ashalata is determined to help lift other vulnerable women out of poverty. 'I wish to expand my business, where seven to ten poor women will be employed, and



also buy some land for my family,' Ashalata says.

Almighty God,  
Thank you for the skills and creativity you have blessed each of us with. Give us wisdom in how – like Ashalata – we can use them to help lift people out of poverty. And in these challenging times, we pray that everyone will still have the opportunity to turn their lives around.  
Amen.

**Mandy McIntosh**



Note: The baskets I have used in this article come from Madagascar. They are supplied to fair2all by Madaraff, a wholesaler that ensures the people who make them are paid fairly. Buying fairly traded products you are supporting meaningful work that changes people's lives, as it did 'Ashalata' (\*the name has been changed to protect her identity) in the Tearfund article above.



## Pilgrim Fathers ... and Mothers

This year sees the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower, the ship that carried English colonists across the Atlantic to the 'new world' of North America. On 6<sup>th</sup> September 1620, 102 passengers set sail from Plymouth, Devon. There were 47 men, 18 women including 3 who were pregnant, and 37 children and teenagers.

Many on board were Puritans, a radical branch of Protestantism, who didn't believe the reformation had gone far enough. They wanted to see all Catholic traditions and practices stripped from the church. This meant they wanted to be rid of anything not in the bible, and this could include a wide variety of practices, from having no stained-glass in the windows, to not kneeling whilst you pray. The reformation had brought the bible in English so they could read and study scripture, and they felt they could have a much more direct relationship with God and that they should be able to make decisions themselves.

Half of the Puritans on board were Separatists. Separatism originated in the 1580s in the reign of Elizabeth I, and Separatists were the most radical kind of Puritans who wanted an even more thorough reform. Their religious practices had to be clandestine, as anyone holding services not sanctioned by the Church of England could incur severe legal penalties, including banishment from the realm, prison and even torture.

Some of the Separatists on the Mayflower had already chosen to leave England in 1608 for the Netherlands. They



were on board a small ship called the Speedwell 12 years later, leaving the Netherlands and planning to travel to America in conjunction with the Mayflower. When the Speedwell proved to be unseaworthy the Separatists decided to go to America on the Mayflower alone.

Several aborted attempts on the Speedwell delayed departure, which meant sailing into an autumnal Atlantic. For a boat of this size it was tough. The treacherous journey took 66 days but, despite what must have been a



terrifying ordeal for all on board, no one died on the journey, even the passenger who fell overboard mid-Atlantic.

The pioneers arrived on 11<sup>th</sup> November in Cape Cod in Massachusetts, further north than intended. John Carver was elected leader, and the men including servants, but not the women, decided how to govern. They found themselves in a dangerous and wild place, and it was winter. They battled harsh weather, disease and internal dissent as they struggled to establish their new colony. Carver died within 3 months, and half of the pilgrims died before spring.

The indigenous people, the Wampanoag tribe, helped the newcomers survive that first year, equipping them to cultivate food. Both groups took part in what has been described as the 'First Thanksgiving' in 1621.

The Pilgrim Fathers believed it was their divine mission to spread Christianity, and so to convert the indigenous population. This was an idea embedded within the English colonial project for North America from the 1580s onwards.

The arrival of the Mayflower was the start of a wave of faith-based migration that would last several decades. After 1620 tens of thousands of pilgrim families crossed the Atlantic to New England, establishing colonies across the region. Their beliefs became the foundation for a new religious intellectual and social order. Puritans believed in the separation of church and state. The state had no authority over what the church can do by way of doctrine or appointing ministers. In worship they eliminated the Book of Common Prayer. They had no bishops or hierarchy, and lay people had a significant voice.

Today in America there is kudos attached to being descendants of those who travelled on the Mayflower, and 35 million Americans claim to be. But although the Mayflower is seen as the origin story of the United States, Jamestown had been settled in 1607, and was the first permanent settlement in the US. It hasn't gained the same recognition, possibly because the Mayflower was seen as a search for freedom, whereas Jamestown, by contrast, was seen as a profit-seeking disaster.

We're used to people today coming to Britain to escape from religious violence or imprisonment for their beliefs or punishment for their writings. How strange to think that there was a time when that was the experience of religious minorities in this country - The story of the Mayflower is that all too familiar tale about a group of believers who were persecuted for their faith and who fled to start a new life in another country.

**Jill Chapman**

## Service Pattern

**W**e have worshipping together, on-line, since the Lockdown began. The first opening up of our church building was for private prayer on Saturday mornings. Next, at the end of July, we started our 4pm services, in church and also live-streamed to Facebook and available on our website. And now we take the next step:

### Sunday worship

#### For September

- 6<sup>th</sup> September  
10.30am All-Age worship, streamed live from home  
4.00pm Holy Communion at Isley Walton
- 13<sup>th</sup> September  
10.30am Holy Communion streamed from home  
4.00pm Evening Prayer at St Helen's, live-streamed
- 20<sup>th</sup> September  
10.30am Holy Communion at St Helen's, live-streamed  
4.00pm Holy Communion at Staunton Harold
- 27<sup>th</sup> September  
10.30am Holy Communion at St Helen's, live-streamed  
4.00pm Holy Communion at Breedon

#### From October

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday  
10.30am All-Age worship, streamed live from home  
4.00pm Holy Communion at Isley Walton
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday  
10.30am Holy Communion, streamed live from St Helen's  
4.00pm Holy Communion at Worthington
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 10.30am  
Holy Communion, streamed live from St Helen's  
4.00pm Holy Communion at Staunton Harold
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday  
10.30am Holy Communion, streamed live from St Helen's  
4.00pm Holy Communion at Breedon on the Hill
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday  
10.30am Flagstaff Family Service of Holy Communion, streamed live from home.

To help us make sure that the number of people who come along to the 4.00pm services can be accommodated in the socially-distanced seats available, please 'book' a seat for these services by emailing Jill Chapman by Saturday evening at [sthelensashby@gmail.com](mailto:sthelensashby@gmail.com)

### **Wednesday worship**

The 10.00am service of Holy Communion will be streamed live from St Helen's from Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

### **Daily Prayer**

Prayer for the Day will continue daily except Wednesday and Sunday. It is posted to our churches Facebook pages at around 8am each day.

**Compline** will be live-streamed to the St Helen's Facebook page at 9.00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays only during September. We will not have Compline during October and November, but will pick it up again for the season of Advent in December. This will be one of the ways in which we will seek to make Advent distinctive in a year when our traditional ways of marking it might not be open to us.

Recordings of St Helen's Church services, service booklets and hymn sheets can be found on the website under Church Life, and also on the St Helen's Facebook page

### **New Faces**

Some new contributors to on-line worship have included Martin Vaughan and Elizabeth Smith bringing us Prayer for the Day:



And Alison Cross Makaton signing for us in the All-Age service.

## Hilda Beatrice Kenyon

This month I have chosen to feature a remarkable Ashby woman, Hilda Beatrice Kenyon, (born Hilda Beatrice Dewes), but I must point out that the research on this woman has been done by Martin Pantling who has made an extensive study of the first women to be appointed as magistrates in Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland during the 1920s.

Hilda was born in Ashby in 1873 and her family were closely connected with St Helen's Church. Her father was William Pettit Dewes, a prominent local solicitor, who was closely involved with the building of the extensions to the church in the 1870s. He was prominent in the town in other ways too, being Registrar and Acting High Bailiff at the County Court and Clerk to the 'Ashby Board of Guardians'. He was also a trustee of the National School (now the museum and library in North Street) of which Hilda's grandfather had been one of the founding trustees in 1836. The Dewes family were strong supporters of St Helen's and gifted considerable funds to the parish.

Little is known of Hilda's early life, but in 1897, she married Henry Thomas Kenyon a cattle rancher. The wedding took place in St Peters Church, Buenos Ayres and for about seven years, the couple lived in Argentina where Henry owned a large estate. Henry had been born in Great Ness, Shropshire to a family which, like Hilda's, was closely connected to the Anglican Church. His father was the Vicar of Great Ness, so it is not known how the connection with Argentina and cattle ranching came about. In 1904, they returned to the UK and settled in a large house in Mill Street, Packington. Henry, who was some twenty years Hilda's senior, died in 1911 and Hilda's life took quite a different turn.

She had developed an interest in the Poor Law over a number of years and, in April 1919, she was elected to the Board of Guardians for the Ashby Poor Law Union. This Union governed the Ashby workhouse as well as administering Poor Law relief to people in the community. She was immediately elected to the "House Committee" which had special responsibility for the workhouse and she also served on the Finance Committee and the Boarding and Orphans Committee. At a Board meeting in November 1919, Hilda asked why it was that workhouse girls who had gone to work as domestic service were not being paid at the same rate as other girls. The Chairman replied that one workhouse girl had been receiving £7 a year, now raised to £8, another was getting 3s. 6d. a week, but she was out of the jurisdiction of the Board. Hilda said that she thought it was ridiculously low wages and that a girl of 17 could easily get £12, but I have not found out whether this resulted in any improvement.

She also voiced her opinion at other meetings about things she felt needed improvement and, along with a Mr T Parker, she was elected to attend the Association of Poor Law Unions of England and Wales in early 1921.

However, despite her keen participation in the activities of the Board, she served only one term as she was not re-elected.

In 1923, she was appointed as a magistrate, only the second woman magistrate in the county, although four women had preceded her in the City of Leicester, and Maude Fanny Morris of Market Bosworth had been the first Leicestershire female magistrate,



appointed in 1920. The first female magistrate in England was Ada Summers of Stalybridge, appointed in 1919.

Hilda sat mainly in Ashby and Coalville until 1929 when she left Leicestershire and joined the supplementary list. At some time before then she had moved from Packington and lived at “Charnwood” in Leicester Road, Ashby. Shortly after 1929 she moved to London where she lived at various addresses, but she obviously maintained her connection with Argentina. In October 1936, she was shown on the first-class passenger list of the Asturias, Royal Mail Lines Ltd. arriving in Southampton from Buenos Aires. She died in London in December 1947.

Following Martin Pantling’s research on Hilda and other female magistrates, a play “No Smoke Without Fire” was written about the first trial presided over by Ada Sommers, the first English female magistrate. It was performed by local magistrates in Leicester Town Hall on 14th March 2020 – immediately before COVID-19 lockdown! Pudding Bag Productions have been working with Martin and the intention is to produce a film drama about the life of Hilda Beatrice Kenyon as soon as pandemic restrictions allow.

The photograph shows some of the Ashby Poor law Guardians in 1920. The woman in the centre is thought to be Hilda Beatrice Kenyon. Courtesy of Ashby de la Zouch Museum.

**Wendy Freer**



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# Mothers' UNION

## Christian care for families

### Thank You Key Workers Appeal

Nationally, the Mothers' Union has launched a fund-raising appeal to say thank you to our key workers and their families during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been recognised that because of the extraordinary demands that have been made of our essential workers, from hospital staff to delivery drivers, carers to cleaners, and refuse collectors to bus drivers, quality family time has not always been possible.

Families and supporting family life have always been at the heart of our work, and we recognise the importance of making time to step away from the stresses of everyday life, reconnect and create memories – enhancing wellbeing is essential to healthy lives and healthy families. Therefore, MU is extending our existing Away From It All (AFIA) Programme to say a special 'thank you' to key workers in these unprecedented times.

Donations via [virginmoneygiving.com/fund/mothersunionkeyworkers](https://virginmoneygiving.com/fund/mothersunionkeyworkers) will help provide a range of day trips/experiences and short breaks for families of key workers to help rebuild connections and togetherness, especially for those who have been kept apart or who are on low incomes – families who would be unable to have experiences like this.

If you know a key worker who you think deserves a break, you can nominate them on the Mothers' Union website: [www.mothersunion.org](https://www.mothersunion.org).

**Beryl Stephens**



# Stones

I was cycling along the path that starts where Pretoria Road finishes, in a quest to explore Battram Wood. Then ahead I noticed two men blocking the track. One was crouching and putting things into a bag, while the other stood by. Neither noticed me approaching, and I could see the man near the ground was putting stones into a sack. He looked up and said 'Hi,' while the man standing moved aside to let me pass.

When out and about you see many things, some of them strange.

We will never know why these two were collecting stones, because I didn't stop to ask. Too intrusive.

But on reflection, the stones remind me of a well known poem from the book of Ecclesiastes. It includes:

"A time to cast away stones,  
And a time to gather stones"

And what do you do when you come across a strange verse like this?

Most would give up and move on to another with an easier interpretation. Yet it's hard to forget this text if you've just seen two men collecting stones.

So let's ask again, what does it mean?

Promise me you won't straightway google it. If you do, you'll instantly kill off your own imagination. Losing a stone or a brick might be bad luck; losing your imagination is a disaster.

So at this point you might take a break to ponder this casting away and gathering up. You may start to have some fabulous ideas and insights that are special to you. Develop them, expand them. That's my challenge to you.

Do you need some clues?

First, Ecclesiastes is one of the bible's books of wisdom, which includes



Psalms and Proverbs. So the verse is probably not information for builders, and probably not about stones at all. That's useful to know, because it allows your exploring to go far and wide, and your thoughts to be worth discussing.

The second clue is that this verse comes from a sort of two person drama in chapter 3. Imagine a stage, with a narrator, sitting. And nearby is a poet, standing.

The narrator starts with:

To everything there is a season,  
A time for every purpose under heaven.

Then the poet kicks in with:

A time to be born,  
And a time to die;  
...etc...

After the poem you will find the narrator speaks again, a bit like an Alan Bennett talking head. Note, the narrator doesn't want to bombard you with facts; rather to have a conversation with you, where your ideas are valued.

There is a third clue.

The poem seems to be talking of opposites, like casting away and gathering up. And it implies there is a right time to do one thing, and a right time to do the opposite. Very confusing, because how do we know if it's the right time to be doing whatever?

But stay with the confusion in your mind, and regard it a challenge instead. Then the treasure you'll find in this verse will be different and unique to you.

Let's now increase the scope. Beyond our purely personal reflections, are we allowed to extend the conversation and ask what the stones may mean for our church community? Is now the right time to do something differently, or to change our attitude?

We may also develop our theology. Instead of wanting everything to be well-defined, water-tight, and nailed to the deck, possibly we should consider a mindset that's fluid, and flexible enough to handle different points of view.

Further, maybe we should use drama to explain an idea, like Jesus created the story of the Good Samaritan to illustrate who is our neighbour.

Enough of all that! It's now time to get out my OS map, and find a new place in the National Forest to explore.

**Richard Vann**

# Kim's Game

As part of our All-Age service on August 2<sup>nd</sup> we enjoyed playing this classic memory game. Here are all the items for a cut-out-and-keep version to play again at home. If you want to see the service again it's available under 'On-line Services and Readings' on the St Helen's website [www.sthelensashby.net](http://www.sthelensashby.net) along with all the other services we've had since Lockdown began.





## Keeping Up with the Moving Goal Posts

If nothing else in the 'new normal', we are all having to learn to adapt to new situations, comply with new regulations and generally do the best we can. I was surprised that when I was asked 'How long have you been re-opened' I had to think hard. Having the till behind the screen, wearing a mask and ensuring the clothes go into quarantine for 72 hours together with regular wiping down has become absorbed into our daily routine.



I am ensuring that I am keeping a good range of cards as customers are buying several at a time, so they have plenty to keep in touch with friends and family. Inevitably the washable, cotton face masks continue to be popular as we realise there have been times when having a spare in our car or bag has been useful.

Without Autumn Fair (a big trade buying event) in early September it won't be possible to see new products, but some suppliers are being very creative and offering 'virtual tours' of their stands. So don't worry there will be plenty of choice

available – I am working through each supplier and placing orders; today's priority was to restock both large and small Divine Chocolate bars as I think many customers are buying one to 'fuel' their walk home! Before the end of the week I will have ordered a selection of lovely, sturdy, shopping baskets in a range of autumn colours, ideal to carry your shopping on your walk home. Equally they would make a very useful and special gift.

Other events may have had to be cancelled or postponed, but the plan is that Ashby's Fabulous (hopefully with the usual live models) will be happening on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October so book the date.

As we had to cancel our last minute holiday in France we are trying to book an alternative but... It is therefore possible that fair2all's opening hours may be reduced in my absence to 10am – 2pm most days. Please phone 01530 417286 to check the shop is open if you plan to visit after 2pm.

Thanks.

**Mandy McIntosh**

fair2all, 17 Bath Street Ashby

## **"When People Are Divided, the Only Solution Is Agreement"**

**T**he Irish nationalist politician John Hume died in August. I'm sure we all saw the news coverage - what an amazing and heroic man. The list of people who paid tribute to him included leaders from all over the world and every walk of life.



The key thing about John Hume was that his was the vision that lay behind the Northern Ireland peace process, and he played a pivotal role in ensuring the process led, ultimately, to the Good Friday Agreement, the multiparty peace accord signed in April 1998.

I was vaguely aware of him at the time, but I was busy in 1998 – I had two small children. Yes, of course, I knew that there was a peace agreement between the British and Irish governments, and was impressed. Maybe I'm even more impressed now because we know with hindsight that it has held up pretty well, effectively bringing an end to 'The Troubles', which had blighted the region for thirty years. I also noticed the news coverage when he

and David Trimble leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize later that same year. But I don't think I was paying enough attention.

When John Hume died on 3<sup>rd</sup> August I was struck, not only by the praise heaped upon him, but the sort of things that were being said. I'd just written a piece for August's magazine about the 'life of good trouble' of American politician John Lewis when here was another politician driven by his faith. And in a context which looked just as unlikely to have a solution - the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland. I'm surely not alone in equating religion with division in Northern Ireland. But here was a man who managed to establish a cross-community consensus for peace and the future direction of the region, a man with a very strong religious instinct which drove him to try to bring people together, to be a builder of connections, to believe that peace could be achieved by talking.

I started reading about him. He was born and brought up in Derry, the eldest of seven children. His father was unemployed and they were poor. After leaving school he spent some years as a seminarian training for the priesthood before finding a different vocation, becoming first a teacher and then an activist. He was a prominent figure in the civil rights campaigns of the late 1960s and, recognising that poverty disempowers people, he played a leading role in the formation of the credit union movement. He was a

founding member of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and served as its leader for 22 years.

He seems to have been the man Northern Ireland needed at that moment. The more I read the more I thought of Queen Esther coming to her position 'for such a time as this.' He was the man with the will, and the necessary gifts.

One of his key strengths was analysing the Northern Ireland problem correctly. Unlike many others he realised that it wasn't a question of the British getting the Loyalists and the Republicans around the table, it was a question of getting the Republicans and the British establishment around the table.

Another of his gifts seemed to be believing that solutions were possible. And he was dogged in his determination that bridges would be built that would make that solution happen. His participation in secret talks with leader of Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams, in the late 1980s and early 1990s was a key catalyst for the beginnings of a peace process. He faced intense criticism, including some from within his own party, when this dialogue became public in 1993. But, despite threats to his life, and to his family, and his wife asking him to reconsider his course of action, he persisted with his efforts to engage and build consensus. The result was the Hume-Adams statement of 1993.

He was most certainly brave. As Father Paul Farren said at his funeral, "We should never underestimate how difficult it was for John to cross the road and do what was intensely unpopular for the greater good. Even in the darkest moments, when people would have been forgiven for having no hope, John made peace visible for others."

He was also a consummate builder of connections who could muster international energies to deliver – he built connections with Europe (he later served as an MEP), who encouraged the British government to be involved in talks, and with the USA who put pressure on the Irish Republicans to move beyond their existing strategy.

Given such great abilities to create links it's not surprising so many world leaders eulogised him after his death, including former US President Bill Clinton who said, "He fought his long war for peace in Northern Ireland, his chosen weapons an unshakeable commitment to non-violence, persistence, kindness and love. He was Ireland's Martin Luther King."

Perhaps his greatest gift was that he was a humanitarian in every manifestation of his life. As he himself said in his Nobel Peace Prize lecture, 'Difference is of the essence of humanity. Difference is an accident of birth and it should therefore never be the source of hatred or conflict. The answer to difference is to respect it. Therein lies a most fundamental principle of

peace – respect for diversity.’

But ultimately, this was a Christian man, who still lived modestly in Derry until the end of his life, attending the cathedral around the corner from where he lived. The bishop, Donal McKeown, knew him well, and this was his explanation of why John Hume was the man he was: “He was part of that generation that were pickled in Catholic social teaching. The Good Samaritan gospel teaching of crossing the road and not walking past someone in need was sunk into his blood.”

**Jill Chapman**

**Chris Lewis**

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# Quotes for the Month

'We couldn't come together this summer ... for our annual shot-in-the-arm of revolution and revelry, dance and devotion, ideas and inspiration, prayer and protest. So we thought we'd come to you. We called it Wild at Home.'

*Greenbelt Festival website, August 1<sup>st</sup>*

'Just remember Abraham and Sarah were OAPs, the disciples were grown men and Anna and Simeon were well into their dotages when God used them. God is not ageist.'

*Gary Cadge, Christian Misfit Community, Facebook, August 3<sup>rd</sup>*

'John Hume, who passed away in the early hours of this morning, lived and breathed the reality that tolerance and understanding are more powerful than vengeance or being right.'

*Apple TV's Oliver Jeffers, Facebook, August 3<sup>rd</sup>*

'Thank you to the person who called at 4:40 am to ask what times the church would be open. Your keenness is an example to us all.'

*Fr Chris Phillips, Twitter, August 6<sup>th</sup>*

'There is and has only ever been one real sermon. That we – every one of us - are all in the category of The Hungry, and Jesus is in the category of Bread.'

*Revd Nadia Bolz-Weber, sermon, nadiabolzweber.substack.com, August 10<sup>th</sup>*

'The Bible models both simple faith and hang-on-against-all-the-odds fidelity ... when God seemed not just invisible but wholly absent.'

*Philip Yancey quoting from his book Reaching for the Invisible God, Facebook, August 15<sup>th</sup>*

'The way I see it, God is not a Christian ...

... a Jew, a Muslim, a Hindu, a Buddhist or a Sikh. God is the author and lover of all humanity, regardless ...'

*Rev Steve Chalke, Twitter, August 19<sup>th</sup>*

'If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?'

*Rev J John, Facebook, August 20<sup>th</sup>*

'Research into the risk of spreading coronavirus via singing shows it largely depends on the volume ... And good news for church unity: there were no significant differences in aerosol production between different genres of music such as choral, gospel, rock or pop.'

*Interview with Professor Jonathan Reid, Premier Christian News, August 21<sup>st</sup>*

'What you do for yourself dies with you when you leave this world, what you do for others lives on forever.'

*Sir Ken Robinson, champion of creativity in education, who died on August 21<sup>st</sup>*

'The hardest command we have from Jesus, and one of the most revolutionary, is 'Love your enemies'.'

*Archbishop Justin Welby, August 24<sup>th</sup>*

'Together, we can create a new normal. Together, we know #ThisCanChange.'

*The Trussell Trust, Twitter, August 24<sup>th</sup>*

'The scriptural ideal is not to live in the world and go to church, but to live in the Church and go out to the world.'

*Richard Rohr quoted on the Kissing Fish Facebook page, August 25<sup>th</sup>*

'Let's run the race marked out for us. Let's fix our eyes on Old Glory and all she represents.'

*U.S. Vice President Mike Pence's speech to Republican National Convention, August 26<sup>th</sup>*

'This year is turning into a watershed year ... From churchgoing to office work, a significant evolutionary leap is taking place.'

*Ted Harrison, A Broader Kind of Remembrance, The Church Times, August 28<sup>th</sup>*

'The most terrible poverty is loneliness and the fear of being unloved.' – Mother Teresa of Calcutta

*Lucy Lister, St Helen's Church Prayer for the Day, Facebook, August 31<sup>st</sup>*





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As August drew to a close we heard something of AYFC's plans, a request for prayer support as arrangements were made to resume Wednesday football - not simple, with various counter-virus measures to be implemented, and an invite to all Year 7s

## Football Prayer Support

I am daunted by the prospect of managing such potentially conflicting expectations. I am also moved by the keenness of the lads to return to something that they obviously value highly. Please pray that this will translate into willingness to honour the pitch owners, honour one another and honour the one from whom this gift and all good gifts come.

## Rock Solid

Outdoor summer-holiday Rock Solid meetings began on Fridays on 14<sup>th</sup> August. The first week we enjoyed meeting some cows and talking about the future. All but one of the group would be beginning new school, college or university arrangements within the next few weeks. Within the group and beyond there seems to be a refreshingly realistic lack of confidence in

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humans' ability to determine the future. We talked about Jesus' promise to return to all humankind but this time in a non-rejectable sort of way, what it will be like when he does and what looking forward to this could mean for us now.

Please pray that these young people will be confident and reassured to talk about the uncertainties that we live with. Pray they will be blessed with the faith to believe in the one who is the certainty we need to live in a wobbly world.

The second week we enjoyed looking at clouds and making rude noises. We also recalled when we started a new school and our uncertainties and insecurities. And we gave thanks for those who made that new school an enjoyable place to be and challenged ourselves to be that person to new pupils / students.

Please pray that these young people will be selfless and courageous in reaching out to their peers and siblings with testimony and invitation. 'Come, see a man who told me everything I've ever done' said a lady from Sychar to her friends and enemies - after she met Jesus. Pray that Rock Solid will be a place / community where young people do meet and hear Jesus.

At the end of August was the first Rock Solid meeting of the new school term. It was at the end of a week which saw some children returning to school after 5 months away. Some of the group had yet to return to school (because some schools are staggering start of term for their different year groups) and some of the group (being home schooled) won't be going to school. There was lots to talk about.

The plan was to meet at Tesco, go for a walk, engage in a game of pilchards in Mrs Tesco's shop, and welcome any new year 7's who joined us. Some of these are siblings of existing members, which can make for interesting chemistry. Please feel free to pass on an invitation to join us to anyone you know in year 7.

We have a long list of fun meeting planned including; counting clouds, grasshopper stalking, finding a noodle in a haystack, a prawn cracker crawl, camouflage competition, extreme vegetarian golf and, oh, the list goes on and on.

Please pray that those young people we have enjoyed meeting with over the past year will be confident to come and that those God is wanting to add to our number will respond to his nudging. Pray we will all enjoy being a part of his creation and that we will find new ways to worship him as we do.

Thanks,  
**Vernon**

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♦ Community Heritage Building, 4 Church Yard, South St, LE65 1AA

♦ Facebook pages: St Helen's Ashby de la Zouch  
St Helen's Heritage Ashby de la Zouch

♦ Twitter: @sthelensashby

♦ Website: sthelensashby.net

♦ Flagstaff Team: www.flagstaff.org.uk

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Ashby Congregational	Rev. Catherine Booton	01530 563301
Ashby Methodist Church	Rev. Jacky Goaten	01530 412298
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church	Father Peter Wade	01530 412237

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