



St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Loving God, Loving Others, Loving the World



Parish Magazine

June 2025

PARISH DIRECTORY

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St Helen's Church is part of the **Ashby Churches**

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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.



FROM THE MINISTRY TEAM

Two conversations recently have set me thinking: one was about the value of liturgy, ie. common worship, to borrow the title of the latest revision of the Book of Common Prayer; the other was about an experience of 'wonderful worship' – as related to me by a family member on holiday.

Let me begin by challenging a common misconception: only Anglicans and Catholics use a liturgical form of worship (I'm writing mainly about England.) Anyone who has worshipped in churches of other denominations will soon realise that every act of corporate worship has some sort of liturgical 'shape', whether or not the words are identical every time.

A second misconception is that the Holy Spirit only inspires spontaneous worship. But that is to suggest that the work of Cranmer and the other Reformers of the 16th century, who strove in their liturgies to define the parameters of biblical orthodoxy, was not inspired by the Holy Spirit. The language may need updating, but surely the eloquence, the biblical depth and the reality of spiritual experience that is to be found in e.g. the liturgy of Evening Prayer, is unsurpassed? Remember that some of the Reformers gave their lives for such truth.

A third, and perhaps less common misconception, is that the Biblical authors did not use liturgical or creedal forms. But is that really the case? There was continuity but there was also newness.

To give another example, which seems appropriate for this month in which we celebrate both Ascension Day and Pentecost, read what is said about the mystery of godliness in 1 Timothy 3:14-16. Paul quotes from a Christian hymn, presumably a well-known one used in the churches at the time? The new factor is the Lord Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower the Apostles' witness to Him. Of course hymnody and liturgy had to change with the coming of Christ who became the focus of our salvation. But there has also been continuity.

This brings us to the heart of the matter of worship, which is the heart of

the worshipper in relation to the God whom we worship. For whether we are saying the tried and tested words of the liturgy, or using more informal and spontaneous forms of worship, the critical factor is our own heart. Are we responding 'in spirit and truth' to what we hear and say or is it simply a familiar routine? I often use word 'anchor' in relation to Sunday worship. However difficult and demanding the week has been, the Anglican liturgy anchors me in timeless truth – about myself, a sinner; about Jesus, the Saviour who died for me; about the love of God the Father; about the indwelling Holy Spirit; and about my brothers and sisters in Christ as I join in common worship with believers around the world. Let's not confuse 'styles' of worship with reality in worship.

Sue Brown

FUNDRAISING THANKS

Liz Smith successfully took on the challenge of running the London Landmarks Half Marathon in aid of RNIB. She would like to extend the thanks of the charity, below, to everyone who kindly donated and supported her.

*'Thank you so much for all your incredible efforts in the 2025 London Landmarks Half Marathon. Our records show that you raised an amazing **£952.50** for RNIB. You should be very proud of what you've achieved. We do not underestimate the huge challenge you've undertaken for us, and we really appreciate all your hard work. You have made a fantastic contribution, which will make a real difference to people affected by sight loss. We provide vital support to people who have lost their sight and help them rebuild their lives; this wouldn't be possible without amazing people like you. Your efforts will help us achieve our ambition of making every day better for people affected by sight loss. We couldn't do it without you. I look forward to welcoming you back to Team RNIB in the future.'*



Congratulations Liz!

Thanks, also, to everyone who supported our bake sale and fundraising for Cancer Research UK. The bake sale itself raised around £180 for the charity and this was added to the total of fundraising from our previous Race for Life 'Pretty Muddy 5km' run, making £676 overall.

During the mud run at Braunstone Park, it was encouraging to join alongside hundreds of other runners for fun warmups and lots of very muddy obstacles, spurred on by stories of Cancer survivors which were shared via loudspeaker during the morning.

Emily Darlington



ASHBY YOUTH FOR CHRIST

If you would like to sign up for regular updates either follow this link <http://eepurl.com/dvVqrj> or email helen.davis@yfc.co.uk.

Alternatively you can scan the QR code.

Thank you for all your prayers and support.



Rock Solid

Please hold in your prayers our camping trip to be held this month on Breedon Hill. This has been specifically requested by many of our KS3 members and will be a much anticipated night of fun and fellowship together.

We also recently climbed Bardon Hill to join in with a National Youth For Christ fundraiser– livestreaming ourselves as we flew the AYFC flag and spoke about some of our recent work. This event raised £170 for our centre thanks to generous donors, and Rock Solid members enjoyed a sunny evening of rock clambering and Frisbee. A quote by a young person from our livestreamed video: [why are you a youth for Christ?] “Because I am a young person and I love God”.

THY KINGDOM COME

Thy Kingdom Come is an international prayer movement which runs each year between Ascension Day and Pentecost. This will be Thursday 29th May -Sunday 8th June inclusive. Participants are encouraged to pray, daily, for five people to come to know Christ, in the understanding that persistent prayer for others– or intercession– brings transformation to their lives. The people we choose could be anyone from friends, family, colleagues or people we interact with on a regular basis.

Once you have chosen your five people, you can pray for them daily using the following prayer, or your own words as you feel led:

*Loving Father,
in the face of Jesus Christ
your light and glory have blazed forth.
Send your Holy Spirit that I may share with my friends [here, name your friends]
the life of your Son and your love for all.
Strengthen me as a witness to that love
as I pledge to pray for them,
for your name's sake. Amen.*

Here are five other suggested ways to pray for your five people. Why not give one, or all of them a go in the run up to Pentecost and beyond?

1. PIECE OF STRING

Take a piece of string or cord, and tie five knots in it to represent each of the five people you have committed to pray for. You could carry the knotted string in your pocket, tie it round your wrist or place it somewhere that you'll see it regularly. Use the knots to remind you to pray for each person on your list of five.

2. SMALL STONES

Find five small stones (light coloured ones are best) and write each of the people on your list onto each of the stones. Place them on your desk, bedside table or fireplace as a reminder to pray. Alternatively, you could place each stone in a different room of your home and pray for each person as you enter or leave the room.

3. BUSINESS PRAYER CARD OR BOOKMARK

Grab a piece of card that will easily fit inside your wallet, purse or book. Write your list of five names onto the card before putting it in your wallet or book. Use this card as a daily reminder to pray for them.

4. PRAYER ALERTS

Add your list of five people to the alerts section of your phone and set reminders to pray for them. You could choose one name per day, or pray for all five across your day. Remember to set alerts for a suitable time where you can stop to pray for your list.

5. POST-IT NOTES

Use five post-it notes and write one name onto each. Stick them onto your mirror, above your bed or somewhere that you'll see them regularly and will be reminded to pray.

[Taken from <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>]



A LIGHT IN THE WORLD

The next in our series highlighting the ways we live out our faith as a church, we hear from Pat Stafford about Loughborough Town of Sanctuary. Steve Moses, the chair of LTOs, will be preaching at St Helen's this month.

LTOs has been in existence for some years, but I first became involved after watching horrific TV coverage of people in Afghanistan desperately trying to escape their home country after the withdrawal of British and US troops. Later, at an 'all-age' service at St Helen's, the children were asked to decide what they would take with them if they had to escape in such a way - and the adults were given what my dad used to call 'one of God's little nudges'. (Another fine mess you got me into Liz Smith!!!). We were offered a list of possible 'links' to investigate, one of which was that for LTOs.

Following one of those links, I discovered that LTOs had come into existence as a response to seeing anxious asylum seekers, queuing outside the 'Immigration Enforcement Centre' in Loughborough. Our government keeps track of anyone who has applied for asylum. Those not housed by the Home Office are required to report regularly at a centre such as this and Loughborough is the only such centre in the East Midlands.

These people could be at any stage of the asylum application system, waiting for the results of an initial application or an appeal. They are often required to report weekly, and have travelled from cities and towns all across the Midlands, where they have managed to secure a temporary home with friends or family. (Initial applications for asylum typically take about two years to be processed by the Home Office.)

Many are unaware of any practical and moral support which might be available to them, usually provided by refugee charities such as City of Sanctuary, Refugee Action or Migrant Help. So LTOs volunteers 'meet and greet' these asylum seekers outside the reporting centre offering a friendly chat; hats and gloves in cold weather; information about local support available to them - and a voucher for a basic meal or cuppa at the nearby community centre. Sometimes a volunteer will join them there for a friendly chat and to offer a bit of moral support.

Some of those reporting are about to receive the results of their application or an appeal. They are not allowed to take a friend or relative into the centre with them and if an appeal is rejected, they can be immediately taken into custody via the waiting van - and transferred to a detention centre, prior to being deported. If that happens, they are not allowed to come out of the centre to say goodbye or inform their supporter of the result. This leaves the LToS volunteers to offer consolation and support to the friend or family member left outside.

It was as a volunteer, meeting and greeting in this way, that I first met *Basim, about whom I have often written in this magazine. He had escaped persecution in Chad and had applied for asylum in the UK on arrival via small boat. I'm not sure how he had heard about us, but that morning he held in his hand a piece of paper on which were written five English words, indicating that he wanted to practise them. It seemed on further investigation that he was being housed in a hotel in Loughborough which had been acquired by the Home Office - and that there was another similar local building now also housing asylum seekers. This then, was the trigger for LToS to widen its remit: we investigated and realised there was a great deal for us to do!

Home Office Accommodation is basic and cramped, but asylum seekers are given three basic meals a day and are entitled to health care from the NHS. They are then given £8:86 per week to buy any basic essentials. They usually arrive in just the clothes they stand up in, often wearing flip-flops.

There are currently two accommodations in Loughborough, one for single men and one for families. The men sharing a room often do not share a common language and competency in spoken and written English varies from excellent - to very little. Adults are not allowed to work, although all those I have met are very eager to do so. Qualifications vary: everything from gynaecologists , to accountants to teachers, to those holding little or no qualifications relevant to the UK.

Although allowed outside, they need to check back into the accommodation every evening. Security guards prevent any casual visitors. Children are gradually allocated school places but in those early days this could take up

to 6 months. There are no facilities for younger children to play.

I leave you to imagine the effects that this life-style (added to any previous trauma they have experienced) has on both the mental and physical health of those we try to help!

We arranged a morning at one of the hotels to ask residents what they felt most needed we began to establish various initiatives. LToS, with your support, has since been involved in providing shoes, clothing and school bags; liaising with Loughborough College to negotiate some access to English teaching; intervening to support school applications; providing bicycles (and helping asylum seekers to build a bike shelter to prevent them being stolen!); arranging football sessions (these have now been taken over by Leicester City Football club and housed at the University); providing opportunities to choose ingredients, cook and eat together - with the help of the URC church; providing baby clothes, Moses baskets and cots; giving Christmas gifts for the children; accompanying asylum seekers to mandatory Home Office appointments in Solihull, funding occasional access to sports activities at the leisure centre thanks to specific donations ... the list of needs is ever growing!

One of the priorities has been finding ways to develop English language skills and we set up a regular Monday afternoon session for English conversation. There have been a number of inherent challenges to overcome. Volunteers to lead these groups come from very varied backgrounds and experience and bring different talents to the role, so we have evolved a flexible approach which allows each of us to 'teach' in our own style. Those with TESOL experience tend to work in a more formal way, whilst those of us with a primary background tend to bring resources to inspire conversation and integrate grammar and vocabulary 'teaching' into games and challenges. One volunteer who is very musical, teaches mainly through songs and poems.

Whatever the approach, it often seems to involve a great deal of laughter, and the refreshment break allows us to teach that most important of English skills: making a proper cup of tea! In the early days, school

registration seemed to be a slow and precarious business, so that's when I first met Steve, who did a brilliant job, working with the groups of children who often joined us.

Through all the activities provided by LToS, friendships develop across and between volunteers and asylum seekers and this can be challenging emotionally, especially as Asylum seekers are often removed by the Home Office to other parts of the country with only a few days' notice - and new arrivals frequently join us at random intervals.

Sadly, the need for help doesn't end when asylum seekers are given 'Leave to Remain' and thus achieve official 'refugee' status. They are allowed one month more in Home Office accommodation, during which they need to find a job and secure a home - and then they become entitled to the basic level of 'Universal Credit'.

Once given 'Leave to Remain', young families are usually found some sort of shared accommodation, often in other (cheaper) areas of the country, but for single men and women, the picture is very different. I have certainly begun to realise what a privileged life I lead - and I have learnt more than I ever thought I would need to know about topics such as: access to homeless shelters; the search for affordable housing (there isn't any!); how universal credit works; and the often punitive model of 'support' offered to people who are desperately seeking employment.

We try to intervene and advocate for them, liaising with homeless charities and other agencies - but despite their often traumatic back-stories, asylum seekers are usually not considered 'vulnerable' and at this point are left to fend for themselves. The knowledge often shared among the homeless communities is profoundly humbling and has far outstripped our own. Should you ever need to know, I can advise that the only way to gain temporary access to the few homeless shelters in existence is usually to be found sleeping rough, preferably in the open air outside (not inside) the station and in the rain. That way, if you're lucky, you will be noticed and brought in by the 'outreach teams' on their daily early morning searches. (I sincerely hope that advice will never be useful to you!)

We sometimes liaise with a brilliant Christian charity called Exaireo which

helps to get homeless people from all backgrounds back on their feet. After an interview, accommodation is provided in a shared house where the ongoing help of a 'support worker' is offered. Needless to say, they are currently very oversubscribed, but it's good to know that *Basim is currently being offered Exaireo's invaluable help.

Across all our work, we have come to accept that we can't do everything, and that liaising with other agencies and building good relationships with them is key. Sarah Jones, Mental Health lead for Charnwood, provides invaluable support by meeting with LToS volunteers and Asylum seekers at weekly 'drop in' sessions. Members of our LToS committee have also become founder members of the recently formed 'Asylum seeker and Refugee support network'.

And in even better news, LToS was recently successful in securing National lottery funding to enable us to gain the services of a part-time worker to coordinate volunteers and take on a lot of the support work in the hotels!

I'm so looking forward to hearing more from Steve on Pentecost Sunday. I'm sure he will join with me in thanking you all so much for the generous support you offer LToS and in asking for your on-going prayers for this work, as we negotiate an ever-changing and challenging immigration landscape.

Pat Stafford.

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OUR WORSHIP IN JUNE

	am	pm	Wednesday
1st Sunday 1st June		3.30pm All age service 6pm Evensong	1st Wednesday– 4th Holy Communion 10.30am In Church
2nd Sunday 8th June	10.30am Holy Communion with guest preacher.		2nd Wednesday-11th Holy Communion 10.30am Prior Park Community centre
3rd Sunday 15th June	10.30 am Morning Worship		3rd Wednesday– 18th Morning prayer 10.30am In church
4th Sunday 22nd June	10.30 am Holy Communion	3.30pm Messy Church St Helen's Heritage Centre	4th Wednesday– 25th Holy Communion 10.30am St Helen's In church
5th Sunday 29th June	10.30am Team service at Breedon on the Hill		

Regular activities:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Monday mornings | - Little Fishes 9.30 - 11.30am during term time |
| Mondays | - Pilgrim group |
| 1 st Wednesday | - We're in stitches – 2 till 4pm |
| Thursdays | - Choir practice – 6.30 till 8.30pm |
| Fridays | - Heart- warming Space 2-4pm |
| Saturdays | - Parish Prayers – 9.30am in the Hastings chapel |
| 1st Saturday | - Pause for Paws– 10.15-12.15 at the tower door. |

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 8th June– 10.30am– Holy Communion (Pentecost Sunday)

During our usual Sunday service we will be joined by guest preacher Steve Moses from Loughborough Town of Sanctuary. This is one of the charities which we have supported financially as a church. There will be opportunity to continue our Pentecost celebrations afterwards as we share some multi-cultural refreshments in the heritage centre.

Tuesday 24th June– 7.30pm– Talk by Mary Tuckey on ‘Weddings’

The ‘We’re In Stitches’ summer talk series continues with Mary Tuckey speaking on the customs and traditions of weddings throughout the ages, including designing and making the wedding dress, choice of fabric and accessories. There might even be mention of some royal weddings. Tickets £4, payable on the door.

Saturday 28th June– 4pm– Gresley Male Voice Choir Concert– A celebration of 35 years of Canine Partners.

Here at St Helen’s, Gresley Male voices will be performing a concert in aid of the charity Canine Partners; audience members will also be treated to a demonstration by one of the charity’s talented assistance dogs. Tickets cost £10 and can be purchased via the QR code or phone number on the poster (page 13).

Sunday 6th July– 6pm- Soiree

Join us for choral evensong lead by the choir, followed by refreshments and a recital of ‘Music For Two Voices’ by Caroline Essex and Caroline Summers. Entry is free with donations welcomed on the night.

AN 18TH CENTURY MUSICAL INTERLUDE IN ASHBY

On Friday the 6th October 1781, the Leicester Journal announced that there would be a “Music Meeting” the following Tuesday in the Church, Ashby de la Zouch. As this predates the building of Holy Trinity Church, Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church, and the various non-conformist churches, this can only refer to St Helen’s.

Proceedings began 11 am with the *Oratorio of Joshua*. *This was Handel’s fourth oratorio written in 1747 and first performed at Covent Garden, London in 1748. It tells the story of the Israelites’ journey into Canaan and through the Battle of Jericho, and is said to have been written as a parallel to the ultimately victorious struggle of the English Hanoverian monarchy over the Jacobites in 1745.*

This was to be followed in the evening with a “Miscellaneous concert and a ball” although where the ball took place it does not say. Again, this occasion predates the building of the Ivanhoe Baths with its ballroom and the Royal Hotel.

On Wednesday morning the Masque of Acis and Galatea was to be performed, perhaps in the church again. This was another work by Handel and could be described as a “pastoral opera”. It features Galatea, a semi-divine nymph who falls in love with the shepherd Acis.

Tickets for performances were not cheap. The Oratorio was 3 shillings and 6 pence, about half a week’s wages for an ordinary labourer. The evening concert was 3 shillings and the Masque was another 3 shillings. Books (presumably programmes of some sort) could be bought for 6 pence from J Beadsmore, the printer in Ashby.

There was to be “an ordinary” each day at the Queen’s Head and an ordinary on Wednesday at the White Hart. This usually means some sort of public dining so perhaps the audience were offered refreshments after the entertainments. It doesn’t say how much they cost!

Further research has revealed that this was not the first performance of the

Oratorio in Ashby and, in fact, it may even have been an annual event. It was performed in the church on Tuesday 29th August 1780 and was followed, as in 1781, by the evening concert and ball. The performance the following morning was of *Alexander's Feast*, another work by Handel, this time supported by an orchestra consisting of double bass, kettle drums, trumpets French horns etc. It looks as though the price of the tickets tempted some people to try to evade payment by sneaking into a rehearsal because it was announced that no-one, except performers, would be admitted to the rehearsal without showing a ticket.

The Music Society was still singing away in 1790 when again the Oratorio of Joshua was performed on 5th October followed by the usual evening concert and ball. This time the Wednesday morning performance was *L'Allegro il Penseroso* by Handel. The principal violin was played by "a gentleman from London" (they don't give his name) with many other professional musicians.

It is interesting to note that the "ordinary" provided by the Queen's Head on the Tuesday was for gentlemen only with ladies being provided for at the White Hart. On Wednesday they swapped round and the ladies went to the Queen's Head.

Wendy Freer



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MARJIE WILSON

Marjie Wilson died peacefully on 7th May with her daughter and son in law at her bedside.

I thought it might be appropriate to write a short article about her, as she has been part of St Helen's life for over forty years.

I can remember the first time the Wilson family arrived at St Helen's - Marjie, her husband Michael plus three lovely daughters in their teens / early 20s. Marjie always paid attention to her appearance, her hair beautifully done and tasteful clothes. She enjoyed giving dinner parties in their bungalow on Willesley gardens, being the perfect host.

Michael ran a knitwear business using ladies who worked at home. His organisational skills extended into catering and in the early 80s there were always regular dinners for around sixty folks squeezed into "The Cottage" - the predecessor of the Heritage Centre.

Joints of roast beef, or turkeys, would be cooked in people's homes, transported to the cottage to be stored in "hostess trolleys" and then served up with potatoes, numerous vegetables and gravy prepared in the kitchen there. Other long standing families like the Barradells, Bowrons, Lawrences, Prices and Edwards would be part of this amazing social enterprise. They bonded the congregation in a wonderful way.

However life is rarely smooth. Michael's business ran into financial trouble and eventually had to be wound up. They had to sell their beautiful bungalow and move to Cedar Grove, which Marjie never really took to her heart as a "home".

She would sing Michael's praises as to what a wonderful man he was. But when she returned home one day to initially think she had been burgled, only to find it was Michael who had taken his clothes and left, her world fell apart.

As someone who loved company, life on her own was not easy. However she was nothing if not kind, and she found purpose in helping other folks. She would house and pet sit, when people went off on holiday. She

would call in on older, more frail, church folks and help them with jobs, shopping or just for a chat.

Church was her saving grace. She loved the choral aspects but would listen to the sermons with great interest. The carol service was one of her year's highlights - though always tinged with regret that Michael was no longer singing in the choir.

As she aged, she faced more challenges. She decided against a knee replacement as she wasn't in pain, but increasing deformity made walking ever more difficult. Her hearing deteriorated and trying to get her hearing aids in and out of her ears was tricky as her arthritic hands couldn't manipulate the tiny tubes.

She remained interested in others, and took huge pleasure in the young children in the congregation - her face lighting up when they came to talk to her.

Trying to communicate with Marjie could be tricky. Her deafness, combined with her desire to talk more than to listen, could make for some interesting dynamics, especially on the telephone, trying to organise to take her to church !!

However, I will remember her for a person who was very kind to me and my family, was never malicious about anyone, delighted in people's company and helped others whilst her health allowed her to.

She will be missed.

Martin Vaughan



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GARDENING TIPS FOR JUNE

As we approach the start of June, we have been fortunate that the days have been generally warm and there has been no sign of a late frost. However, there has been a distinct lack of rain throughout May which means much more time is needed to water our many plants in the early morning. It is usual for bedding plants to be planted out in June but most of us have started this process earlier – but be prepared to cover them if temperatures drop.

There is an endless list of such plants that can make a brilliant bedding display. My favourites are Geraniums, Marigolds, Cosmos, Dahlias, Begonias and Petunias. Our, “Spanish Area”, is full of brightly coloured Spanish ceramic pots containing a multitude of red, orange and yellow flowers, which include a few Cannas.

We have been lucky to find fully developed hanging baskets with purple Fuchsias so early in the season in readiness for the Ashby Open Gardens. However, always remember that deadheading both annual and perennial plants is always worthwhile in order to keep them flowering, rather than setting seed.

June is a safe time to plant out more tender vegetable plants such as Courgettes, French Beans, Tomatoes and Cucumbers, providing your garden offers a medium degree of shelter from the wind. Please remember to sow and plant vegetables sparingly but often, if you are fortunate enough to have the space. Continue to earth up potatoes but remember to keep the compost moist. Do not overwater as this compacts the soil

Some vegetable species require physical support during growth. For example, Broad Beans, French Beans, Runner Beans and Peas have slightly different growing requirements in terms of support.

Pinch side shoots from your Tomatoes and remember to start feeding them once the first truss is setting fruit. If you are growing Strawberries then peg down the runners once your crop is nearing the end if you wish to create new plants for next year. Always water potted Blueberry plants with rain

ASHBY OPEN GARDENS

7th-8th June in aid of Bright Hope Hospice and the Air Ambulance Service.

water rather than tap water as the lime content of tap water reduces the acidity of the soil over time.

This is a safe time to prune shrubs which have already flowered such as Spiraea, Choisya, Camelia, Deutzia and Philadelphus. Take out unwanted branches and reduce the leading shoots to make the shrub bushier. We also prune the bottom of shrubs to lift the canopy which allows more light, and air in, and this benefits any plants growing around the base of the shrub. Now it is warm enough to plant out or sow tender herbs in pots, such as Coriander, Dill, Basil and Samphire. Don't forget to bring them back inside later in the year.

We again have a Blue Tit nest in one of our bird boxes which is easily viewed from our house and garden. You need to remember to top up your bird baths, bird feeding tables and hanging feeders. We also hang 3/4 coconuts and put in crushed fat balls. Our smaller birds love them. They are expensive to buy so re-use them rather than buying new coconuts.

Lastly, we are opening our garden to visitors as part of the Ashby Open Garden Scheme on Saturday the 7th of June and Sunday 8th of June from 11am to 6pm. You can also enjoy some refreshments. We have lots of seating outside (some undercover) which you can take advantage of. We would love to see you all. Children are welcome as we have games and fun areas for them to enjoy. Of course there are also many more Fabulous Gardens to visit across Ashby.

Alan and Alison Cross



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A photograph of the lower legs and feet of several people dancing on a wooden floor. The text 'The Ranter's Barn Dance Band' is overlaid in a large, stylized, blue font with a white outline.

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THE PARADOX OF PENTECOST

Pentecost Sunday is upon us, and this year it falls on 8th June, exactly 50 days after Easter Sunday. The name comes from the Greek word for fiftieth, 'pentecoste.' We now remember this as the day the Holy Spirit came down on the disciples, a few days after Jesus had died and ascended into heaven.

If there were three great acts of God in Earth's history, they might be: God created the Earth, Jesus being born and living for a time on Earth, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Rather than get tangled up in the theology of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, we can simply look at what happened when the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples in a definite way.

The disciples were in one place when there was a sound like a rushing wind, then something like tongues of fire appeared, but it didn't burn them. The Holy Spirit immediately came into them and they started to speak in other languages. This commotion was heard by the people nearby and they came along to see what was going on.

The disciples met with them and spoke a message from God in their own language, for many were from different countries. All this is recorded in Acts chapter 2. The precise details we're not told, but the message that went out made a colossal difference to the hearers, and many joined up with the disciples. This group became the early Christian church.

You might be thinking, 'Good for them. Exciting times, but long ago and that stuff doesn't happen now.' Yes and no. The precise event in Acts chapter 2 is a one-off, but there have been many occasions since then when the Holy Spirit has come in power and affected people in amazing ways. There is the Welsh Revival of 1904 and the Hebridean Revival of 1949, and we can discuss what happened another day. Be warned, they were very dramatic, even surreal.

And why is Pentecost a paradox? It's this. If the Holy Spirit could give such a boost to the early church, why don't we see the same in our church today? One reason is God never works in the same way twice. Also, God doesn't do something unless you ask him. If you haven't asked him, it won't happen.

The other clue is in the word 'apostle,' which means 'one who is sent.' Jesus

gave the disciples that name when he chose them, foreseeing they would be sent out to speak to people and explain the Kingdom of God. If during their lifetimes, the apostles ever wondered how the Holy Spirit would be helping them, they could recall the mighty acts of Jesus, and how the Holy Spirit must have been involved.

The paradox of Pentecost is how the apostles could communicate with speakers of other languages. For ourselves, we have our own paradoxes when God has helped us, out of the blue, or we have seen a miracle.

As regards the Anglican Church in England today, you'll hear a lot more about Jesus than the Holy Spirit. Jesus is more known from history, whereas the Holy Spirit is an unknown quantity that no-one can accurately describe. Nevertheless, if you're young, or young at heart, you may wish to take a risk and try to engage with the Holy Spirit. If so, how? One approach is this advice from Jesus, with which we conclude:

'If you then know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'
Luke 11:13.



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Pop in and see us at

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FROM THE ALBUMS



Alan Cross celebrated his 75th birthday at our Heart Warming Space. Happy Birthday Alan!



St Helen's hosted Candlelight Concert's offering of a Coldplay recital.



A service to mark the 80th anniversary of VE day was hosted by the Town Council in the churchyard, including a hymn sung by the choir and the lighting of the beacon.



Andrew Chapman and Sue Field gave a wonderful recital on bank holiday Monday.



We welcomed baby Annabelle into our church family.



The Capriccio Ensemble performed our May Soiree.



St Helen's Church & Community Heritage Centre

On the first Saturday of every month:

Pause for Paws



Drop in on
1st Saturday of the month
between 11:30 & 13:00
at St Helen's church
(west door of the church)
Refreshments will be provided

4 Church Yard, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE65 1AA



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