



St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

FAITH — LOVE — COMMUNITY



Parish Magazine

November 2025

PARISH DIRECTORY

General inquiries: in the first instance, please contact the parish office.

Parish office: **parishoffice@sthelensashby.net** // 01530 411607

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

Opening times: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 10am - 1pm

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

Alliance Church	07753 679147
Ashby Baptist Church	01530 413721
Ashby Congregational	01530 563301
Ashby Methodist Church	01530 412298
Holy Trinity	01530 412339
Our Lady of Lourdes	01530 412237

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

Dear Friends,

"The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning; It's time to sing Your song again. Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me, Let me be singing when the evening comes.

These are the words of a song by Matt Redman which may, or may not, be familiar to you .



It is November ,the clocks have changed and we have left British summer time until next March. For many of us this is a difficult time ,and spirits can be lowered as we contemplate the darker days , and the idea of waking with song **time to sing Your song again.**maybe a struggle knowing that the time of daylight will get shorter and shorter as the month progresses.

History tells us that people have felt like this for generations and have responded in different celebrations , customs and rituals . November brings many celebrations of worship and observance in the church's calendar. The month starts with All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. Time is spent in remembering those that have gone before us and our loved ones. On Remembrance Sunday we join with many people and keep silence for those who have lost their lives in the service of their countries and for those who are involved in conflict still .

As November draws to a close it heralds a time of anticipation with Advent. Advent, preparation time in Christianity for the birth of the light of the world in Jesus Christ. We can look forward to that light which will come at the time when the days start to lengthen out again.

Hard though it might seem when we are in the shorter daylight days we should remember the creation account and the provision God made for us recorded in Genesis 1.

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light

. ⁴ God saw that the light was good.

So as I leave you with November ,I hope that you can sometimes reach the evening with *some song* in your hearts ***Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me, Let me be singing when the evening comes.***

Wherever you are in your journey in life and faith I commend to you this verse from the Gospel of John in the New testament . Jesus came to the world in a dark time and his light will continue to shine through the darkness (you just have to let it!)

⁵ ***The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:5***

Elizabeth Smith

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CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY

On Saturday 8th November there will be a sing-along quiz and dessert night to raise funds and support for Ashby's CAP centre. This will be held in St Helen's heritage centre, beginning at 7pm. Tickets are £5 per person, available on the door or in advance from Katie- 07725733007.

CAP offers several services including debt-counselling and a money management course to empower families and individuals to live debt-free lives.



THE HAVEN ASHBY



The Haven Counselling, in Ashby de la Zouch and Loughborough, has now celebrated its 25th successful year of charity status with a special thanksgiving service and will continue to provide confidential low-cost therapy and counselling in a supportive environment by our growing team of therapists. Please share our website www.thehavenashby.org.uk with anyone who might find counselling helpful.



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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.



This month we are planning to host a 'weekend away' for our year 10 apprentices, exploring areas of Charnwood Forest and indoor camping overnight. Plans are still underway, so prayers for this would be much appreciated, but we are trying our best to make the girl's wish for marshmallows round a campfire a possibility for the weekend! This time away together will kick start the coming year of discipleship for this group of approx. 8 as they explore, together, Jesus' call to follow Him and their individual giftings.

Please keep an eye out for a prayer initiative we will be running for advent this year, as well as information about this year's Crackerteria fundraiser which will be coming soon.

A LIGHT IN THE WORLD

Greenbelt Festival describes itself as 'somewhere artistry meets activism, where the political meets the practical.' It's where over 10,000 people gather over a long weekend each August to dream up a better world. Liz Smith, Andrew and I have been dreaming there for a few years now, Chris and Judith have an even longer association with it. And numerous people from St Helen's have been along too, including Revd Mary.

The most profound moments for me at the two most recent Greenbelts have been the live link-ups with the Tent of Nations (ToN), near Bethlehem, which has gradually changed from being a family farm, owned by the Nassar family for over 100 years, to being an environmental and educational farm and international meeting place. Their ministry began among Palestinian Christian refugees left homeless after the Arab Israeli war in 1948-9, offering them bible study and prayer sessions to empower them and to encourage

them not to leave. In the 1970s Israel started building Settlements in the West Bank, and today the ToN is surrounded by 5 illegal Israeli Jewish settlements that are growing to become cities, and a rapidly expanding Torah school. But the ToN Christians have dedicated their lives to peaceful resistance.

The live link-up in 2024 was during the Sunday morning Communion Service, which is held outdoors with thousands of people sitting outside in their camping chairs, having set up a little camp of all the items they're carrying 'just in case' for the rest of the day ahead, including re-fillable coffee cups and reusable beer mugs, waterproofs and brollies, sunhats and suncream, water bottles and snacks, and much more besides. Before the service we were given a simple instruction. We were to move a couple of metres. It was mildly inconvenient but also surprisingly difficult. Most of all it was a clever way to illustrate the plight of Palestinians in Gaza suffering something hundreds of times worse as they are required to move from their homes with everything they possessed. And then to do it again. And again.

During the service we heard from Daoud Nassar, talking from the ToN, live on the screen. We heard how the family has seen demolition of farm buildings, water cisterns, tents, crops, and outright expropriation. We also heard how they respond - They choose not to hate. They refuse to have enemies. During the service the crowd at Greenbelt and those who live at ToN waved, and sang and prayed together, and Daoud urged Greenbelters to join in their work, even inviting those present to visit the farm as volunteers, to experience life in Bethlehem and bring home the stories of the Palestinians struggling to exist and resist the occupation. And the over-riding message was – 'We refuse to be enemies.'

One of the things we were looking forward to this summer was Daoud Nassar joining us in person. But, yet again we heard him speaking movingly via a big screen as he was unable to leave. This, in itself, was a powerful statement about what life is like in the West Bank. As was his reiteration of their refusal to be enemies. Maybe he'll be with us in 2026. (If you'd like to know more about the Tent Of Nations you can find them at tentofnations.com)

Do you love singing? 
If so, you would be most welcome to
come and join

ST HELEN'S JUNIOR CHOIR



Come and take part in
2 free singing workshops on
Saturdays 22nd November and 6th December
10:30 – 11:30am
to prepare for a performance at our
Christingle Service
on Sunday 7th December at 3:30pm
St Helen's Church, Ashby-de-la-Zouch



For more details please contact

Anna Haines by emailing our Parish Office: parishoffice@sthelensashby.net

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GARDENING TIPS FOR NOVEMBER

It is getting wetter and colder as we enter November. Trees are showing their beautiful displays but dropping their leaves rapidly. Our Liquidambar Styraciflua is beautiful at this time of year. As Autumn changes to Winter our main gardening jobs are mostly about protection of Climate Sensitive Plants. You should protect your outdoor containers if there is a risk of frost damage with fleece, bubble wrap or move them into a frost-free place. We will cover and insulate our tree Ferns (we now have 4) and Tropical Areas this month. However, there are still many other jobs to consider such as tidying your flower beds, removing any weeds, reviewing your planting designs, continuing to rake dead leaves (especially those in a pond). You can also plant your Winter flowering plants, bulbs, vegetables and bare rooted fruit trees.

Encourage hungry birds into your garden by investing in bird baths and feeders as our feathered friends will keep garden pest numbers down and bring you joy on a bleak Winters-day.

Hedgehogs go into hibernation anytime between October and December depending on how mild the temperature is. To prepare for this they often start eating more and building a nest. You should consider installing a hedgehog house in your garden, and providing them with food as long as they are eating it. This year we have built a leaf mound at the rear corner of our garden so as to encourage a safe hibernation home for Hedgehogs.

November is a good time to plant tulip bulbs in the ground or in pots. Plant 2/3 times the depth of the bulb in light soil. If your soil is heavy then add grit to improve drainage as the bulbs do not like to sit in water. Hardy bedding plants, such as Pansies, Violas, Cyclamens, Primroses and Heathers are great tolerating our frosty British Winter and will provide lovely colour, even when it's miserable outside. Winter berries encourage birds to visit your garden. Particularly suitable shrubs include variegated Holly, Cotoneaster, Pyracantha and Berberis.

Cut back the yellowing foliage of Herbaceous Perennials and lift and

divide overcrowded clumps to maintain their vigour.

There is a great deal of work to be done in the vegetable garden. Spread well-rotted manure across your vegetable beds to rot down over the Winter months. Check your stored Potatoes, Onions and Garlic from this year's crop and remove any which are rotting. Continue to plant out new crops of Early Peas, Broad Beans, Onions and Garlic in prepared beds. Lift any of this year's Parsnips, Swedes, Turnips and Sprouts After the first frost as this improves the flavour by converting starches to sugar.

Give your garden tools a check and make sure they are clean and, in some cases, sharp. Also ensure that your lawn mower has been cleaned and checked over. Remove all traces of fuel if necessary.

Finally make the most of any dry day by sitting outside and enjoying your Winter-garden, just make sure you are well wrapped up. Consider adding fairy lights and garden ornaments to your garden. We have added many sets of battery-operated lights which are remote controlled as it's lovely to take a walk outside on a cold Winter's evening. Don't Forget that it is Well Known that Good Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing has Strong links to Gardening All Year Round.

Alan and Alison Cross



For news and views in North West Leicestershire read your local newspaper

Ashby Times

on sale every Thursday at your local newsagent

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OUR WORSHIP IN NOVEMBER

	am	pm	Wednesday
1st Sunday 2nd November		3.30pm All Age worship 6pm Evensong	1st Wednesday– 5th Holy Communion 10.30am In Church
2nd Sunday 9th November	9.30am Remembrance Service		2nd Wednesday-12th Holy Communion 10.30am Prior Park Community centre
3rd Sunday 16th November	10.30 am <i>Holy Communion</i>		3rd Wednesday– 19th Morning prayer 10.30am In church
4th Sunday 23rd November	10.30 am Holy Communion		4th Wednesday– 26th Holy Communion 10.30am St Helen's In church
5th Sunday 30th November	10.30 am Team service at Holy Trinity	6.30pm Advent Carols	

Regular activities:

- Monday mornings - Little Fishes 9.30 - 11.30am during term time
- Mondays - Pilgrim group
- 1st 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

Friday 7th November– Messy Church– 4.15-5.30pm

All are welcome to join us in St Helen's heritage centre. Please note the change of day for Messy Church, which will now be taking place monthly on Fridays with lots of bible themed activities for children as well as opportunities for grown ups to connect.

Sunday 9th November— Remembrance Sunday– 9.30am

Join us as we host members of the Ashby Community for a service for Remembrance Sunday before joining the parade down to the act of remembrance at the War Memorial.

Tuesday 25th November– heritage talk– 7.30pm

'Henry Grey's Bradgate Monument' with Moira Ackers. Tickets £4 on the door, including light refreshments.

Saturday 22nd November and Saturday 6th December– Junior Choir Singing Workshops- 10.30am

Our Junior Choir will be singing in the Christingle service on Sunday 7th December and practicing for this on the above Saturday mornings for an hour. Do you know a child or young person who loves to sing? Why not invite them along! For more information, please contact Anna Haines via the Parish Office at parishoffice@sthelensashby.net

Sunday 30th November– Advent Carol Service– 6.30pm

Congregational carols and choral pieces to begin the Advent season.

Friday 5th December– Staunton Harold Carols by Candlelight - 7pm

With carols sung by St Helen's Choir and refreshments after the service.

Sunday 7th December– Christingle Service - 3.30pm

In aid of the Children's Society, with music by the Junior Choir.

ANGRY JESUS?

Meek and mild. Is that what people think about him when Jesus is mentioned in conversation? But what about those situations where some anger is displayed? That, or frustration, or barbed comments. Let's have a look at some, and it's worth noting that Jesus is mainly talking to, and relating to, people who are Jewish.

Tipping over the tables. This is the most quoted incident, and it's very memorable. Jesus is in Jerusalem, in the temple area. He comes across market traders and gets annoyed. Why? Because the temple and all the courts around it are designated as holy, so are for prayer and other spiritual exercises, not the razzmatazz of a street market. Why is this remembered? Because turning over tables is a violent physical act, though not harming any person. Of course, the point is very clear – if anyone disrespects God, Jesus gets angry.

As this incident is a one-off, was Jesus acting out of character here? To check if there are other instances, we can simply look at the gospels. Let's start with Matthew. We soon get a flavour of how people expressed their anger. John the Baptist said to the Pharisees and Sadducees, 'You brood of vipers!' when they came to him for baptism. Next is Jesus giving the sermon on the mount in Matthew chapter 5. The words catch your interest because they are profound. Then straightaway there's a nasty surprise when he says 'You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste it must be thrown out and trampled underfoot.' It's obvious that Jesus isn't going to suffer fools gladly.

Some of his comments come with wit, humour, and religious satire. He says, 'Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but not the log in your own?' There was an audience listening to this teaching, and they would have chuckled at the imagery. As do we.

The crux of what Jesus is about is shown in the next story. Shortly after the sermon on the mount, a Roman centurion comes humbly to Jesus and says 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralysed, in terrible distress.' Jesus says 'I will come and cure him' but the centurion replies 'Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed.' Lo and behold, when the centurion gets home, his servant is

healed. At this point you're thinking 'that went well,' but Jesus concludes with a penetrating observation. He says to the crowd around him 'Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.'

That's what Jesus was about. Behind all the healings, teachings, and the bustle of ordinary life, he was looking for faith. For instance, in chapter 11 we find mention of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. These are Jewish towns in northern Israel, near Nazareth, and Jesus knew them well. Indeed he did many healing miracles and much teaching of their citizens. But Jesus gives them a triple "Woe" of condemnation, because they had not repented, whereas Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom would have repented.

It's quite a long passage, and we can debate the precise meaning. The main message is clear – they have not repented, they have not come to faith, and Jesus can hardly contain his disappointment. Verging on anger.

We looked at the religious leaders like the Pharisees, and they definitely got it in the neck. The general Jewish population were less a target and were more like clueless spectators. You'd think the disciples would be ok. No! When their boat was sinking in a storm on the Sea of Galilee they completely panicked. Jesus was asleep, so they woke him up. His first words were 'You of little faith.' That word again. Their faith, or lack of it, was becoming a problem.

There is also the story about the yeast of the Pharisees, and Jesus tells his disciples to beware of it. It's recorded on Matthew chapter 16, but there's a more vivid account in Mark chapter 8, where Jesus says to them,

'Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear? Do you not remember?... Do you not yet understand?' Is this anger or is it frustration? There is certainly the sense of 'Why am I bothering with you at all!'

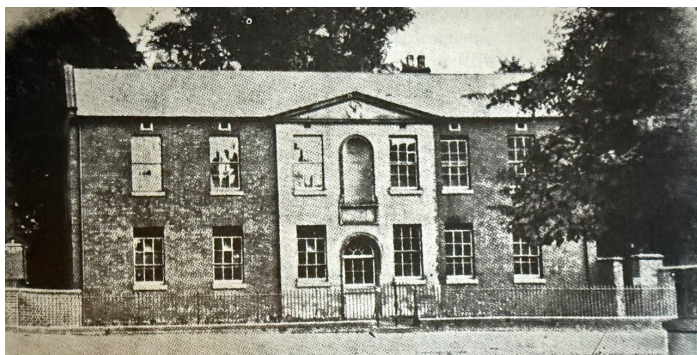
And now it's over to you. Think back. Are there situations where you have shown some faith? Or no faith? For me, it's mainly the latter. To conclude, now that Jesus has ascended to heaven and is sitting at the right hand of the Father, is he still angry? You'll have to decide, because I haven't a clue.

Richard Vann

THE HOOD BUILDING

I am going to begin this month's article with a little anecdote from W Scott's "The Story of Ashby de la Zouch". It is not directly connected with the Hood Building but I thought you would like to read about it.

According to tradition, (no date given), an inhabitant of the town lost his way one dark night. Almost exhausted, he heard the clock of St Helen's Church chiming and this enabled him to



The Hood Building in the 1920s. Courtesy of Ashby de la Zouch Museum

reach home safely. To show his gratitude, he conveyed to the trustees of Ashby Grammar School a certain amount of property on condition that one of the church bells should be rung every morning from 4 am to 4.15 am. That must have been popular! It continued until 1808 when it was stopped and the £2 previously given to the church for the ringing was paid to the school. That date is very close to the year in which a building was constructed in South Street which came to be known as The Hood Building, but was officially Ashby de la Zouch Boys' Grammar School.

The original buildings of the Grammar School, that dated from 1564, were demolished in 1643 during the English Civil War. This was carried out by the Royalist garrison in the castle to make a line of fire for the guns. For a number of years, the school was held in the chancel of St Helen's Church. Then, during the time of Samuel Shaw, who became headmaster in 1668, a new school and school house was built. By the 19th century, these buildings must have become inadequate and in 1807 a new "modern building" was erected in South Street next to the church gates. This was the building that still stands there today and in the 20th century became known as the Hood Building. It housed the boys' grammar school or Classical School. This was a time of controversy related to the school. The education received there had always been Latin and the Classics, but there was a

growing feeling that more modern subjects such as mathematics, geography and science should be taught. In 1827, this resulted in the establishment of a separate department known as The English School. It was held in the upper storey of the new building while the Classical or Latin School occupied the ground floor.

The two schools continued in that building until 1871 when the Latin School moved to the Ivanhoe Baths, next to the Royal Hotel. It didn't stay there for long. In 1880 the boys moved back to South Street but as yet another new school building was completed that year, they were soon to move again. This was the building which still stands on the corner of Leicester Road, opposite the former cottage hospital, and is still used as part of Ashby School today.

Meanwhile in South Street, it would appear that part of the school remained in that building until 1912 when it stood empty. In 1921, the building was bought by Joseph Hood MP and presented to the school governors. This is why it is known to this day as The Hood Building.

Joseph Hood was born in Ashby in 1863 and attended Ashby Grammar School. He became a solicitor in 1890, but in 1903 moved to Liverpool and later Surrey where he was elected Unionist MP for Wimbledon in 1918, a seat he held until 1924. Although he never came back to live in Ashby, he never forgot the town of his birth and childhood. He visited Ashby Grammar School in 1921 and gave out the prizes at Speech Day. His various business enterprises made him a wealthy man which is how he came to be able to buy the building in South Street which still bears his name. He also gave other pieces of property to the town, for example the playing field which also came to be named after him, Hood Park. He died in 1931.

The Hood Building was still being used by the Grammar School in May 1954 when the Leicester Evening Mail reported that a family of blackbirds had taken up residence in a wall and ventilator. Five young blackbirds were hatched and raised there.

In 1944, the nearby Manor House was leased by the school for additional classrooms. This eventually became an independent prep school which also made use of the Hood building. After Manor House School closed down and

the building was leased by another independent establishment, the Lewis Charlton School, it was felt that the Hood Building was no longer needed. It was put up for sale and in 2022 plans were approved to convert it to office space.

The building work has been going on ever since and a large modern extension on what was once a carpark is nearing completion. The Hood Building is about to embark on another phase of its life.

Wendy Freer



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The logo for 'The Ranter's Barn Dance Band' is written in a large, stylized, light blue cursive font. It is overlaid on a photograph of several people's legs and feet as they dance on a wooden floor. The people are wearing various types of trousers and shoes, including brown leather boots and grey sneakers.

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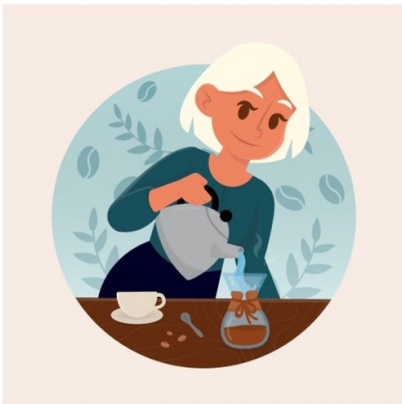
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Pause for Paws

10:15am to 12:15pm
First Saturday of the month



St Helen's
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door)

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will be
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*7th June,
5th July,
2nd August,
6th September,
4th October,
1st November,
6th December.*

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