

Welcome to the United Benefice of St. Helen, St. Mary and St. John the Baptist

It's great to gather together as the Body of Christ in this beautiful part of Derbyshire. Though we have differences, we have one Lord, one Faith and one passion for the Gospel. May we spend time this morning praying together and sharing fellowship.

All are very welcome to take part fully in our services. If this is a Service of Holy Communion, you are very welcome to receive Holy Communion at the appropriate time. *Gluten free wafers are available. Just ask anyone leading the communion.*

Our Worship today, 26th November, Feast of Christ the King

8.00am Holy Communion at St. Helen's

9.00am Holy Communion at St. John's

11.00am Holy Communion at St. Helen's

4.00pm Evensong at St. Mary's

5.00pm Café Church at St. Helen's

**Readings: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24
Matthew 25:31-46**

Tuesday – Morning Prayer at St. Helen's, 9.30

Thursday – Morning Prayer at St. John's, 9.30

Mon. 27th Nov. 7.30pm, Home Group, Whitworth House, Dale Rd.

Thurs. 30th Nov. 9.00am, Prayer Meeting, 14 Park Avenue

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United Benefice Services for next Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion at St. John's

10.00am Joint Family Service at St. Helen's (This will be the Guides, Scouts' and Cubs' Carol Service.)

A Christmas Fayre afterwards, in the church hall.

Prayer: Fridolin Wieschhues, Robert & Margaret Pearse and family, the Hopper family, the Parnell family, Tony & Marie Thrower, Stan Codd, Dennis Roberts, Dorothy Ash, Stephen Porter, Anne & Susan ChinChen, Lindsey Wilson.

Please let Pauline know of anyone you would like to put on the list, and also when someone's name can be removed. For St. Mary's, please pass names to David Gadsby (734922) and for St. John's to Marion Bowler (650261).

Café Church at St. Helen's: Today, Sunday, 26th November, 5.00pm in the church hall.

St. Mary's Carol Services: 10th and 17th December. My apologies but incorrect times have been put in St. Helen's November magazine. The services are both at **4.00pm**. (Chris Townsend)

Special Devotions for Advent

St. Helen's: Simple Night Prayer will be held each Monday evening during Advent at 7pm. (4th, 11th, 18th Dec.)

St. John's: Each Friday, at 10.30am, we'll be using bible study to reflect on the Coming of the Saviour. (8th, 15th, 22nd Dec.) We are all aware of the busyness and even the frantic nature of this time, but please try to make space for these two special devotions during Advent.

Uniformed Organisations' Carol Service

Please support this Carol Service on the first Sunday of Advent, 3rd Dec., 10am at St. Helen's. A light and friendly service, where everyone is very welcome.

Schools

Please keep our schools in your prayers as they prepare for their nativities and shows.

Ecumenical Communion, Monday, 4th Dec.

St. Helen's, 10am, we have our monthly Holy Communion. The numbers have dropped a little, so please support this if you are able.

Calling all singers! (And a reminder about the vocation of Christians.)

We've been asked to sing some carols at Whitworth Hospital and also at the Dementia Centre next door. I know we are all busy, but as a Christian community we must always remember we are called to serve the poor and needy, to support the sick and dying. We are also called upon to live an ordered life, in which we often spend time in prayer and reflection.

LGBT+

We've held our first meeting to reflect on and discuss the thoughts raised. Our next step will be in the New Year, when we look at the more thorny questions concerning Christianity and LGBT issues. I was very pleased with the gracious response of the congregation, as well as that of the two ladies representing the Derbyshire Charity which advocates for those who are LGBT+.

A Feast of Christmas
Music & Magic
Friday 1st December 7.30pm.
Saint Helen's Church, Churchtown, Darley Dale
Belper Town Wind Band
Magicians of International Fame
Jean & Clive Moore
Tickets £5.00
This event is suitable for people of all ages.
Steve Walker has tickets

Intimate Worship

Our final 'Intimate Worship' of 2017 took place on Sunday, 19th November.

It was a moving evening of sung worship and powerful prayer ministry.

Our first meeting of 2018 will be Sunday, 14th January.

We will be meeting on the second Sunday of the month on a regular basis.

A Few Thoughts for the Week

'Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee.'

'There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendours. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously - no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption.'

'If God were our one and only desire we would not be so easily upset when our opinions do not find outside acceptance.'

'We sinned for no reason but an incomprehensible lack of love, and He saved us for no reason but an incomprehensible excess of love.'

The Kingdom of God is Justice and Peace. This is the first line of a relatively new hymn. How we yearn for this truth to be recognised! All around us we see injustice, intolerance and inequality, as well as a great lack of peace. But today we celebrate the solemnity of Christ the King, the feast that ends the Church's year. Whatever has happened, it's great to finish

on this wonderful feast, for we put all our sins, fears and troubles within his realm and allow him to forgive each of us.

His kingdom isn't here yet; it hasn't quite come to fruition. But God, in Jesus Christ, has said to us 'Do not be afraid' and 'Why do you lack faith?' Yes, we're waiting for Jesus's second coming, but each day we have the opportunity to allow His kingdom to come just a little bit more through our prayers and through our service to his world. May we wait on the Lord as we prepare to enter Advent. May we trust in Him who saves. May we have confidence and joy as we wait on the Lord to bring justice and peace. And let us remember that in the Sacraments and in the Word, the kingdom of Jesus Christ is already with us. My we be joyful in this time of expectation, for God is coming, in and through us all. As Henri Nouwen said:

'Waiting patiently for God always includes joyful expectation. Without expectation our waiting can get bogged down in the present. When we wait in expectation our whole beings are open to be surprised by joy.'

All through the Gospels Jesus tells us to keep awake, to stay alert. And Paul says, 'Brothers and sisters... the moment is here for you to stop sleeping and wake up, because by now our salvation is nearer than when we first began to believe. The night is nearly over, daylight is on the way; so let us throw off everything that belongs to the darkness and equip ourselves for the light'. (Romans 13:11-12).

It is this joyful expectation of God's coming that offers vitality to our lives. The expectation of the fulfilment of God's promises to us is what allows us to pay full attention to the road on which we are walking. God bless you as you once more own Christ as the King of your hearts and may you find great joy in serving other people. Alleluia!!

With love.

Stephen Monk

Psalm 95

CELEBRATE WITH GLADNESS

Come, celebrate with gladness
The Lord, your mighty King:
No other god is like him,
This God whose praise we sing –
For He is the Creator
Of sea and sky and land;
The mountains and the valleys
Are held within His hand.

Come, bow in adoration;
Come, kneel in godly fear
Before our holy Sovereign,
The Saviour we revere.
Our God is our Deliverer,
Our strong, eternal Rock,
The Maker of all His people,
The Shepherd of His flock.

Come, still your hearts to listen
To all He longs to say,
Resolved to be attentive,
Committed to obey.
Remember those He punished
Who put Him to the test –
And strive by faith to enter
God's promised, perfect rest.

Please take this pew sheet home for details of what is coming up and also for prayer