

# St Helen's Church Magazine

## February 2024



**February – snowdrops, days getting longer,**



**Shrove Tuesday – 13<sup>th</sup> February**



**Valentine's Day – 14<sup>th</sup> February**

**Ash Wednesday – 14<sup>th</sup> February**

**Service 7.00pm at St Helen's**



**and the beginning of Lent**  
**Journey with us to**  
**the Cross**



**We do not charge for our magazine but a regular donation towards production costs would be appreciated**

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**Please feel free to contact any member of the PCC or Social Committee if you have a question or suggestion.**

**All enquiries and more information on all services and events:**

[www.sthelensdarleydale.org.uk](http://www.sthelensdarleydale.org.uk)

## A Thought

It seems odd to write about Lent when we've not reached Candlemas yet!! But as we know, time moves onwards. As we head into 2024 there are so many things which cause anxiety or fuel uncertainty, both within and outside the church. Sadly, like so many years before there are wars and conflicts and injustice. In Advent 2023 there were 100s of Christians killed in many parts of the world.

Whoever thinks it's easy or safe to be a Christian should think again. Yet, this isn't any different from the early church. Many people think that one of the proofs of the truth of Christianity was that so many of the first followers of Jesus were willing to die for Christ. All but John the Divine were martyred. 2000 years later we are called to die in little ways: putting other people first; letting go of 'pet' sins; shopping in a way that is kind to local producers and the planet; forgiving and asking for forgiveness; loving without asking 'who is worthy of love' and sacrificing 'self' with a joyful heart.

Lent from Ash Wednesday until Palm Sunday gives us time to look at our lives and reflect. It's fair, I think, to say that we sometimes forget that our faith calls us to allow God into our lives - to allow God to forgive us and heal us. At Christmas time we think about the joy of the Nativity Scene, the Babe of Bethlehem who comes to bring us peace and love and salvation. Lent is the time when we see how costly those three gifts are. But you are worth it. Christ was born for us and Christ died for us.

So, this Lent, please know that you are loved; and please allow the love of God to move through your words and actions, and also in reaching out to our broken world. This Lent is another opportunity to walk more worthily in the way of Christ and so, bring peace into our lives, our community and our world. Finally, Lent is not a time to dwell on or sink into a morass of guilt. God loves us. If we are sorry for our sins God's loving forgiveness is total and unconditional. So, please don't dwell in guilt but live in the love of Jesus who was born, crucified and who rose again.

God bless you all. **Stephen Monk (Revd.)**

## News

For those who haven't heard yet, I've been asked to take on the Parishes of Holy Trinity Matlock Bath and St Mary's Cromford. At this time, I haven't had a chance to speak to the PCCs of the two parishes. Some of you may know that these two parishes have been in Vacancy for nearly four years. These two parishes have many gifts and talents, also a great sense of Christian heritage and many faithful members in their congregations. I would ask you for your prayers and your support as we look at how we can keep serving five parishes instead of three. I'm very happy for your suggestions and your advice as we move forward in trust and hope.

May God bless this new endeavour and the chance to work together. Thank you.

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## **Introducing our new charity – Baby Basics**

**We are supporting this charity as part of our All-Age Community Service and will collect items up until the 10<sup>th</sup> March, Mothering Sunday.**

Information about them from their website:

'Baby Basics is a volunteer-led project aiming to support new mothers and families who are struggling to meet the financial and practical burden of looking after a new baby. Baby Basics started in Sheffield in the spring of 2009 but there is an ever-increasing network of Baby Basics centres across the country each staffed by a committed team of volunteers.

Baby Basics provides much needed essentials and equipment to mothers and families who are unable to provide these items for themselves; including but not limited to teenage mums, people seeking asylum and women fleeing domestic abuse and trafficking.

Working with midwives, health visitors and other professional groups to provide support directly where it is most needed, Baby Basics volunteers



lovingly collect, sort and package a 'Moses Basket' of clothing, toiletries and essential baby equipment as an attractive gift to new mothers.

The aim is to help these new mothers practically and generously, demonstrating the love of God through our care. God is at the centre of Baby Basics as we are inspired and motivated by His heart for everyone. Every day we continue – and every item we send out, is thanks to His kindness, grace and provision.

Our vision is based on Matthew 25:37-40:

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

### **Giving Supplies**

Baby Basics relies on donations so if you are able to help out by buying or passing on any of the items listed for the Moses basket starter packs, we and all the new mums, would be extremely grateful.

Our most frequently requested items are Moses baskets, clothing, pushchairs, toys and toiletries. The full list of what we need is below:

#### **(New items in unopened packets only from this category please)**

- Maternity pads
- Sanitary towels
- Hand soap
- Baby soap
- Baby shampoo
- Mum shampoo
- Newborn nappies

- Baby wipes

**(Good condition second hand items are acceptable from this category)**

- Moses baskets, Newborn clothing. Bedding, Towels

We also accept donations of equipment such as cots, slings, pushchairs and prams as well as good quality toys. These will be passed along to those in need via midwives, health visitors and other professional group

**Giving Financially**

Our overheads are modest but we still need a certain amount of income to cover the costs of packing and sourcing everything we need to really show these mothers we care.'

*(If you wish to make a financial donation, please put it in an envelope marked For Baby Basics and leave it in the collection plate. A box in which practical donations can be put will be available in church. We aim to collect items initially by Mothering Sunday, but will continue to support this charity on a longer-term basis).*

**The APCM**

The APCM will be held **on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April** after the **10.00a.m.** service **at St. John's.**

I should be grateful if I could have any contributions to the annual report by **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February.** This will give me a couple of weeks to put the report together to send out to the PCC for approval at its March meeting. I know the report tends to be quite a lengthy document but it is the one opportunity we have each year to acknowledge and celebrate **all** the wonderful things which go on in the benefice.

Penny Dakin

# St Helen's February Diary

## Special services



Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 7.00pm

Ash Wednesday Service

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February 6.00pm

Celtic Reflection with Revd. Malcolm Pyatte



## Lent Courses

St John's Winster – Tuesdays 7.30pm Studying the Beatitudes

Darley Methodist Church – Monday 5<sup>th</sup> film The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. From Monday 5<sup>th</sup> course – details from the Methodist Church

## Regular Events and Services

Open Door Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2.00 – 3.00pm

**Open Door**

Family fun for everyone!

## **Chill and Chat with Coffee Toddler Group** in St Helen's Church Hall

**Thursdays 8.45 to 11am term time only**



Coffee bar open for tea, coffee, toast and biscuits throughout the morning. Children's snack followed by singing and story time at 10.15. No charge but donations to cover the costs welcome if you are able.

*The church is also open for quiet reflection and prayer*

### **Thursday Coffee Social – every Thursday 12noon to 2.00pm**



a space and time to relax and enjoy good company. Everyone is welcome

As well as light refreshments there is soup with bread, but bring sandwiches instead or to go along with the soup.

– We will let you know if we have to cancel, so if it will be a first time for you do let Ann Bradley know in advance that you plan to come and let her have your contact details.

### **Prayer Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> February - 9.30 – 10.00am in church**

You can pray as you feel led or prepare something in advance. You don't need to pray aloud at all, other than an Amen at the end of a prayer. When we gather in prayer, we make a difference to all around us. Don't forget there's coffee/tea and cake in the hall afterwards! See below.....

### **Coffee Morning – 10<sup>th</sup> February in the Church Hall**



Home-made scones and cakes and a time to relax with friends. Take time out from Saturday chores and come and join us! Bring a friend or neighbour!

**If you are a baker, a cake contribution would be great!**

## Monday Lunchers

Salt 12<sup>th</sup> February and Pepper 19<sup>th</sup> February

11.45 am for 12noon at the Whitworth Terrace Café

For more information contact Kath on 01629 732805



**Ecumenical Holy Communion Friday 16<sup>th</sup>**

**11.00am Darley Methodist Church**

Come if you can for a time of worship and fellowship with our Methodist brothers and sisters.

## New Beginnings

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February 10.30am refreshments in the hall;**

**11.00am worship, praise and prayer in the church**

## Home Groups and Worship Group



**Thursday Ecumenical Home Group** started the

New year off with a party enjoying a meal together followed with carols and a short service.

The dates for February are:

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 7.30pm

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm

For more details contact Margaret on 735778. New people welcome.

## **Thursday Group** led by Diana Wills

In winter we meet on Zoom (2x40minute sessions), term time only. We are studying Ephesians using Tom Wright's study guide. For details and a Zoom access link, contact Diana on [dwills@doctors.org.uk](mailto:dwills@doctors.org.uk)

**The Worship Group** meets most Wednesdays 6.00pm in church, as arranged. Contact Dea Ayling or Stephen and Jayne Walker for more information and if you are interested in joining.

## Looking ahead



### **From Churches together in Matlock and Darley Dale:**

The **World Day of Prayer service for 2024**, prepared by an ecumenical group of Christian women from Palestine, will be held at:

**2.00pm on Friday 1st March at**

### **Matlock Methodist and UR Church, Bank Road,**

with most of the Matlock churches represented and taking a part. As we participate in this service, we will be part of a great wave of prayer in native languages encircling the globe. We will be joining with people in over 146 countries and islands around the world to pray with and for the people of Palestine.

**All are welcome. Please join us.**

*(This was originally known as the Women's World Day of Prayer, although never meant for women alone.*

*Given Stephen's sermon on the 21<sup>st</sup> January at St John's, when he spoke of Christian unity and supporting and praying for all churches in our area, may I encourage us all to attend if we can. C T)*



## The lighter side of church life



## Smile Lines

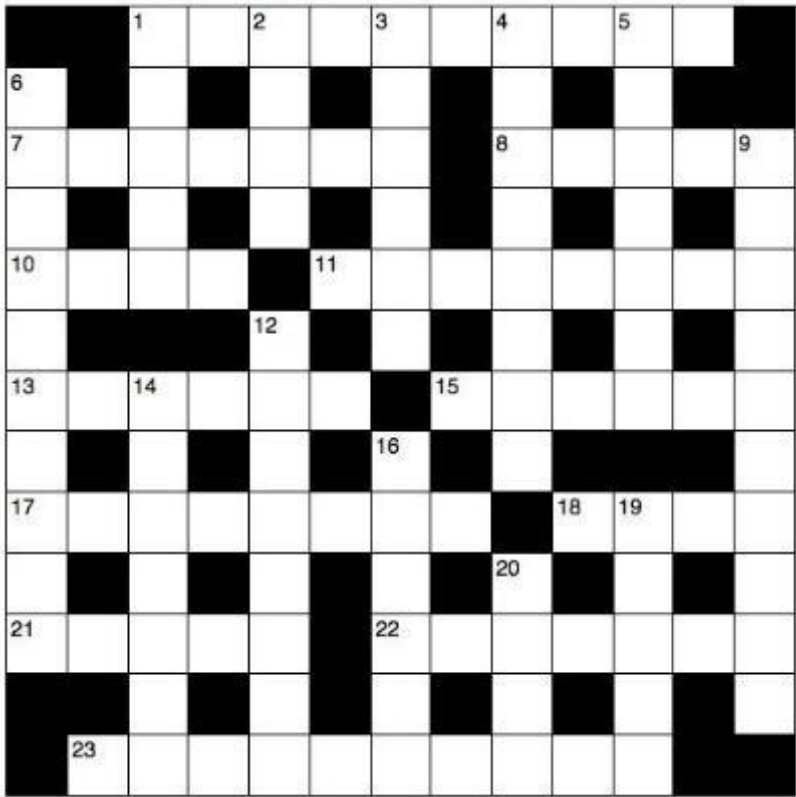
*Editor: With Valentine's Day in mind...*

**Romance, love, marriage and all that stuff – the way children see it....**

### ***How do you decide who to marry?***

You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the crisps and dip coming. - Alan, age 10

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**Across**

- 1 Success or wealth (Deuteronomy 28:11) (10)
- 7 Forbidden fruit for Nazirites (Numbers 6:3) (7)
- 8 Concede (Job 27:5) (5)
- 10 Look at (Psalm 48:13) (4)
- 11 Much in evidence after weddings (8)
- 13 Condense (Job 36:27) (6)
- 15 Breakwater (6)
- 17 Give a tan (anag.) (8)
- 18 More usually now called Pentecost, — Sunday (4)
- 21 After living for 365 years, it was said of him that 'he walked with God' (Genesis 5:23–24) (5)
- 22 Trampled (Judges 9:27) (7)

23 For example, Miriam, Deborah (Exodus 15:20; Judges 4:4) (10)

### **Down**

1 Arrogance (Proverbs 8:13) (5)

2 Roman poet from first century BC (4)

3 So rapt (anag.) (6)

4 Declare again (2 Corinthians 2:8) (8)

5 Paul's 'fellow worker', to whom he sent two epistles (Romans 16:21) (7)

6 God's foreseeing care and protection (Job 10:12) (10)

9 Traditional form of Roman Catholic Mass (10)

12 'The Lord... has given the — of Israel to David and his descendants for ever' (2 Chronicles 13:5) (8)

14 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my — ' (Luke 1:46–47) (7)

16 The central element in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, identified and interpreted by Daniel (Daniel 2:31) (6)

19 'On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of — will not overcome it' (Matthew 16:18) (5)

20 City where Paul was under house arrest for two years (Acts 28:16) (4)

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## **Answers on Page 26**

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### **Smile Lines – more from children on love and marriage.....**

#### ***What is the right age to get married?***

23 is the best age because you know the person FOREVER by then. - Camille, age 10

#### ***What would you do on a first date that was turning sour?***

I'd run home and play dead. The next day I would call all the newspapers and make sure they wrote about me in all the dead columns. - Craig, age 9

***How would you make a marriage work?***

Tell your wife that she looks pretty, even if she looks like a lorry. -  
Ricky, age 10

***What do you think your mum and dad have in common?***

Both don't want any more kids. - Lori, age 8

***Is it better to be single or married?***

It's better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them.

- Anita, age 9

**... And on life in general**

**Do what we can to help...**

*(Brings a smile but a definite message for us all!)*

Several women in the church prayer group were visiting an elderly friend who was ill. After a while, they rose to leave and told her: "We'll do what we can to help. We promise to keep you in our prayers."

"Thank you," she said. "But really, I can do my own praying. The thing I can't do is the dishes in the sink in the kitchen...."

**Off to the vet**

In his younger days our golden retriever Catcher often ran away when he had the chance. The vet's surgery was about a mile down the road, and Catcher would usually go there. The nursing staff knew him and would call me to come pick him up. One day I called the vet to make an appointment for Catcher's yearly vaccine. "Will you bring him," asked the receptionist, "or will he come down on his own?"

And now the serious stuff – but it’s good for you so do read some if not all of it. You know who I am referring to!

## Growing your faith

*Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham considers the subject of ‘real love’ greetings*

### **‘Lenten Valentines’**

This month both Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day fall on the same day! The link between the two can be summed up in terms of the nature of real love! Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, focuses on learning to love God more, as we give Him space in our lives. This is what Jesus found when He was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan. (Luke 4:1-13).

Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread. Yet loving God and His word comes before satisfying physical desires.

Satan tempted Jesus to worship him. However, worshipping God is an expression of loving God and serving Him.

Finally, He was tempted to put God to the test, by jumping off the Temple. Real love for God does not put Him to the test, but wants to obey Him.



Lent also teaches us how to live out the love of God in practical ways, as we follow Jesus in the way of the Cross. We see this clearly demonstrated in the life and death of Saint Valentine.

Valentine was a Christian who demonstrated the importance of sharing God’s love with others. We know little about him, except that he was a priest who lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century AD and that he was martyred on 14<sup>th</sup> February. Emperor Claudius felt that soldiers in the Roman Army were

distracted from their duty by their wives, and so had attempted to outlaw marriage. It is believed that Valentine married couples in secret, which is why today we celebrate our love for one another on his day.

In trying to understand the meaning of her revelations from God, Julian of Norwich found:

*'What, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was His meaning.'*

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*Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham continues a new series which will run for the next two years.*

## **What's the Big Idea? *An Introduction to the Books of the Bible:* Exodus**

This month we are looking at Exodus, the second book of the Old Testament. Its name means departure, reminding us that Israel's flight out of slavery in Egypt is the major focus of the book.



Exodus is a book of two halves! The first part (chapters 1-19 & 32-34) is the story of an oppressed people who are delivered from slavery into a life of freedom. The second half (chapters 20-31 & 35-40) consists of detailed instructions about the life and worship of God's people. The book introduces us to their *salvation* or deliverance, as *story*. God's promises to Abraham are fulfilled as the people journey to the Promised Land. He also renews His covenant with them at Sinai, expressed in the Ten Commandments (20: 1-17).

At the heart of Exodus is the person of God Himself. In chapter 3 God reveals His name as YHWH or *'I am who I am'* (3:14) to Moses. This is the name by which God is known throughout the Old Testament, expressed in the title *'the LORD'*. To know God's name is to know Him, as well as His character i.e. His justice, truthfulness, mercy, faithfulness

and holiness. He is the God who controls history, delivering the people out of Egypt, while the death of the Passover lamb points us to Jesus' death on the cross (1 Corinthians 5:7).

God's promises of help remain true for us today: *'Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today'* Exodus 14:13.

*'This Exodus story continues to be a major means that God uses to draw men and women in trouble out of the mess of history into the kingdom of salvation.'* (Eugene Peterson).

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### **Quiz on the Book of Exodus**

*How well do you know what happened in Exodus? Try this quiz!*

1. Who rescued Moses from the basket in the bulrushes?  
a. Pharaoh's daughter b. Pharaoh's maid c. Pharaoh's wife
2. How many plagues did God send on Egypt?  
a. 5 b. 10 c. 15
3. What was the second plague?  
a. frogs b. water turned to blood c. locusts
4. What is the name of the sea the Israelites crossed to escape the Egyptians?  
a. Dead Sea b. Black Sea c. Red Sea
5. At what place did the Israelites arrive to find the water was too bitter to drink and God made it sweet?  
a. Marah b. Elim c. Horeb
6. Which bird did God provide for meat in the wilderness?  
a. pigeon b. quail c. turtledove
7. What guided the Israelites through the wilderness?  
a. a star in the sky  
b. Moses had visions telling him where to lead the people

- c. a pillar of cloud and of fire
8. When there was no water to drink, how did Moses provide it?  
a. from earthen jars b. from his rod c. from a rock
9. On which mountain were the Israelites given the Ten Commandments  
a. Mt. Sinai b. Mt. Nebo c. Mt. of Olives
10. What is the seventh commandment?  
a. Thou shalt not covet  
b. Thou shalt not commit adultery  
c. Thou shalt not bear false witness
11. What was on top of the Ark of the Covenant?  
a. two cherubim b. candlestick c. Aaron's rod
12. What compelled the Israelites to form and worship the golden calf  
a. they wanted to make a statue to the Lord  
b. they made it as a symbol of their freedom from slavery  
c. they didn't know what had happened to Moses
13. What was the name of a man who was given the Spirit of God, to enable him to become a good craftsman, and assist with the building of the tabernacle?  
a. Caleb b. Bezaleel c. Buz
14. Who was Moses' successor?  
a. Joshua b. Caleb c. Aaron
15. For how many years did the Israelites wander in the wilderness?  
a. 20 years b. 30 years c. 40 years

## Answers on Page 26

*Editor: As Lent begins, it is a good time to look at the things Jesus said, and the claims that He made. By the Revd Dr Herbert McGonigle*

## **What's so special about Jesus?**

The gospels record that people were astounded by many of the things that Jesus said. Even His enemies, intent on trapping Him, admitted: "No one ever spoke the way this man does." (John 7:46) Furthermore, "the crowds were amazed at His teaching, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." (Matthew 7:28-9)

For in Jesus, we find something without precedent in the span of human literature. While urging humility on others and while giving the impression of the ultimately humble person, Jesus' teaching and claims are basically *egocentric and completely focussed on Himself*. In ordinary life, that would get a person labelled as crazy or as a megalomaniac!

Just think of the few astounding claims Jesus made about Himself. "I am the Resurrection and the Life." (Jn 11:25) "I am the Bread of Life." (Jn 6:35) "I am the Light of the World." (Jn 8:12) "I am the Good Shepherd." (Jn 10:7,9) "...whoever lives and believes in Me will never die." (Jn 11:26) And – most staggering of all - "anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father." (Jn 14:9)

CS Lewis comments on the inescapableness of Jesus' uniqueness: "There is no half-way house, and there is no parallel in other religions."

That Jesus cannot be ranked among a pantheon of religious leaders or prophets becomes further obvious when one reflects further on His claim of being at both the beginning and at the end of Creation and of History. He said: "I am the First and the Last" (Rev 1:17), as well as: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Mt 28:18).

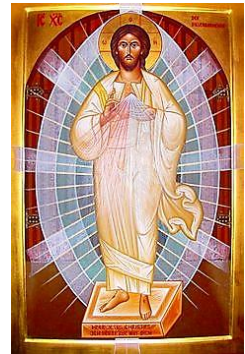
Clearly the disciples accepted this, as John begins his gospel with these words: "In the beginning was the Word (Jesus) and the Word was with God and the Word was God... Through Him all things were made;

without Him nothing was made that has been made.... The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.... and in Him all things hold together.” (Col 1:16,17)

When we look at what Jesus goes on to say about the end of history, we are even more startled, as when He said of any person who follows Him: “I will raise him up at the last day.” (Jn 6:40) This was the local carpenter, remember! And when we note that throughout the Bible final judgement is a function reserved to God alone, it is astounding to register that Jesus says of Himself: “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son .... authority to judge because He is the Son of Man.” (Jn 5:26—27)

Yes, between Creation and the end of History stands Jesus. That also means, of course, and we note it with comfort, because everything in between is His also.

During this Lent, why not spend some time just quietly thinking about these claims of Jesus?



## In the news

*Editor: The following story may be of use in helping you know how to direct your deep concern over what is happening in the Middle East just now...*

### **The war in Gaza-Israel – Bishops urge people to pray – and act**



“The first thing Christians can do in response to war is to pray for peace and for those affected.” That is the message of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

The Archbishops are praying for “those mourning, those injured, and all those fearing for their safety,” and for “restraint on all sides, and renewed efforts towards a just peace for all.”

The Archbishops and Bishops are also encouraging Christians throughout the UK to join them in prayer, and to consider practical action, by supporting organisations “working to promote peace and human flourishing in the Middle East.”

The following is posted on the Church of England website:  
Christian Aid is the official ecumenical arm of Churches in Britain and Ireland and has been working with the poorest and most vulnerable people in the Middle East since the early 1950s, when it provided humanitarian relief to Palestinian refugees.

The Church Mission Society is a historic Anglican mission society which supports mission partners across the region.

The Council of Christians and Jews is a leading interfaith charity which works to help Jews and Christians to meet, to understand each other better and to create meaningful engagement between the communities.

Embrace the Middle East is an ecumenical Christian charity working to help marginalised and vulnerable communities in the Middle East.

Friends of the Holy Land is a non-political Christian Charity whose mission it is to secure a resilient and enduring Christian community in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan - the part of the world that Christians call the Holy Land.

The Jerusalem Middle East Church Association has supported the life and work of the Anglican Church across Jerusalem, the Middle East and North Africa for more than 120 years and other many ways for individuals to get involved in supporting the Church in the Holy Land.

USPG is a historic Anglican mission agency that has a long-standing partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

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*Editor: The Ven John Barton looks back on two years of the Russian-Ukrainian war.*

## **Ukraine - Two Years Later**



Although Russian troops were massing near the borders of Ukraine in February 2022, we naively believed their denial that an attack was imminent.

Since then, an all-out war has resulted in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, and hundreds of thousands of military casualties. A quarter of the Ukrainian population has been displaced. Eight million are now refugees, spread across Europe.

Few of us realised that a war between the two countries really started in 2014, when pro-Russian regions of Ukraine rebelled and Crimea was annexed.

Hostilities between the two countries had begun even earlier. Ukraine had joined the Soviet Union in 1922 and ten years later lost more than a million of its population in the 'Holodomor' famine, now widely regarded as genocide inflicted by Joseph Stalin, the Soviet leader.

Relationships between the two countries have always been turbulent, and Russia's possessive attitude towards its neighbour is deeply resented.

Ukrainian refugees in the UK are mainly women and children, for their men are needed for war service. So, they have organised themselves into self-help groups, painstakingly learning to read and write in

English, as well as working full or part-time and keeping up their morale by organising groups for young and old. Choirs have sprung up, often assisted by British musicians. One member wrote movingly of how singing helped her cope with the mental trauma of her homeland fighting for survival.

Ukrainians are unceasingly grateful for our hospitality, but they fear our compassion may wear thin, as our attention has been diverted by news of the barbarity between Israelis and Palestinians. That conflict also has a long history of smouldering hatred on both sides. Wars rarely solve disputes. When wearied people recognise their futility, settlements may be negotiated. Forgiveness takes longer.

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### **Supporting those in need on Church Action on Poverty Sunday**

This year **Church Action on Poverty Sunday is on 11<sup>th</sup> February**, when Christians around the country are urged to remember those in real need. Perhaps one of the most serious impacts of poverty is the dire state of homelessness. The numbers are staggering. More than 300,000 people are homeless in the UK; 119 families in England are made homeless every single day; and 140,000 children are currently without a home. The figures are the highest on record.

When you picture a homeless person, he or she will probably be a rough sleeper; but rough sleeping is only one manifestation of homelessness, and not the most frequent one.

Homelessness ranges from living on the streets, to living in emergency accommodation, in women's shelters, and in other temporary accommodation.

Homelessness is not always a visible problem. But the cost-of-living crisis, record rents hikes, stretched local services and withdrawal of emergency Covid measures have led to more people falling into desperate positions than ever before this past year.

Green Pastures is one organisation who is working to enable Christians to make a difference. It has been housing the homeless for 25 years, and it exists to help Christians do their bit to tackle the growing homelessness crisis.

Green Pastures has grown to now house more than 1500 formerly homeless people across the UK, in more than 100 towns and cities. To fund property purchases, Green Pastures has raised more than £47 million in funding, through everyday people who lend them some of their savings and receive interest in return. This model enables the organisation to buy property and work in partnership with local ministries to directly impact the lives of people in need.

For those facing homelessness, it starts with the life change of a safe and secure home. Tenants like Kev are also offered compassionate wraparound support, pathways towards recovery and independence, and the opportunity to know Christ for themselves.



*Kev (pictured left, with Green Pastures partner, John) lives in a Green Pastures home in Cumbria. At a visit, without prompting, Kev said, "This home saved my life, in fact this man saved my life."*

With many more people in need waiting for help, this month is a great time to consider how the Church can make a significant impact. You can find out more about Green Pastures' work, and how you might get involved, at <https://www.greenpastures.co.uk>.

### **How can we help locally?**

If you have ideas do let the PCC know. In the meantime, we can continue to give donations to our local Foodbank, Jigsaw, even if it is only one or two items



## Earth matters



### **"Thank you, but we should have done more" - Bishop responds to COP 28**

*The Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher, lead bishop for Environmental Affairs, has been reflecting on the recent COP28. Here are some extracts of what he says:*

“My hopes for COP28 were that we needed a commitment to phase out fossil fuels, make significant progress with the Loss and Damage Fund, prioritise resilience building for climate vulnerable communities, and create a transition to green development pathways that is just and ambitious.

“COP28 saw some progress on these items. Like a cracked record, I say again: ‘Thank you, but we should have done more.’

“\$700m has been pledged for the Loss and Damage Fund, with further funding pledges for adaptation and resilience building. Both are a start, but the amounts are not nearly enough to support even the existing schemes in the pipeline to support the poorest and least resilient communities in the world who have pumped the least carbon into the atmosphere.

“While it is very significant that the words ‘fossil fuels’ have made it into the final agreement, it remains disappointing that the parties have failed to agree the most important pledge – the need to completely phase out fossil fuels.

“The UK Government’s clear position of a phase-out of fossil fuels means it can have global moral leadership in this area. Without a phase-out of fossil fuels, there is no pathway to net zero carbon.

The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; Ps 24.1

“The Church of England has a clear role in continuing to be a place of thanksgiving for our life in Jesus, hope for the poor, and prophetic action to care for our planet.

“I urge us all, and particularly world leaders, to remember that the pledges made at COP28 do not have to be the upper limits of our climate action. We can and must reach further. That goal must be a fossil fuel phase out and a re-centring of our priorities towards the care of creation and the poorest people.”

## **Don't forget those nestboxes!**

**On 14<sup>th</sup> February our annual National Nestbox Week begins.**

Now an established part of the ornithological calendar, it aims to encourage people to help out the birds in their gardens each Spring. Everyone is invited to put up more nestboxes in their local area, and a very helpful website gives full instructions on how to do this. More details at: <https://www.nestboxweek.com>

**Crossword Answers ACROSS:** 1, Prosperity. 7, Raisins. 8, Admit. 10, View. 11, Confetti. 13, Distil. 15, Groyne. 17, Navigate. 18, Whit. 21, Enoch. 22, Trodden. 23, Prophetess. **DOWN:** 1, Pride. 2, Ovid. 3, Pastor. 4, Reaffirm. 5, Timothy. 6, Providence. 9, Tridentine. 12, Kingship. 14, Saviour. 16, Statue. 19, Hades. 20, Rome.

### **Answers to Quiz:**

Question 1: a (Pharaoh's daughter) Question 2: b (10)

Question 3: b (Water turned to blood) Question 4: c (Red Sea)

Question 5: a (Marah) Question 6: b (Quail)

Question 7: c (A pillar of cloud and of fire) Question 8: c (From a rock)

Question 9: a (Mt. Sinai) Question 10: b (Thou shalt not commit adultery) Question 11: a (Two cherubim)

Question 12: c (They didn't know what had happened to Moses)

Question 13: b (Bezaleel) Question 14: a (Joshua) Question 15: c (40)

# Ed's Endings

## Quotes of the month

*Editor: February sees the beginning of Lent. It is the time of year when the Church encourages people to take spiritual stock of themselves, and to seek a deeper commitment to God. Here is some food for thought.*

### ***With Lent in mind...***

Still water and still religion freeze the quickest. - *Anon*

Some Christians are not only like salt that has lost its savour, but like pepper that has lost its pep. - *Albert George Butzer*

Christianity is the total commitment of all I know of me to all I know of Jesus Christ. - *William Temple*

I am so busy at this present time I cannot do with less than four hours each day in the presence of God. - *Martin Luther*

No man ever said, at the end of his days, 'I have read my Bible too much, I have thought of God too much, I have prayed too much, I have been too careful with my soul.' - *J C Ryle*

### ***With Valentine's Day in mind....***

Marriage requires falling in love many times – always with the same person. - *Anon*

Life has taught us that love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction. - *Antoine De Saint-Exupery*

All items for the March magazine to be with me by the 14<sup>th</sup> February, please.

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## Services in the United Benefice in February

### St Helen's:

- 4<sup>th</sup> February** 11.00am Holy Communion  
2.00pm Open Door
- 9<sup>th</sup> February** 11.00am Friday Ecumenical Holy Communion  
Darley Methodist Church
- 11<sup>th</sup> February** 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Family Service at St. Mary's
- 14<sup>th</sup> February** 7.00pm **Ash Wednesday Service**
- 18<sup>th</sup> February** 11.00am Holy Communion  
6.00pm **Celtic Reflection**
- 23<sup>rd</sup> February** 11.00am Friday Holy Communion
- 25<sup>th</sup> February** 11.00am New Beginnings  
(10.30am Refreshments in the Hall)

### St Mary's:

- 4<sup>th</sup> February** 10.00am Holy Communion at St. Mary's
- 11<sup>th</sup> February** 10.00am Family Service
- 14<sup>th</sup> February** 7.00pm Ash Wednesday Service at St. Helen's
- 18<sup>th</sup> February** 10.00am Holy Communion Service at St. Mary's
- 25<sup>th</sup> February** 10.00am Morning Prayer at St. Mary's

### St John's:

- 4<sup>th</sup> February** 4.00pm Service
- 11<sup>th</sup> February** 10.00am Family Service at St Mary's
- 18<sup>th</sup> February** 10.00am Holy Communion at St Mary's
- 25<sup>th</sup> February** 4.00pm Service

**Every Monday 7.00 to 7.40pm - Zoom Service**

**For details and access invitation contact: [christownsend2@sky.com](mailto:christownsend2@sky.com)**