

Welcome to our Weekly News Letter



A reading to carry us through 2025
For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which
God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. *Ephesians 2:10 NRSV*

Services this week and readings

Sunday 26th October 2025

Last Sunday after Trinity
Bible Sunday also known as
Reformation Sunday

Clocks go back this Sunday!

8.30am Holy Communion
10am Family Service

MORNING PRAYER is said @ 8am Monday,
Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday Mornings in the Lady
Chapel All Welcome

Dates ahead:

- Friday 31st October **Light party** 5-6.30pm
- Sunday 2nd November **Memorial Service** 4pm 'theme: In this mirror'
- 9th November **Remembrance Service** starting 10am in Church gathering around War Memorial for 11am silence.
- 11th November act of silence gathering at 10.50am by War Memorial all welcome, followed by St. Helen's School service @ 11.10am
- 10th November PCC 7pm St. Helen's house
- 15th November **Messy Church** 3-5pm
- 16th November Safeguarding Sunday
- 16th November 12 noon interment of ashes for **Brian Saich**
- **29th November Christmas Fair 12noon - 3pm**

Readings for Sunday:

2 Timothy 4: 6-8,
16-18
&
Luke 18: 9-14

'What race; turning
the world upside
down.'

Memorial Service of Hope and Comfort

This year's theme

'In this mirror'

Sunday 2nd November 2025

4pm

@

St. Helen's Church Cliffe



Tea and coffee served after the service

This is an opportunity to give thanks and remember before God all our loved ones who have gone before us.

There will be an opportunity to light a candle in their memory

All are warmly welcome to this reflective service.

LIGHT PARTY 2025

**St. Helen's Church
is once again offering an alternative
to Halloween:**

**Friday 31st October
5-6.30pm**

**Why not come in fancy dress?
but no spooks or scary costumes please**

**Fun & games held at the back of
church, Buttway Lane, Cliffe**

All children must be accompanied by an adult

Monday Afternoon

Board Games

Here at St. Helen's

House in the

front room

1pm -3.30pm



Free and open to all

why not challenge the Vicar

to a game of chess or maybe it was

**Reverend Green in the study with the candlestick, or just
a trivial pursuit!**



St. Helen's Church Cliffe

The Coffee Stop

A community hub for all

'Tea, coffee and cake as cheap as chips'

St. Helen's House just before you get
to the church opposite parish carpark

Opening Times

10.30am -4pm

Monday – Friday

(subject to volunteers)

Free WIFI available

**If you would like to give to the work at
St. Helen's it couldn't be easier.**

**Just Scan the QR code follow the link to our
page on SUMUP and donate.**

All gifts are gratefully welcome and received.



**Help us to keep our church open
for another thousand years**



**If you would like to give to foodbank there is a
shopping trolley found at the back of St. Helen's
Church just drop your donations in the trolley.**

**For more info about St.Helen's go to
'A Church Near You' or our 'Webpage'**

click one of the buttons below

www.achurchnearyou.com/church/9932

Messy Church New dates below for 2025/2026



Messy Church Dates for 2025/26

3-5pm.

Dates are:

- 20th September 2025 'Messy Idols' Moses and the law*
- 18th October 2025 'Messy Coats' the story of Joseph*
- 15th November 2025 'Messy Music' Gideon's army*
- 17th January 2026 'Messy Hair' Samson*
- 14th February 2026 'Messy Love' a new commandment*
- 14th March 2026 'Messy Mothers' a look at biblical mums*
- 3rd April 'Messy Good Friday' 10.30am-12 noon*
- 16th May 2026 'Messy Gold' King Solomon*
- 20th June 2026 'Messy messengers' Looking at prophets*

There is no charge for Messy Church, but donations are always welcome to help with the running costs.

Weekly activities

If you would like something advertised here please email cliffatcliffe@gmail.com



**QR for this Newsletter
share it with others**

**Reverend Clifford's Weekly Blog
'Light'**



God's light has given us a saving promise, it is even reflected in the darkness
 Photo taken by me last Monday as the heavens opened.

25th October 2025

Something a little lighter this week adding a little light in the darkness.

I got it wrong today (*22nd October*) as I thought October marked the Autumn equinox, no it was on the 22nd September, I guess I got it wrong because I struggle with the word Autumnal and have created my own word over many years of Octomnal, let's be honest every word starts somewhere. And yes I feel all Octomnal! The equinox marks the equal proportion of light to darkness, of day and night 12 hours of each. As we know here in the northern hemisphere the days are getting shorter and the nights longer and this continues until 21st December when the earth's rotation starts to give us more light once again.

I guess the reason I even thought about it today was because of two things, the first occurred last night (*Tuesday 21st*) as I held a wedding rehearsal at All Saints Frindsbury where by the time you read this I conducted a wedding there on Friday covering for the church as it is now in interregnum. If you are familiar with All Saints it sits at the end of the road perched up on the chalk cliffs that were formed by quarrying away the chalk many years ago, it then over looks Rochester and the whole of the Medway valley below. When we lived in Frindsbury, when we were very young newlyweds back in the late eighties, I spent many hours up there walking our dog and often prayed over that view for all the people below, I spent a lot of time on the hill

with God.

It's dark at the end of the road, but as we opened the doors of the church to the night air at the end of the rehearsal, directly opposite across in the Frindsbury estate there was a wonderful firework display. The fireworks continued as I popped in to get some fish and chips on the hill, in fact I saw and heard many more fireworks on the way home. For a moment I thought I had fallen asleep for a while and had woken up on the 5th November, but as I tucked into my supper I realised as I discussed it with Cathy that it was Diwali which is celebrated with fireworks between the 20th and 21st October this year. Hindus, Sikhs and Jains celebrate for five days a festival of light, with various commemorations to different deities Diwali symbolizes the victory of light over darkness. The homes of believers are decorated with lights and various sweet treats are offered and shared as they believe it represents the start of new beginnings and new prosperity. It is in short a wonderful celebration that turns its back on the things of darkness. Don't get me on my bandwagon but compare that to our stolen American obsession with celebrating every that is dark at Halloween, and you get a stark division of thought.

It is quite surprising sometimes that many of our various religions around the world have more in common than they do not, we need sometimes just to pause and recognise this and celebrate those common truths. Here then in Diwali we can see that darkness places within us a fear that we want light to destroy.

It is in a universe of darkness that the earth finds light from the sun, placed in just the right spot in the solar system that the same light enables us to have life here on earth, without the light and energy from that sun we would just be another lifeless planet, like the billions and billions of other lifeless planets. Not by chance, we then have this life that many of us believe is more than just chance, but has been created, formed, put together, controlled by a source of life and energy we call God. It is in this simple belief that millions of people hold faith in and around the world. The simple complexity and variation of life on earth goes way beyond random chance, if random chance played a key role then we would be seeing life on many more planets now visible to us. As yet, not a shred of life or evidence of anything as small as bacteria has been discovered, I'm not saying it won't but at present we are all alone at the very least in our own galaxy.

I believe then that through that same God, the one God we can find a deeper truth which shouldn't divide us but bring us together so that we can celebrate the things we have in common with each other as humanity, as a precious gift in a vast universe. That then brings me to my second thought for mistaking the autumnal equinox.

At morning prayer today (22nd) our morning psalm came from Psalm 119, the longest psalm which we divide into sections. Today it was verses 105 -128, but the verse that hit me was the opening verse 105, the psalmist writes, 'Your **word** is a lamp to my feet and a **light** for my path.' Light and word are one and together they direct us out of darkness into an eternal light. What a verse for a week in which many are celebrating light, what a verse for this Sunday as we turn back the clocks and allow the nights to seem as though they are drawing in, when in truth all we have done is move the hands on our clocks and watches. The darkness is no greater than the day before (well a couple in minutes longer) what we experience by moving the clocks isn't real, it's a trick of our minds, there is no less light but the darkness seems to feel as though it has increased, the night seems longer, darkness has deceived us.

The psalmist records two elements of truth in this verse, **the word**, God's word, so

what or who is this. Well traditionally at most Christmas carols by candle light services John 1: 1-14 is read which introduces what and whom this word is, there is no story of a baby in a manger just simply that Jesus has been with God since the beginning of time and he is the word of God who became flesh and blood here on earth 2000 years ago.

Jesus himself later in John 8: 12 states that he is **the light** of the world, and whoever follows his path will never walk in darkness. Isn't that amazing, doesn't that give us a hope and protection against darkness in all its forms. Nearly all religions acknowledge that light is so important in our lives, we need it to reveal the effects of darkness which is simply the negative areas of our lives that try to pull us down and destroy us. The only weapon against darkness is simple, it's light, in the darkest room one small light will provide enough vision for us to see the dark shadow of our own hand if we place it in front of our eyes. When light is present there is nowhere anything can hide, light brings revelation and truth.

I remember camping with the scouts at Downe and the older scouts and some young leaders would take us on a night walk through the woods with only a couple of torches. As we walked they would tell a tale about how in ancient times a monk had come to a sticky end in the woods. With everyone's senses being tested and now on edge, they would suddenly shine a torch through the woods to highlight the silhouette of a monk, with screams of terror the leaders then led everyone back to camp, hasten to say, a good night's sleep was not had. The next day the wise would walk the same path, now in daylight and find that what was thought to be a ghostly monk was just an illusion, an ordinary twisted tree stump, light revealing the truth.

Darkness hides everything including the things that might hurt us, don't be fooled by this darkness because it creeps in as the light falls behind the horizon, it wants to draw us in because its purpose is to destroy the light, never believe anyone who says it's all just harmless fun, this is a universal force that wants to draw us away from God, remember that God said in the beginning out of the darkness, 'Let there be light.' God's first and final act in our lives is to bring us light.

Jesus often said, 'I tell you the truth', as the word of God, as the light that shines from the same why would we not want to choose light. The terror of darkness does not have to consume us if we choose to step into this light, for through this light we will find peace, we will find love, we will find forgiveness, and when death and its dark valley try to pull us down and away from God we will find life if we simply follow the path illuminated in front of us, if we accept this light as the truth.

God bless,

Clifford

Please feel free to share this with others

St. Helen's



We are open every Sunday

Free worship

Free Tea and Coffee

Free just as it has always
been

You are always welcome
services begin

At 8.30am and at 10am

Contact Details

If you would like to be contacted by the church at anytime or the Vicar

then please download and return the contact sheet below by clicking on box, in compliance with GDPR

[PDF Contact Sheet](#)

Opening times for Church visits

We are pleased to say that we are continuing to make every effort to keep our church doors open during the week.

If you would like to visit the church then please sign and pick up a key from the Coffee Stop in St. Helen's House. Where possible volunteers might be able to show you around.

When you have finished your visit then simply return the key.

Opening Times

Monday - Friday 10.30am - close at 4pm

we make every effort to keep to these times but as you might appreciate this is reliant on our wonderful volunteers.

Who's who page

Priest in Charge of St.Helen's:

Reverend Clifford Stocking

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Licensed Lay Minister
Dave Green
pewsey54@btinternet.com
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For any safeguarding concerns @ St. Helen's please contact our safeguarding officers:

Children's Safeguarding officer:
Julie Allen - 01634 221763

Adult Safeguarding officer:
Heather Weston -07762 401424



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