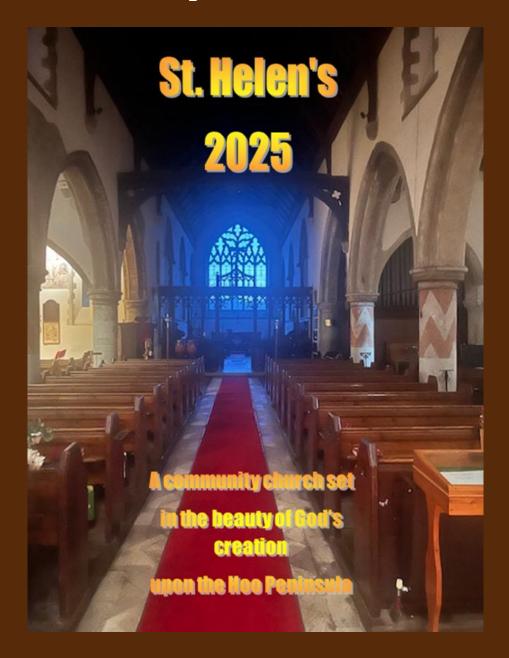
Welcome to our Weekly News Letter



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 14th December 2025

3rd Advent Sunday

8.30am Holy Communion
10am Family Service

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

Dates ahead:

- 16th December **Hope Explored Advent Course** 7-9pm In St. Helen's House
- 14th December Carols by candlelight St.

Helen's 6pm

- 15th December St. Helen's School Concert all welcome in Church 6.30pm
- 15th December Music Jam 8-9pm
- 17th December St. Helen's School Christingle 10am in church
 - 20th December Carol Service at St. James Cooling 6pm
 - 22nd December time to make Christingles ready for Christmas Eve 11am in the Coffee Stop, its always messy fun and fellowship

Readings for Sunday: Isaiah 35: 1-10 &

Matthew 11: 2-11

Theme: 'Who are you Jesus?'

St. Helen's Crib & Christingle 2025

Christmas Eve Apm





Who needs a Carrot @ Christmas?

"Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace".



Three-week course looking at Hope

Did you know that 600 years before Jesus was born @ Bethlehem his birth had been predicted?

Jesus offers Hope!

There are few emotions more powerful than hope. But these days, hope often feels hard to come by.

Open to all and free why not find out more over three Tuesday evenings here in December

7-9pm

2nd December St. Helen's House 9th December St. Helen's Church 16th December St. Helen's House

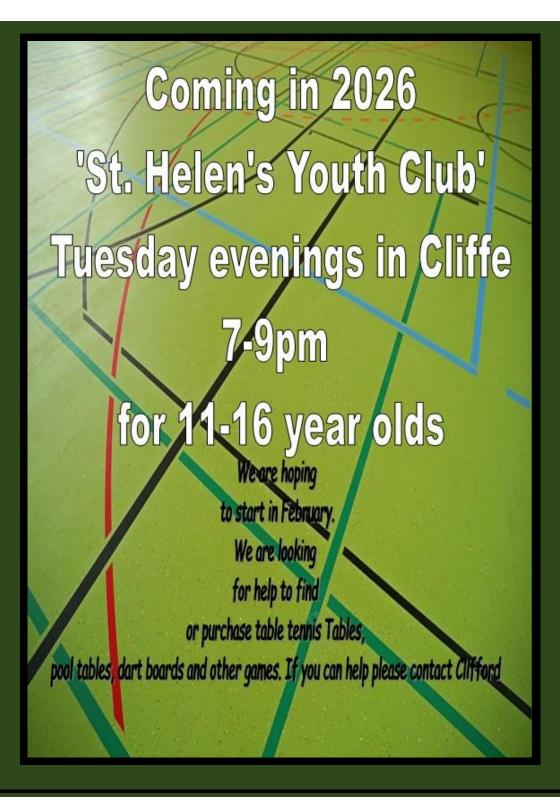
Tea & coffee provided

MAKING MIRACLES

Knitting & Crochet Group - Cliffe

All abilities welcome
Drinks & snacks available to buy from
the Coffee Stop

THURSDAY 18TH DEC 1.30 - 3.30PM ST HELEN'S HOUSE BUTTWAY LANE, CLIFFE ME3 7QP





SATURDAY 29TH NOVEMBER - 12 TO 3PM CHRISTMAS FAIR















IPM - CRIB & CHRISTINGLE (CHRISTINGLE THEME: DONKEYS) feel free to come dressed as a donkey or bring a toy donkey!

11.30PM - MIDNIGHT MASS

CHRISTMAS DAY - 10AM FAMILY SERVICE







Christmas Eve until Monday 5th
January 2026
Thank you for all who have used it over
2025 and all who volunteer
see you in the New Year

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 <u>open</u> 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 November2025 '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 'Please sit comfortably'

13th December 2025

Please sit comfortably

As I begin to think about this blog this week I want you to remember I use to be a train Driving Instructor, I ride a motorbike, have had a go at flying a light aircraft and been a bus driver for a short while, so driving is something I'm okay at in general and enjoy. I'm not a speed freak; I just enjoy cruising around. When our children were younger they would not ask if they were nearly there yet until we had been traveling at least eight hours. I've driven and towed all-round France and down to Italy, I think my longest route took about 18 hours once, the kids just slept through it all.

Now a couple weeks ago it was that time to change our car, I must admit the old one was one of the best cars I've enjoyed driving, but it was time for the change. Same make, same model on paper but the Duster has undergone a complete remodelling so very different from the old Duster in shape, functions and handling. As I prepared to drive the car away I was given a quick run round the car by the salesman, it was quick and he later emailed and apologised. Not to worry, I soon began to get a hang

of all the new bits and bobs on the drive home. Now because we tow, it had to go back just over a week later to have a towbar fitted. I had arranged for a courtesy car for the day, so I dropped my car off and they for a moment had forget they had agreed to this. Soon sorted as I was given the keys to a new Renault Comfort the sales reps car. I was pointed to the car which was sat in a tight parking space on the forecourt, I was given no instruction of how this car worked or its functions, just it all yours see you later.

Now this is where the world has changed so rapidly, for anyone who drives and automatic you will be thinking what's the problem, for anyone who drives an electric car you will be thinking the same. But I'm a manual six geared petrol head. Fortunately, the last time I had a courtesy car it was all electric and the first and only automatic I had and have ever driven, but I was given a crash two-minute lesson on what was what, is that what we call gaining experience?

Anyway, this Renault was the top of the range full hybrid, 'out of my financial league' some of the controls on the dashboard are the same as a Dacia thankfully, but that's as far as it went, with a purple light floating all-round me in what can only be described as a tight cockpit it was like walking into a Sci-Fi movie. You might have noticed that I have very short legs so first things first adjust the seat. I couldn't reach the peddles, where on earth was the adjuster. I called across to the lady who booked me in for the day, 'How do I adjust the seat?' It was electronic as she showed me the switch and quickly disappeared again. I was now ready, I knew how to turn the car on, same as mine with a single button. But this was a Hybrid automatic, where on earth was the drive selector. I turned the car on and off and every time the seat reset itself, I was getting frustrated, it had to be here somewhere. Then I found it a stick behind the window wiper stick on the steering wheel, up for reverse and down for drive.

By this time someone had now parked in front of me, oh well gave me more time to workout how this car would move. The person in front eventually came out of the showroom, I didn't want to get out of the car again and find them and have to reset the seat again. It was now time to move out of a very tight parking slot; I suddenly found how sharp the brakes were as I nearly flew through the window screen at the very slightest of touches. At least it was running on electric mode and couldn't stall. I slowly moved down to the exist and had to then enter a traffic jam all the way along Rainham Highstreet up towards Gillingham, stop start all the way in a car I had not a clue about, bings and dings coming at me from every direction, the petrol engine cutting in and out between the electric silence. It was going to be a very long and nervous drive back to Cliffe.

Once I was out of the static traffic I started to find my way around how this car worked and by the time I got home I had mastered it, well sort of.

As I said at the beginning of this blog I'm a confident driver, but in that moment I was uncomfortable, of course I know how to drive, but given something new the principles are the same, the laws of the road are the same, but the techniques and functionality were very different. Maybe a quick lesson might have helped, and quieter roads to get a feel of the machine I was now in charge of. One thing is for sure I have now ticked the Hybrid box and if I pick up a courtesy car like that again I will start with the confidence that I have done this before.

That got me thinking, I'm a priest, I'm trained in theology, I have been reading God's word the bible ever since I could read. I don't confess to know it all, but I have a good

understanding of how the Bible works, how it can be applied in our every day life. What I often come across is like myself with that courtesy car, some people find that as they pick the bible up maybe for the first time or maybe for the millionth time, they do not understand how it works, why it is or even where to begin. I always say if nothing else start with Mark's Gospel as it tells the simplest story of Jesus. Part of my role as a priest is to help people navigate through this ancient scripture we call the bible. I can sell it as a sales person like selling a car, but I also need to help people with gentle understandable instruction and like the car if that happens then the experience is far better and really helps us to use it as it should be.

One of the worst things to do with a bible is to try and simply read it cover to cover without help. It was never written to be done in this way, it simply doesn't make sense if you try this on your own and the normal result is you give up quickly, as it were you give the keys back and say this is not for me. That's a real shame because if you can find someone to guide you through its pages it begins to make a lot more sense and God might just become real to you as you see His hand in our history.

As we begin a New Year you might want to think about working your way through the Bible to get a better understanding of it, it can be read in a year, but it is difficult to do, even for priests like me. There are many aids and books out there that can guide and help you, I've used them myself over the years. If you would like one of these Linda Jones and Shelia Evans have some they would like to share with people and could guide you in this way. Just speak to them or speak with me and start the new year with a challenge.

I had to go for it in the end with that car, I had to take it off the forecourt and enter the traffic, yes I soon got over the nerves and found I was able to go where I wanted, it can be the same with God's word, once we activate it we find we start an eternal journey and we learn to navigate life's ups and down's with a better understanding.

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

145 St. Helen's Rectory Cliffe Rochester Kent ME3 7PY clifford2567@googlemail.com 01634 610752 or 07941056237 Day Off usually a Thursday

Church Wardens: Robin Thompson

kentstamps@outlook.com 01634 221497

Paul Sutton

paulsubtle@gmail.com 07740867238

Licensed Lay Minister Dave Green pewsey54@btinternet.com 01634 220430

For any safeguarding concerns @ St. Helen's please contact our safeguarding officers:

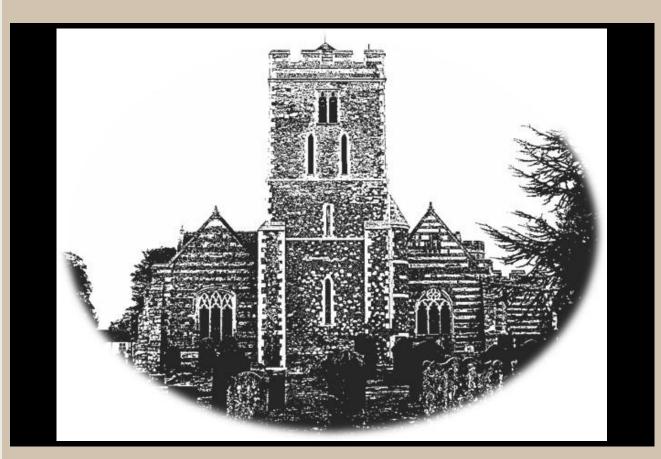
Children's Safeguarding officer:

Julie Allen - 01634 221763

Adult Safeguarding officer:

Heather Weston -07762 401424





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Our mailing address is:
cliffatcliffe@gmail.com
Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe

