

Welcome to our
Weekly News Letter



St. Helen's 2026

A community church set in the beauty of God's creation upon the
Hoo Peninsula

A reading to carry us through 2026

'I will give you a new heart and put a new

**spirit in you; I will remove from you your
heart of stone and give you a heart of
flesh.'** *Ezekiel 36:26 NIV*

Services this week and readings

Sunday 4th January 2026
'Happy New Year'
2nd Sunday of Christmas
or
Epiphany

8.30am Holy Communion (*BCP traditional*)
10am Family Agape Service

Please note our New Services for 2026 will be as follows:

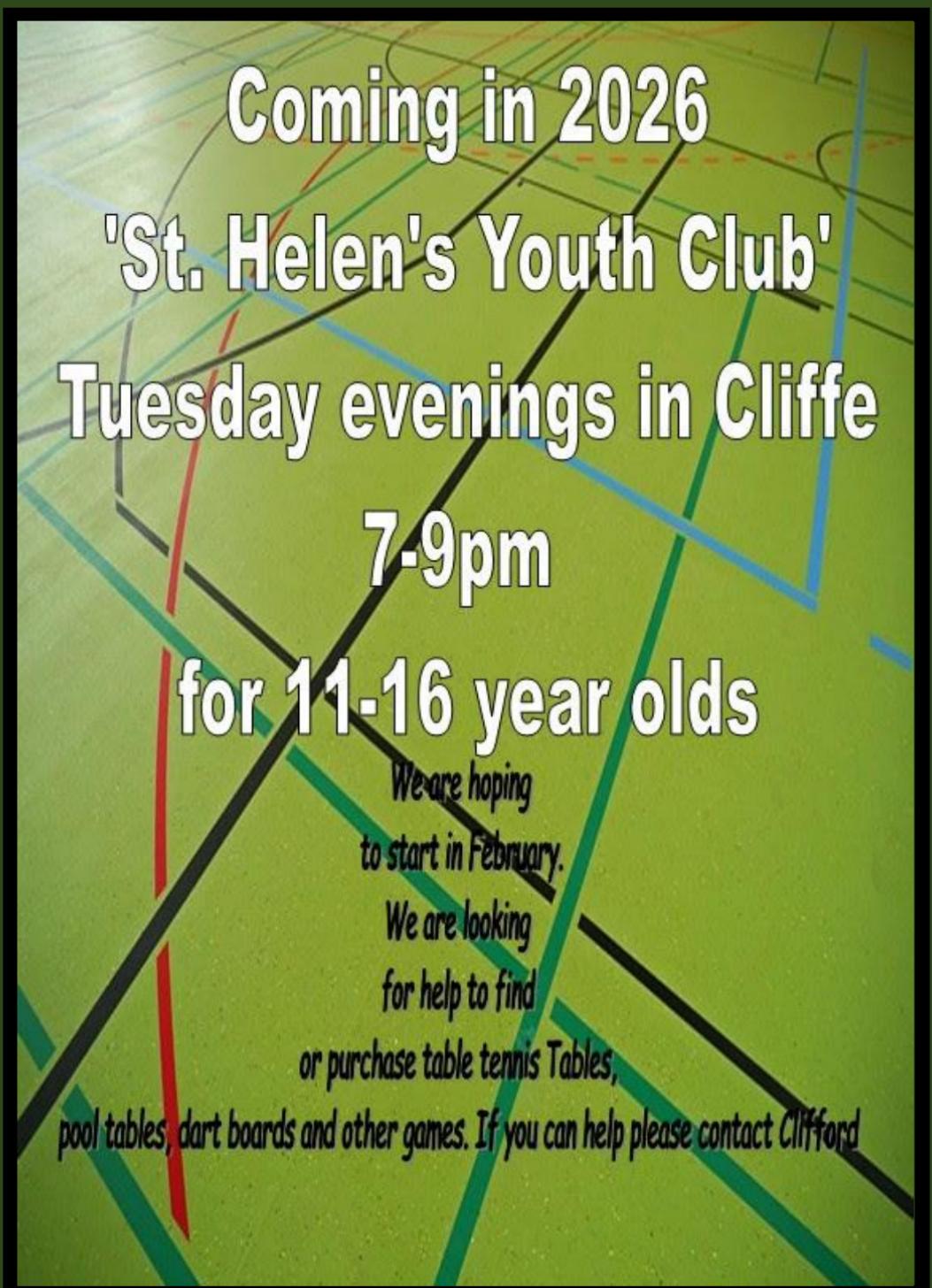
1st and 3rd Sundays of the month Family Agape services (*simple sharing of bread and wine*)
2nd & 4th Sundays family service of the word
5th Sundays as advised at time

MORNING PRAYER is said @ 8am Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday Mornings in the Lady Chapel All Welcome
Starting once again 5th January 2026

Dates ahead:

- 10th January PCC members social @ the Rectory 7-10pm
 - 12th January **PCC meeting** 7pm St. Helen's House
 - **Messy Church** Saturday 17th January 3-5pm 'Messy Hair the story of Samson'
 - 19th January, 2nd Feb, 16th Feb **Music Jam** 7-8.30pm
-

**Readings for
Sunday:
Isaiah 60: 1-6 &
Matthew 2: 1-12**



Coming in 2026
'St. Helen's Youth Club'
Tuesday evenings in Cliffe
7-9pm
for 11-16 year olds

*We are hoping
to start in February.
We are looking
for help to find
or purchase table tennis Tables,
pool tables, dart boards and other games. If you can help please contact Clifford*

**Please note that the Coffee Stop will be
open from this
Monday
5th January 2026
We look forward to serving you.**

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



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share it with others**

**Reverend Clifford's Weekly Blog
'the heart of the matter'**



3rd January 2026

What is my heart made of?

Well, a warm and happy New Year to you all as we begin another calendar year, maybe thankful that 2025 is now behind us, maybe saddened by the things and people we left there as we now move on nationally with the hope of a new start. You might possibly be making new year resolutions, already booked the summer holiday or tempted by all the TV ads for hotter climes, it might be a diet as again the ads flood us with reminders of our over indulgence in the Christmas season. It could be you are going to have a dry January, or you will set aside a budget for one of those charity ads that tug at our heart strings. It might be none of the above because the simple reality is that actually nothing has changed and you are happy just the way you are.

The real truth is a date in the calendar changes nothing, so, so sadly the jubilation of the midnight celebrations was soon tarnished with the huge loss of lives at a Swiss night club. 2026 will be remembered by those families for all the wrong reasons and our deepest prayers go out to them all and those who will need treatment for their wounds both physically and psychologically in the days and years to come.

In other parts of the world a change of date has not taken away the daily struggle to simply live in peace, the deafening anger of humanity blotting out the message of those angels 2000 years ago, as the prince of peace entered our world and began to show us how it can all be so very different.

I'm speaking a little about this tomorrow 4th January in my sermon, and I am leaving you with my notes for the verse I have chosen for 2026 at the end of this blog, hard copies will be given out in church. The verse is one that says as we begin this year that God has given us a heart of flesh over a heart of stone.

As we begin 2026 my prayer is that we embrace this heart of flesh. It was Jesus who said this is my body given for you, it was the same Jesus who came down at Christmas not as a demi-god or some sort of heavenly superhero, but as a baby. Jesus became us, his DNA a mix of heaven and earth, feeling and experiencing everything that we mortals must endure. Up till then humanity created gods out of stone, and wood, metals and other materials, they worshiped lifeless objects and gave up sacrifices to these gods both animal and human. This was a worship that could be described as having a heart of stone, in Jesus suddenly everything was turned upside down, God became one of us. God had and has always had a heart of flesh if we are truly created in His image. Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice so that we could give up offering the gods, useless gifts.

Today Jesus isn't present with us in the flesh apart from in us, and we are his flesh and blood, we the Church are known as his body here on earth. It is us who now have the hearts of flesh and offer the world a different way to live from what the world offers.

Just maybe at the start of this new year its time we all took this seriously if we truly want to see a change in this world, pushing behind us the worlds stoney heart. Maybe 2026 is the year when we all get to know Jesus a little bit more and focus on his teaching, his example for life and living. Maybe its time to allow the life blood of Jesus to flow around our bodies, pumped by his heart of flesh, it won't solve every problem, it won't take away every hurt and pain, but it will make a difference as to the way we face each day that we are given.

I leave you now with my verse for the year and accompanying notes.

God bless,

Clifford

Verse for St. Helen's 2026

'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.' *Ezekiel 36:26 NIV*

Last year we looked at how our good works might imitate Christ's and really start to make a difference in the life of our church. This year I want us to perhaps think about all that we do in our daily lives; both within the life of the Church, in our communities, at work, in our leisure time and amongst our family and friends. Sometimes the routine of each of these can make us stonelike, we become numb by the constant rhythm of just doing the same old routine, as we pass from one year into another nothing really changes. Here we go again as 2026 just hardens us off a little more. Well, the prophet Ezekiel tells us that if we seek God's Law and His love in our lives, if we apply that same love and Law in our lives then we will start to approach things differently. The world, our media floods us with constant negativity; is it any wonder that sometimes our hearts simply become stonelike, shutting down. When this occurs, God has the cure His Spirit, God's Holy Spirit wants to free us from this kind of heart disease and refreshes us, pumping as it were new blood through our very being. This isn't I'm afraid literally a new physical heart this is all about our being, you will need medical advice for the physical. This is a spiritual heart that opens our eyes to see God in everything, to start hearing Him and acting upon each situation we are faced with in life. Modelling ourselves on God's own Son Jesus who has exampled for us a true heart of flesh, fulfilling God's Law through forgiveness and love. This spiritual heart pumps love and joy through us, it enables us to act out of kindness with

gentleness, it persists when things are difficult and challenging, it exercises control when a stoney heart would turn away or give up. In all this a heart of flesh can find and exercise peace, Christ's peace which he has said, the world around us does not understand. As we approach everything that a New Year will throw at us, may we find, seek, ask God to give us this new heart of flesh, may we call upon God's Spirit to guide us, to provide for us the words and actions we all need to be part of the Body of Christ here on earth.

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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Cliffe

Rochester

Kent ME3 7PY

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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

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