

**Welcome to our  
Weekly News Letter**



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*

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## Services this week and readings

### Sunday 15th February 2026

#### Sunday next before Lent

8.30am Holy Communion (*BCP traditional*)  
10am Family Agape Service where all are welcome  
to share bread and wine.  
12noon Baptism for Theo Hlland

**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

**Please Note: Reverend Clifford Stocking will be  
licensed as the New Area Dean of Strood on the  
17th Feb 2026. This will be a private one to one  
licensing with the Archdeacon of Rochester at the  
archdeanery. Please pray for our Deanery of  
Strood as we move forward and plan to meet for  
the first time in a long while.**

#### Dates ahead:

- 14th Feb **Messy Church** 3-5pm
- 16th Feb **Music Jam** 7-8.30pm

- 18th Feb **Ash**

**Wednesday** Service @ 7pm (time  
correction)

- 20th Feb **Elvis** is in the building

#### Readings for Sunday:

2 Peter 1: 16-end  
& Matthew 17: 1-  
9

- 24th Feb **Funeral** in church 2.30pm for *David Smith*
  - 24th Feb **Youth Club** 7-9pm
  - 25th Feb **Funeral** Thames View 3pm for *David Townshend*
  - 25th Feb 1st **Lent Course This Cup** 'The Kiddush Cup' 7-9pm in church.
  - 2nd March **Music Jam** 7-8.30pm
  - 4th March **Lent course** 7pm in church
  - 6th March **World day of prayer** Grain 10 for 10.30am
  - 6th March **Wedding @** St. James Cooling 1pm for *Conor and Daisy*
  - 9th-10th March Clifford on Area Deans residential meeting.
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# **New Youth Club**

**Starting**

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

**Back of St. Helen's Church**

**7-9pm every Tuesday**

**For ages 11-16**

**Table tennis**

**Snooker/Pool**

**Darts**

**Air Hockey**

**Loads of other games**

**Music**

**A time and space just to chat & chill**

**Lent Course 2026**

# **This Cup**

**Here @ St. Helen's**

*Written and presented by Reverend Clifford Stocking*

**Five Wednesday Evenings**

**7-9pm**

Week one 25<sup>th</sup> February **the Kiddush cup**

Week two 4<sup>th</sup> March **the Haggadah cup**

Week three 11<sup>th</sup> March **the Berakah cup**

Week four 18<sup>th</sup> March **the Hallel cup**

Week five 25<sup>th</sup> March **the Elijah cup**

During these five weeks in Lent, we will start to look at the origins of the Passover Meal and how Jesus might have shared this with his disciples on Maundy Thursday at what we call The Last Supper.



Next time @ Messy Church

'Messy Love'

A New Commandment

14<sup>th</sup> February 2026

3-5pm



# Arts & Crafts

25th February

10-12noon

in St. Helen's House

All welcome



# ELVIS

*Tribute Night*  
*with Scott Elvis*



**F R I D A Y**  
**20th FEBRUARY**

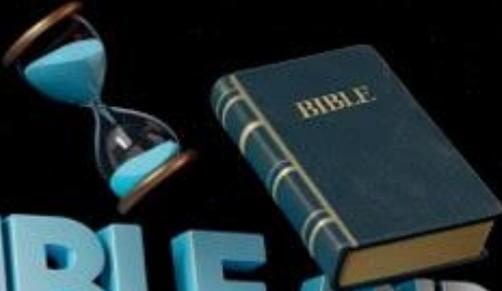
**TICKETS:**  
**£15 ADULTS**  
**£5 UNDER 16s**  
**07778 959003**

**DOORS OPEN 7PM**  
**PERFORMANCE 7.30PM**

**BAR (OWN DRINK NOT PERMITTED)**  
**RAFFLE**

**ST. HELEN'S CHURCH**  
**BUTTWAY LANE, CLIFFE, ME3 7QP**

# GOD, THE BIBLE, AND EVERYTHING (IN 60 MINUTES)

An hourglass with blue sand and a blue Bible with gold lettering are positioned above the main title.

**FRIDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

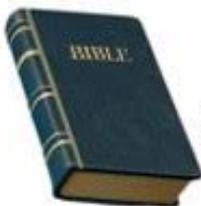
**St. Helen's Church**

**Buttway Lane, Cliffe**

**7.30pm (doors open 7pm)**

BBC sitcom writer and stand-up theologian James Cary hilariously unpacks the entire Bible in one hour – jokes, props, and maybe even a song!

Unforgettable laughs for all ages, faiths, and none!



Adults £10, Under 16s £5

Scan the QR Code or call 07778 959003



**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**  
A service for everyone!

**Friday 6 March**

*I will give you rest, come*

**Nigeria 2026**

**St James's Church  
Grain ME3 0BS**

**10.00am for refreshments  
10.30am for the service**

**All Welcome**



**INFORMED PRAYER PRAYERFUL ACTION**  
24-7 365 Days a year Prayer movement Ecumenical International Women-led  
[wwdp.org.uk](http://wwdp.org.uk) Registered Charity Number 233242



**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

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**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.**

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**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](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/9932)

## Messy Church New dates below for 2025/2026



### Messy Church Dates for 2025/26

**3-5pm.**

*Dates are:*

- 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025 'Messy Idols' Moses and the law*
- 18<sup>th</sup> October 2025 'Messy Coats' the story of Joseph*
- 15<sup>th</sup> November 2025 'Messy Music' Gideon's army*
- 17<sup>th</sup> January 2026 'Messy Hair' Samson*
- 14<sup>th</sup> February 2026 'Messy Love' a new commandment*
- 14<sup>th</sup> March 2026 'Messy Mothers' a look at biblical mums*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> April 'Messy Good Friday' 10.30am-12 noon*
- 16<sup>th</sup> May 2026 'Messy Gold' King Solomon*
- 20<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:cliffatcliffe@gmail.com)

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

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## Reverend Clifford's Weekly Blog 'Gravity'



**14th February 2026**

What goes up must come down, then back in 1988 Eddie the Eagle landed two incredible jumps proving the point. In Calgary Mr. Micheal Edwards either displayed true bravery or utter stupidity as he put on his thick standard glasses and climbed the huge ski jump before hurling his whole-self down the slope flying into the air, as gravity did its bit all Eddie had to do was land the jump, as I remember watching it live at the time, it was all prayers for this complete charismatic utter nutter. Incredibly he pulled it off, twice, he didn't qualify any further which probably saved his life at the time, yet he set a new British record at 73.5m. Up to then it was just something us Brits didn't do, after all even when we did get snow in winter there was never enough to warrant building ski jumps. Then who in their right mind wakes up one day and says, 'I know want I want to be and do, a ski jumper, I want to test gravity and the frame that is the human body and see if I can defy both as I throw myself off what can only be described as a cliff like a lemming.' I remember on one holiday driving past a ski jump in France as we passed through the alps down through Switzerland, it was mid-summer, no snow, those things are simply terrifying.

Yet that's exactly what Mr. Edwards did, he held the British record until 2001, he also caused the Olympic committee to set a rule that inexperienced athletes like him could never enter the games again. Whilst this might have saved many lives, I, like many, thought at the time that it was not within the spirit of the games. Eddie was in fact the best we had at the time, in fact the only person brave enough to give it a go from our shores. He made way, through his heroism, for others to go for their dreams and became an unexpected legend.

It is now 2026 and the winter Olympic games have been televised for us once again from Cortina in Italy. Amid the snowcapped mountains thousands of competitors have taken to the slopes, rinks and jumps once again to prove that basic law of gravity, that everything that goes up must come down. In the main most complete their specialized sporting activity yet many fall, crash and get minced up as they prove we humans can't actually fly or defy the pressures and limitations of our bodily forms. I researched the statistics that one in ten competitors will suffer an injury over the course of the games, making it one of the world's most risky sporting events. Yet alone the long-term damage all sport has on our bodies and minds. The topmost dangerous of all the events believe it or not is Ice Hockey, but then why do I sound surprised, have you seen how they fly at each other, it's not a good game unless someone has been pulverized up against the side wall, don't say you don't enjoy the spectacle. It is the crashes and bangs that give us humans an edge of fear that excites us and keeps us gripped too the screens.

I used this image of the Olympics to explain another thing that comes down by default and how we can prepare for it through what we call the time of Lent at my school assemblies this week.

You see, Eddie the Eagle was in fact very fit and put in as much practice as he could, the problem was he lived in a country that did not and would not support him, so, he just went for it because he could. In truth every athlete at the winter games has spent years practicing, learning the craft of their sport. Mentally preparing for all the knocks along the way, living by strict diets and keeping fit often at seemingly superhuman strengths. Four years of hard work 24/7, 365 days a year all for sometimes those few minutes in the public eye as it all comes together or not. With it comes triumph and celebrations, heartache and disappointment. Champions who proudly take to the pedestal and show off their medals and others, though crushed state in interview they

will be back in four years' time to give it another go and see if they can do better, undeterred. And yes, some retire because age is getting the better of them or that gravity drop has left them nursing their wounds.

Like gravity it is God's love that has come down, love revealed in the presence of Jesus Christ, 2000 years ago God couldn't stop Himself from revealing that love to us, it entered our world, it lived with us and demonstrated through action and word that God's love when applied in our lives can make a real difference, we just need to believe it. Easter isn't that far away where we once again see how that love played out amongst us. The reality was we were not ready for it, and we tried to defy gravity by sending it back from where it had come. Jesus's crucifixion is many things but one of those things is that it demonstrates that even when we have something, someone as good as Jesus, we destroy it. It's like all those stereo typical Hollywood films about alien life visiting earth, we simply chase it down and pull it apart and destroy it, because at our core we just don't get it, understand or can accept difference. Jesus offered love, simple as; because God is Love the theme of our Messy Church this day, it was messy love because we didn't get it or seem to want it. Anyway, like those who practice and get themselves ready for the Olympics, we have a chance once again to examine our own spiritual lives, we call it Lent. Next Wednesday, the night after Shrove Tuesday an abundance of pancakes, some of us will start a fast, giving up something or even taking up something that will help us draw nearer to all that Easter represents. These 40 days of Lent are the preparation times, the reflective times, the spiritual exercise time. Just as Jesus was driven into the wilderness for 40 days, we pray that the same Spirit will take us and guide us into a closer relationship with God, away from the distractions of the world. The Olympic athlete becomes consumed by what lies ahead of them in the moments before they start the race, jump, or event, they are completely focused. They switch off from the crowds and spectators as they know that this is the moment that every single drip of effort has centred itself on, it's now or never, even if they crash out it wasn't because they half-heartedly approached the start line, they gave it their all. In truth, only one person takes gold yet every one of them is a winner because they entered the arena, they did their best, 8 billion other people on earth just watched in awe.

Jesus entered the wilderness and prepared for what lay ahead of him as the world became the spectator, back then estimated at just 200 million people. It might have seemed that he crashed out big time, but his master game plan was just beginning as he rose victoriously taking the top position on the pedestal of life. We are all invited to enter if you like the same race, we won't all get gold, but we can all say that we gave it our all. Lent is a time of training; we focus on the goal in front of us and we shoot with a spiritual belief that we will simply be able to say like the Olympians we were and we are part of it and we did and gave our best.

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

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## 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](#)

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## 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.

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## Who's who page

### **Priest in Charge of St.Helen's:**

**Reverend Clifford Stocking**

145 St. Helen's Rectory

Cliffe

Rochester

Kent ME3 7PY

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01634 610752 or 07941056237

*Day Off usually a Thursday*

### **Church Wardens:**

**Robin Thompson**

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01634 221497

**Paul Sutton**

[paulsubtle@gmail.com](mailto:paulsubtle@gmail.com)

07740867238

**Licensed Lay Minister**  
**Dave Green**  
[pewsey54@btinternet.com](mailto: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:

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