

**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 1st February 2026

4th Sunday of Epiphany Candlemas

8.30am Holy Communion (*BCP traditional*)

10am Family Agape Service C (*bread and wine are
simply shared for all*)

**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:

- 2nd Feb, 16th Feb **Music Jam** 7-8.30pm
- 7th Feb **monthly prayers** in church 9-10am
- 8th Feb Dave & Kay are having a blessing
during the main service to celebrate their **50th
Wedding Anniversary**. After the service
there will be some nibbles all are welcome to
stay.

Readings for Sunday:

1 Corinthians 1:
18-end & John 2:
1-11

- 14th **Messy Church** 3-5pm
- 18th Feb **Ash Wednesday** Service @ 6.30pm
- 20th Feb **Elvis** is in the building
- 24th Feb **Youth Club** 7-9pm
- 25th Feb 1st **Lent Course This Cup** 'The Kiddush Cup' 7-9pm in church.

New Youth Club

Starting

Tuesday 24th 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 25th February **the Kiddush cup**

Week two 4th March **the Haggadah cup**

Week three 11th March **the Berakah cup**

Week four 18th March **the Hallel cup**

Week five 25th 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

14th February 2026

3-5pm



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 20TH MARCH

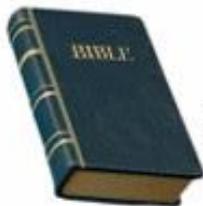
St. Helen's Church

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



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
'You said what?'**



January 31st 2026

Last day of the month, wow January passed by so quickly, tomorrow is **Candlemas** which actually falls on the 2nd February each year but brought forward to Sunday. As I have written so many times in my ministry before it is also known as **Ground Hog Day**. What it means is Epiphany and the Christmas season is finally over; the nativity set is finally removed from the Lady Chapel and put away for another year.

The ancient church tradition before gas lamps and electricity was that people would bring all their candles into church for a blessing. Given the risk that comes from burning candles it was good to ask God's blessing upon them, not just that, that they may reveal God 's light in the darkness of our lives, that He would also keep us safe.

Each Year it has become my personal tradition to provide and decorate the **Paschal Candle** for my churches. I'm thinking about it already this year, as those who know us, Cathy and I produce fused glass work; each year I have designed a different glass cross for these candles and carefully carved them into the candle. On Easter morning we light the Paschal candle from the Easter Bonfire at 6am, the dawn of celebration for the risen Christ. The candle is then carefully brought into church and placed in its holder for the year. It is then lit at every service throughout the year as a reminder of all that Christ Jesus has done for us. By Good Friday there's usually not a lot of the candle left and at 3pm the light that has shone on all that we have done throughout the year is finally blown out, the moment Jesus died on a cross. I always find this such a powerful moment and after I have blown it out I observe complete silence. *(the old candles find a home on my bookshelf as a reminder of all that occurs in minstry)* This year the Pashal candle has been through a lot, not just because the world it has been illumed in has been crazy, but because I think it has been knocked off its stand a few times, not that anyone has ever confessed to this. It has dents and bits are missing and my glasswork has been broken; I glued it back once but the last time it was

tossed to the floor some of the glass was clearly lost or thrown away. What remains though is the smaller cross in the middle of my design, a reminder that Jesus was thrown around, torn apart, hung out to die, and no one wanted to admit they had killed the son of God. But as we celebrate Candlemas again, the coming of light, his light, we are reminded he could not be extinguished. I'll have to find a strong stand for this years candle.

On Monday the liturgical year goes back to Ordinary time, the representation colour being green before we move on quickly to Lent.

Last week some of us got together to set out how we will start and run our new **Youth Club**, between us there is quite a lot of experience, but this still needs your prayers. We have a church building which over the centuries has been the main community hub as well as a place of worship. We would like to continue that relationship between us the church and the wider community, we have something to offer, we have experience and we basically have a warm welcoming nature and a building. Youth Club then begins on the 24th February 7-9pm for 11–16-year-olds and its totally free, tell those please who might be interested. Thanks to the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Chairty trust and other donations we have games equipment to keep those who attend occupied. If you would like to give towards the work we do with young people we have set up a separate reserved fund for this.

In the life of the wider Church what a week it has been, Sarah Mullally started the legal procedures to being confirmed as the 106th **Archbishop of Canterbury** at St Paul's Cathedral, she will be enthroned later in Canterbury Cathedral at the end of March. We do pray for her in this new role; we also pray for a very divided church at this time. My social media posts are full of people sitting on both sides of the fence about her appointment, both within the church and outside of the church. Many of the comments are hostile and frankly outrageous, where have we come as a human race; I have commented before that social media allows people to be very brave, they probably wouldn't say it to someone's face or like it said about themselves. Sarah clearly has a very difficult path ahead and I am sure she will listen and be directed by the Holy Spirit and if she is, then we might note this from Jesus as he made it clear we are not to go against the work of the Holy Spirit because that is the one an only unforgivable sin. Mark 3: 29. You see many around Jesus didn't believe he was who he said he was, or why he did the things he did. May we not get caught in the witch-hunts that cause us to sin, you see time will tell for the things of God endure Isaiah 40: 8. Pray that our church might be united in one name that of Jesus Christ, because if the church is divided what hope is there at all for the world.

For those who worship with us, I spoke about our aging **sound system** last week during our Sunday service, today we had a professional team in to look at it. Basically, it's working fine as long as it isn't played with by anyone trying to adjust it for their own hearing levels. We had a long chat about trying to cover sound in a medieval building, there are areas thus that are better to sit in, given your own hearing needs. To hear the natural voice of someone leading at the front, do that, just come closer to the front. If you use hearing aids, note only certain areas of the church are picked up on our loop system, believe it or not where our green chairs are is the best area, we tested it. I wanted them to look at our speakers and balance them which they did and so there is now more volume at the back of church, this has now been set and cannot be adjusted by us. We noted that our sound desk is getting old and has to many buttons for people to touch, they are going to provide us with a quote for a new sound desk that is tamper proof and once set up can't be accidentally adjusted. The thing about sound is we do not all hear the same thing, different sensitivities affect our experience,

some of us register high and low tones in different ways. Back in the summer for example at my eldest granddaughters birthday party as the sun we beginning to set in Rainham, my son joked about the sound of the crickets. What crickets I replied, I thought he was having me on. All the younger adults said surely I could hear them, I listened, I took myself to the bushes where the sound was meant to be coming from but nothing. A couple of other people my age listened, we couldn't hear a thing. My son really wasn't winding us up and really couldn't believe we couldn't hear them. It was evident then that the high pitch chirps they make is not within my hearing capabilities, a sound I have lost in God's wonderful world of nature. Good thing a cricket is not likely to creep up on me and mug me.

As a longtime classical musician and as a church leader I don't think I have ever been in a church or public area where everyone has been totally happy about the sound they hear, interesting at Sarah's service in St. Pauls Cathedral they had all sorts of problems with the sound.

Theres a myth that a sound system will deliver a huge sound for all to hear, the truth is it will not, stand away from a Microphone, it simply won't pick you up, talk quietly and it only amplifies the same quiet voice. Every person who uses a microphone will have their own tonality and so some adjustments can't be made instantly. In churches we try to set a medium level that copes with as many of these human variations as possible, to experience a better sound sometimes it is simply down to changing your seat.

As a classical trained Double Bassist, I have played in many symphony orchestra's. The bass section is usually put behind the cello's, and in front of the percussion with the brass section to one side. Trust me when percussion and brass are going for it, it is deafening. What I hear is very different to the violinists on the other side of the orchestra. The only person who hears a better overall sound is the conductor up on their podium. After that it is the audience who get a bigger picture of a 120 musicians as all the sound pushes forward and fills the space. I've played some wonderful music over the years, but I guess I have never heard the full delivery at its best due to where my bass and I have to sit. Its often all about positioning!

We are hoping now to receive **a quote** for a new sound desk, we pray it is not too expensive and that we will be able to find **the funds** to improve the hearing experience for all who use our church building.

Two friends were talking to each other, and one said, "maybe you need hearing aids. Maybe you should think about getting hearing test". The other person said, "why would I need a hairy chest?"

Then remember that Jesus said, I came to give sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf.

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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cliffatcliffe@gmail.com

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