

**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*

Services this week and readings

Sunday 22nd March 2026

5th Sunday of Lent

Passiontide

8.30am Holy Communion (*BCP traditional*)

10am Family Service

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

Dates ahead:

- 23rd Music Jam 7-8.30pm
- 25th Lent course 'Elijah's Cup' 7-9pm
- 29th Palm Praise 6pm
- 30th - 3rd April **Holy Week** see below don't forget to sign up for the Seder meal, sheet at back of church or email Clifford.
- 1st April School Easter Worship in church 10am
- 1st April international Adam's apple day, remembering to in future say no to Eve.
- 6th - 11th Clifford taking some time off, emergencies only (gone fishing)

**Readings for
Sunday: Romans
8: 6-11 & John
11: 1- 45**

Holy Week & Easter @ St. Helen's 2026 This Cup

Palm Sunday

8.30am Holy Communion BCP

10am Family Service Theme: He rides on in Triumph

6pm **Palm Praise** service led by the Music Jam

7pm **Holy Monday** 30th March Taizé: Theme wine

7pm **Holy Tuesday** 31st March Celtic: Theme 'I am the vine'

9pm **Holy Wednesday** 1st April Compline: Theme 'Take this cup from me'

7pm start **Maundy Thursday** 2nd April Seder Meal:

You need to sign up for this by emailing Clifford or sign-up sheet at back of church, all welcome to come and experience the Last Supper in a way that Jesus delivered it 2000 years ago as a Passover meal.

Good Friday 3rd April Theme: 'With this cup'

Messy Church 10.30-12noon

12noon -2pm the church is open for prayer and reflective readings then from 2pm-3pm we move to a full-service remembering Jesus in his final hour.

Easter Sunday 5th April

6am Dawn Service A communion gathered around the fire in silence then we enter the church in celebration that he is risen.

10am Family Easter Agape service Theme: 'Finally he is risen to share a new cup'

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.

Arts and Crafts @ St. Helen's
Wednesday 25th March

10-12noon
All welcome
in St. Helen's House



Next time @ Messy Church
Messy Good Friday
3rd April 10.30am – 12 noon



*Hot cross buns
& a drink*

TINA TURNER

AND SOUL DIVA TRIBUTE NIGHT



**FRIDAY
24th APRIL**

7.30PM
DOORS OPEN 7PM

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



BAR (own drink not permitted)

RAFFLE

TICKETS

ADULTS £15
UNDER 16s £5

BOX OFFICE:
07778 959003



A plea from the Coffee Stop

We are very short of volunteers at present due to illness and other life events.

Could you help?

If you can boil a kettle you pass the grade!

Seriously if you think you might be able to spare a couple of hours a week we would be delighted to see if you might be able to join the team of wonderful volunteers who serve at the Coffee Stop.

Many hands make light work

Please see or speak to Shirley or Clifford for more details.

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
Bishop vs Area Dean 'just one small step!'**



21st March 2026

Now for something light hearted as promised.

A couple of weeks ago I attended the Rochester Diocese Area Deans two day conference, in truth it was information overload as we were encouraged to take back to our deanery's and thus churches a whole wealth of ideas and legislation that keeps the Church of England both alive and safe to all who step into it. From safeguarding, net zero, the national vacancy dilemma which to sum up means that every stipend member of clergy will have at least three church/parishes each by 2030. Clergy wellbeing. How to engage with younger generations, church buildings, racial diversity, how to use and encourage Lay ministry, education, funding and finance and a whole load more.

With my head ready to explode and pondering where on earth I might start first within the life of our own deanery which has all the problems that were covered, especially with so many vacancies it was pleasing to have a completely mad conversation over lunch with Bishop Simon.

The last conversation I ever had with him was many years ago when he was Archdeacon of Rochester, as he broke the news to me that I had come close to successfully finding a position at the end of my curacy but unfortunately one warden wanted me and the other didn't so better luck next time. That was then my call to look outside of Rochester which started my travels to March in Cambridgeshire then Margate and eventually returning here to Cliffe and Medway the place we know as home.

The conversation started like this, with the head of communications describing her current building work at home. We then spoke a lot about our experiences of building control officers and workmen generally. As the conversation moved on Bishop Simon

explained that he had hoped he had got out of a visit from some house maintenance man only to be texted by his wife to say the visit had been moved to the following week, he had been foiled. I explained how we use to have in Margate, a gas engineer who once a year serviced the Vicarage boiler. As I mainly worked from the church community centre Cathy always had to let the engineer in. Not a problem if it wasn't for the fact that he talked for England. Not only would he talk and talk, but he also believed in some really strange conspiracy theories. Indeed, the royal family are lizard people from another planet. His best one was during the Pandemic he would not have an inoculation as he seriously believed that it pumped microchips into our bodies so that the government can keep tabs on us. As my late dear friend said at the time, who was a research developer for GlaxoSmithKline. If they could make a chip that small to pass through a needle then hats off to them. One year which was that pandemic year it was me who let him in and had to listen to more than an hour of this rubbish, I had no escape and Cathy just laughed and said now you know what I have had to put up with each year. A lovely man but just talked nonsense for about two hours.

This engaged Bishop Simon to then explain the conversation of a school assembly he had recently taken, so we sat and listened to his story. He was talking about space exploration and the wonder of the universe, when a 10-year-old boy raised his hand to not ask a question but to direct the bishop to his own thoughts and beliefs. 'Bishop you know that they never landed on the moon, it was all a huge hoax' as he explained his theory to a now puzzled bishop who was trying to work out how he would argue back without hurting the boys belief.

Clearly he thought this hadn't just come out of nowhere, his parents at least must believe the same or had the conversation at home. In reply the bishop questioned whether the boy believed the space station was floating around our orbit, or that hundreds if not thousands of satellites up there did the same, giving us the communication tools that we have today. Then he said, when they next land on the moon will you believe when they stand by the original flag and other bits that were let on the surface of the moon. The boy simply didn't believe it nor did the bishop.

When Bishop Simon had finished telling story, I just smiled and thought do I speak now; Bishop I replied, 'I like the idea of finding definitive proof if and when they might land on the moon again, which seems to be presently with all the modern technology we have a huge problem.' He looked at me with a look that said, are you too doubting the landings and a question that asked the same. 'I'm afraid to say Bishop I tend to believe that the landings never happened.' 'But' he replied, 'I watched them as a child when they happened, it must be true how can anyone doubt them', I couldn't admit to seeing them personally even though I guess my parents might have sat me down in front of the telly as a toddler. I do remember being sat in front of a black and white screen two years later to watch the first commercial flight of concord. Then the Bishop said with a strange I don't want to offend you laughter, 'Clifford are you serious', and like a doubting Thomas I said, yes I was, I need as it were to see tangible evidence not just old footage from a time past. Brilliant studio work for the sixties, as Neil steps down filmed by someone all ready on the surface and claims one small step. We then just burst into laughter at the conversation, head of communications said this is brilliant Bishop and Area Dean in differing conversation over moon landings, what a headline she thought.

We continued for a while with the conversation, Bishop Simon said what if you had met Neil Armstrong what would you possibly say to him. My answer, 'seriously how much did they pay you to keep up the lie?'

Then suddenly the bishop had found his answer for that boy who raised the subject in the first place, in future he might take me with him and say, clearly in 1969 man first landed on the moon, but here my colleague here has another theory that some believe, make up your own mind.

The conversation at that table was fun and broke I guess the heaviness of a conference that was information overload, the bishop was probably left pondering what I preach week by week.

I remain sceptical but like Thomas I wait the day when definitive proof comes my way, I remain with more questions than answers, and please don't mock me, today we live with constant untruths in the world of AI, a world of make believe. Humanity and governments have always fed us what they want to believe and it is right that we continue to challenge truth. The moon landings have always had an edge of conspiracy, they most likely did happen even if today we are struggling to repeat them, it is healthy to question less we get led up the garden path.

One day Jesus stepped into the room from nowhere and said Thomas touch and believe, from that day on there was no more doubting for Thomas, was he right or wrong to challenge 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 & Area Dean of Strood

Reverend Clifford Stocking

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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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