

*THE PARISH
OF
ST HELEN
STAPLEFORD*



Profile



2021

THE PARISH OF ST HELEN STAPLEFORD



St Helen's church with the new annexe



A service at St Luke's church



The Church @ Montrose Court - fun day



St Helen's church interior

Welcome Message

Thank you for considering Stapleford Parish Church as a parish where God may be calling you, in the next phase of your ministry. We consist of three churches - the Church of St Helen; our largest, oldest and busiest church, which is central in the parish; the Church of St Luke, built in the 1890s which has a smaller congregation and serves the northwest of the town; and the Church @ Montrose Court, a recent church plant in a housing estate on the edge of the town.

In recent years, we have seen growth in the size of the congregation and an increase in the number and variety of activities undertaken at St Helen's. Also the building of the community annexe, as an addition to the church buildings, and the setting up of the Church @ Montrose Court to reach those in a more deprived part of the parish. Following the coronavirus pandemic, we have not been able to meet together as a whole congregation, but have developed an online ministry.

Following the departure of our vicar and curates to their new posts, we are looking for a new vicar to lead us forward at this key time in the life of our church.

THE PARISH OF ST HELEN STAPLEFORD

Vision Prayer

“We pray, as the congregations of St Helen’s, St Luke’s and Montrose Court, that, by God’s grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, we will be a growing, Christ-centred parish church for the people of Stapleford and surrounds with the intention of leading a new generation into life in God”.

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About Us

We are an evangelical CPAS sponsored parish with a long tradition of biblical teaching, lively worship and mission orientation to the wider community and the world.

It is a church for the people, led by the people, with an active laity involvement in services. There is a nonjudgmental welcome for everybody and different generations mix easily together. Services are informal with charismatic influences. The church community is caring and appreciative, valuing each other and their differences.

Stapleford is very much a parish and St Helen's still has a strong element of being a parish church for the people, reaching outwards to the community when possible. There is a strong volunteering culture with a mix of leadership and helping in this varied income church.



THE DIOCESE OF SOUTHWELL & NOTTINGHAM

“GROWING DISCIPLES WIDER, YOUNGER AND DEEPER”

A statement from the Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham, the Rt Revd. Paul Williams and Archdeacon of Nottingham, the Ven. Phil Williams

The Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham incorporates the City of Nottingham, the whole County of Nottinghamshire and five parishes in South Yorkshire. The population is 1.15 million – 51% live in the greater Nottingham conurbation, 31% in ex-mining areas and 18% in rural. There are 305 churches (252 parishes), served by 142 stipendiary clergy and licensed lay workers.

In 2016 a refreshed diocesan vision was embraced across the diocese, recognising the imperative for ‘Growing Disciples: wider, younger, deeper’. (See www.growingdisciples.co.uk/)

- ‘Wider’ in that we will seek to grow disciples in every part of the diocese, with no retreat from any community: urban centre; outer estates; rural villages; or market towns.
- ‘Younger’ in that we will seek fresh ways to harness the boldness and creativity of children, students and young people across the diocese, not least in Nottingham which is the 4th youngest city outside London.
- ‘Deeper’ as we grow in knowing Christ, so that as his disciples we can be an increasing blessing to the people among whom we live and serve in the workplace, family and community.

Compelled by the love of Christ by 2023 we are seeking to:

- Welcome 7000 new disciples into the fellowship of Christ and his church
- Commission 1000 younger leaders (especially 15-30 year old's) equipped and inspired to serve the purposes of God in the Church and society.
- Plant or graft 75 New Worshipping Communities (NWCs) across the diocese to increase our reach in telling the story of Jesus to all.
- Grow 25 larger Resource Churches with clear commitment to develop leaders, plant New Worshipping Communities, and disciple the young.
- Serve and pray together as ‘One Church’ contending for the gospel in every community and sphere of public life in our city, county and region.



Rt Revd. Paul William



Ven. Phil Williams

If you would like to understand our approach to new worshipping communities, please visit <https://southwell.anglican.org/new-worshipping-communities-a-vision-for-growth/> where we share some of our stories). It is possible to apply for a grant to assist the costs of setting up a new worshipping community.

Every parish is encouraged to create its own 'Growing Disciples Plan' so that it can play a significant part in the strategic commitment to 'Growing Disciples wider, younger and deeper.' This may include identifying the opportunities to reach new people within the parish through a new worshipping community. The diocese has a 'Growing Disciples Fund' so that each parish can apply for up to £2000 per year to support its Growing Disciples Plan.

The Diocese and Stapleford

As a diocese we are seeking to invest in the post at Stapleford with the expectation that the following three objectives set around three core values will be met:

- Grace (local ministry team equipped and inspired, not dependent on stipendiary leadership)
- Growth (clear numerical growth)
- Generosity (financial sustainability, contributing beyond full ministry costs to parish share)

As a leader of one of our larger resourcing churches, the new vicar of Stapleford would receive an induction into diocesan personnel, participation on the Bishops' Fireside programme and ongoing support through the diocesan 'larger resourcing churches' network.

The Archdeacon writes, "*The benefice of Stapleford is one of the diocesan larger resourcing churches that is 'growing to give itself away'. The Church@Montrose Court was an early example of one of the planned 75 new worshipping communities. The next vicar of Stapleford will be building on a solid foundation of faithful parochial ministry where worship, evangelism and discipleship is rooted in the Stapleford community. We look forward to welcoming the new vicar as they bring a new season of growth, development and innovation to the mission in Stapleford - as well as making a positive contribution to Nottingham North deanery, and the diocese.*"

Bishop Paul has said: "*It is my hope that each worshipping community in the diocese will develop a compelling picture of its own future in God's purposes with an expectation of growing numerically and in the scope of its mission. It is my prayer that the new vicar of Stapleford will have the creative and visionary leadership to lead this important ministry into new growth as one of the potential larger resourcing churches in the diocese, having a heart for evangelism, gifts in growing other leaders, as well as reaching younger to connect with new generations.*"



Bishop Paul with Joan in her Nineties at The Church @ Montrose Court



Bishop Paul Teaching in St Helen's

Stapleford

In the parish profile statement you will see the desire we have to see the appointment of a person who will lead the three church communities into growth, continuing to release the gifts of the people in mission and ministry to serve the wider community of the parish.

Stapleford has played a key role in the life of the Deanery over the years and we are looking forward with hope and expectation to see what God will do under the prayerful leadership of the person appointed as incumbent.

The Area Dean and the Deanery Leadership Team will seek to offer support and encouragement to the new incumbent in fulfilling the objectives set out in the Parish Profile Statement, and we hope the person appointed to this exciting role will also be committed to the wider life of the Deanery, including attendance at the Deanery Synod, Chapter and monthly prayer meeting.

- to encourage larger churches to act as resource churches for others
- to see curates trained and released to plant or graft new worshipping communities
- to equip church members for a range of ministries to serve our wider communities
- to train younger leaders to contribute to enabling the church to grow younger

"Growing Disciples: Wider, Younger, Deeper".



Baptism at St Helen's Church

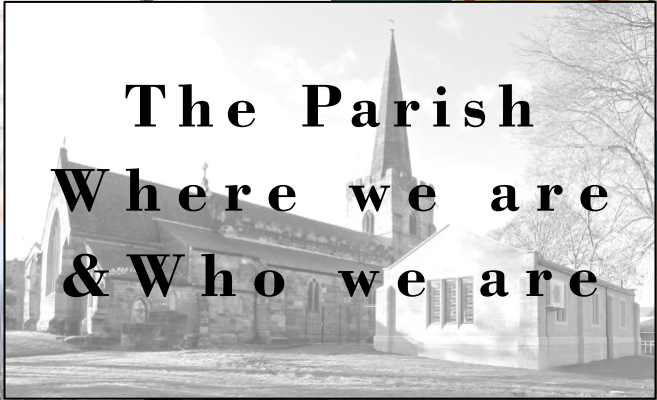


Remembrance day at St Luke's



Baptism at Montrose Court





THE PARISH OF ST HELEN

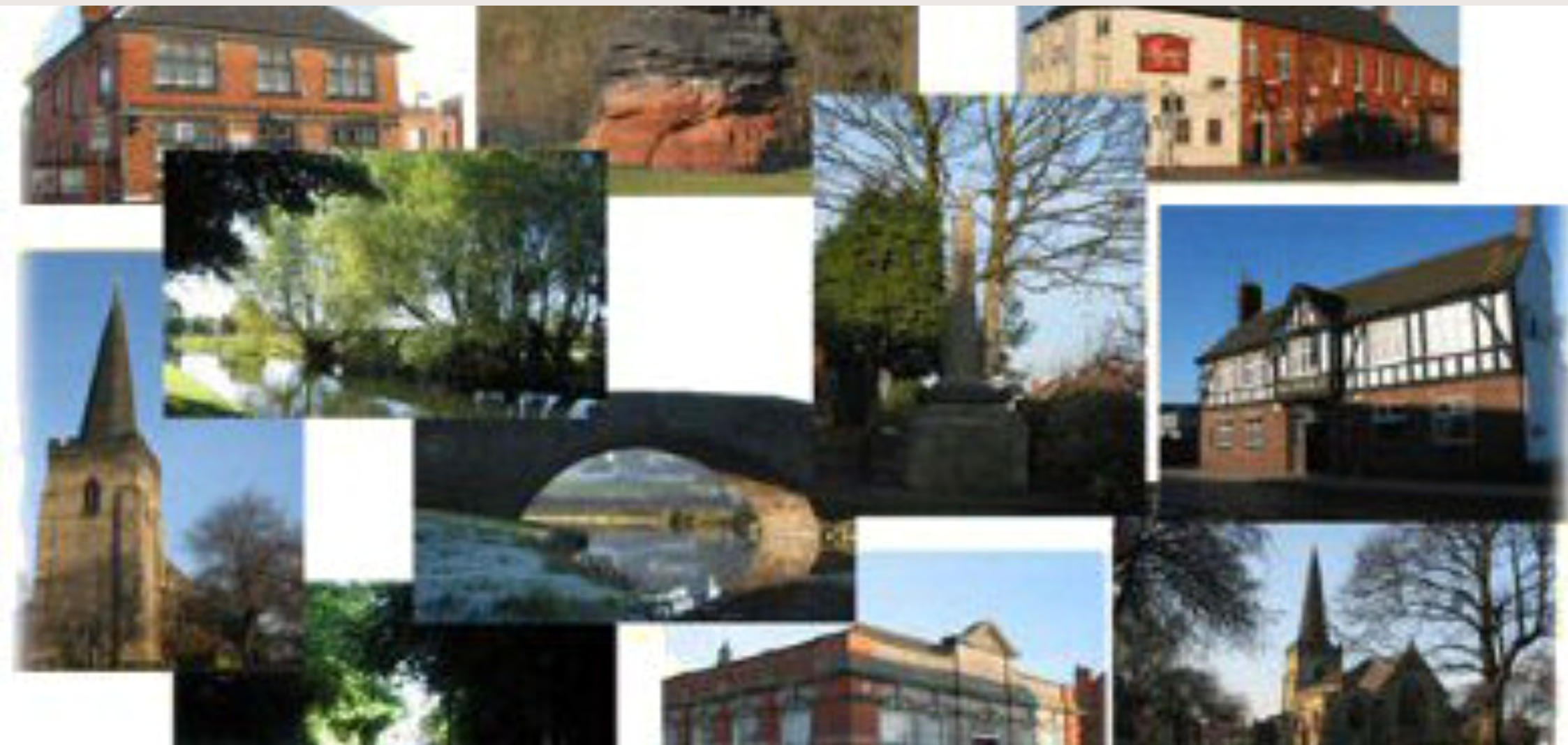
Where we are

Stapleford is a small town of around 16,000 people situated as an outer suburb of Nottingham with the city centre being 5 miles to the east. We are just a mile from the river Erewash and the border with Derbyshire to the west, and only 10 miles from Derby city centre.

Our ancient town features in the Domesday book with a Christian history dating back at least to the Saxon Cross in St Helen's Churchyard. The town has a distinct, independent feel. We are very much a community.



“Stapleford is very much a parish and St Helen's still has a strong element of being a parish church for the people”



Who we are



Demographics

Our population is socially mixed and racially predominantly white, mainly English speaking and UK born. Roughly 20% are under 20 years of age and 20 % are over 65 year of age. At the 2011 census, 60% identified themselves as Christian and 40% as of no religion. Most households own their own home, the remainder being mainly social housing, 63% of housing is semi-detached or terraced. Industry comprises mostly of small units of light engineering.

Character

Stapleford has its own town council and mayor and there is a good community feeling with many of the town coming together for public events pre-COVID, such as Remembrance Sunday, the turning on of the Christmas lights, 'Hemlock Happening' and Stapleford carnival. There are several allotment sites and recreation grounds. There are many community activities and clubs, including the well-attended Stapleford Town football club.



Positioning

With St Helen's Church situated in the centre, and St Luke's and Montrose Court on the outskirts, we try to provide beacons of the light of Jesus to all parts of our parish, being welcoming, serving, evangelistic and outward looking.



Community

There are certainly sections of the community of Stapleford who are living in poverty, shown by the much-needed food bank. The high street does need some regeneration as there are empty premises where banks and other shops have gone.

Fortunately, in September 2019, Stapleford was chosen to receive up to £25m worth of government regeneration investment. In 2021, following the submission of a bid, Stapleford has been awarded this grant and it is hoped that this will revitalise Stapleford with a community leisure hub, cycle super-highway, enterprise hub, new adult learning opportunities and a COVID - 19 grant scheme.

Transport & Amenities



Transport Links

The town has good transport links with several bus routes and a tram stop at Toton Lane with trams to Nottingham city centre. It is also close to the M1. There is a large health centre which includes ecumenically run chaplaincy services. Stapleford also has our MP's office, a library, pubs, cafes, restaurants plus many other shops and services, such as hairdressers, a post office, a new large Aldi store' plus a small Sainsbury's and Iceland.

Schools

Within the parish there are four state infant and primary schools, all within walking distance of the town centre as well as St John's Church of England Primary School (voluntary controlled). Three of the schools also have a nursery school. There is also one large comprehensive school and technology college which includes a sixth form.

St Helen's Profile



St Helen's is a thriving evangelical parish church with charismatic leanings, known for lively worship.

The church, after its recent refurbishment, provides a flexible worship and church community space which is adaptable for the many uses to which it is put. The annexe adds considerably to the facilities with toilets, kitchen and small to medium group accommodation.

Worship is led by a music group and is made up mainly of contemporary worship songs with a few hymns. The style of service is informal, the clergy do not generally robe and there is a well established tradition of lay people taking part in leading services, intercessions and preaching. All the words for services are computer generated and projected on screens so that the service order can be easily followed.

Services

There are generally three services a week at St Helen's, each with a different flavour:

- The 10:00 service is family orientated and is supported by the children's groups (please see the separate reports). The children are present in the first part of the service which is child friendly. They then leave for their groups and there is adult teaching, readings, prayers and worship. The children rejoin their families at the end of the service. Once a month there is a communion, with the children joining in, and once a month an all age service, where the children stay throughout.
- The 6:30 is a quieter service with time given to deeper worship and preaching. The pace is slower and more contemplative. There is communion once a month.
- The third service is at 11:00 am on Wednesdays and is a BCP service, mainly attended by the older members of the congregation. The worship for this is mainly hymns led from the piano. Again, there is a monthly communion.

THE CHURCH DURING COVID

St Helen's worked to establish an on-line presence during lock-down. From the beginning, it was obvious that, to maintain any fellowship and worship, this would be necessary. The aim was simply to offer a connection point for people, to give reassurance and share hope.

This was initially an audio podcast but developed, with the purchase of a video camera, into an online video presentation. The worship songs were provided by church members and this avoided any copyright issues. From the beginning, there was no attempt to replicate a service instead an accessible, informal format was provided.

The on-lines involved many people from the congregation contributing prayers, talks and joining in discussions filmed over Zoom. The on-lines were all available via the Church website, Facebook page and on YouTube. For special occasions there were special productions, including a virtual carol service and Holy week reflections.

Alongside the adult on-lines, there were ones produced for children of Sunday School age.

Uptake of the on-lines was good from the start, peaking at nearly 300 views for the height of the first lock-down restrictions, reducing to a hundred or so as we were able to restart services in the summer, then again increasing for the second lock-down period.

All the offerings received good feedback and were instrumental in keeping the fellowship going through this very difficult period.



Services at St Helen's	Service Source	Adult Nos.	Children Nos
10:00am Morning Worship - 1st, 2nd & 5th Sunday. All Age Worship - 3rd Sunday Holy Communion - 4th Sunday	Common Worship	86	20
6:30pm Evening Worship - 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sunday Holy Communion 3rd Sunday	Common Worship	34	2
11:00am Morning Prayer - 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th Wednesday Holy Communion - 3rd Wednesday	Book Of Common Prayer		

For details of services at St Luke's and The Church @ Montrose Court please see the separate reports

St.Luke's Profile



St Luke's is a small brick built church originally consecrated as a Methodist Chapel. It was taken over by the Church of England in 1910.

Congregation

The average attendance for St Luke's is approximately 27, mostly in the age range of 60 to 90. Our congregation has a loving, caring ethos and we are fortunate to have the Rev Canon Joan Whysall ministering here, and her commitment is greatly appreciated. We have strong support from St Helen's, who enrich our worship by helping with the leading and preaching. At present the music is provided via the on-line system and we are unsure who will return as pianist to help with the worship in the future.

The church has a management team to help in the running of the church, along with our own treasurer, who manages our finances separately from St Helen's. We pay an agreed percentage towards the parish share.

Furthermore, we have a small team of people responsible for health and safety who, between them, have completed the food hygiene course, the Vulnerable Adults Course and a first aid course. As a church, we follow the Ecclesiastical churches guidance for health and safety.

Before the service, on entering St Luke's, people are welcome to put requests in our prayer book to be included in the morning prayers. During the year we hold special services, like a healing service, Songs of Praise and at Pentecost, a cafe style church. We hold study courses and once tried out one that included craft, hoping to reach a different group of people.

We also have a very supportive congregation on the rota for praying, reading, playing the music, flowers, and, of course tea, coffee and cakes. As a church, we like to eat cake and are known for always having cake available, especially when we are celebrating birthdays together.

Service Schedules

10.00am Morning Worship	1 st Sunday
10.00am Holy Communion	2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th & 5 th Sunday



COVID

Despite the restrictions in church, we have had a good congregation each week. In the new year we commenced live services on Zoom which were well attended and gave opportunity for those who have difficulties in attending church.

In the early days of lock-down and before we got our on-line Zoom services started, every month something was delivered to each member of our congregation. At this time we were very concerned for the well being of our mainly older congregation and deliveries were made of cards, candles, cakes, plants, and Christian messages.

Monthly phone calls took place and every effort was made to ensure we were up to date on our members latest situations and needs. At Easter, a decision was made to purchase the Church of England's "Live Lent" course and delivered to every member of our congregation. In a similar way, we ensured that all, during Pentecost, received a copy of the "Thy Kingdom Come" booklet.

Moving forward, not all members are happy to return to church yet, so Rev Joan Whysall repeats the Sunday service live over Zoom on a Monday afternoon.

Notes

- **Strengths :** The members of our congregation have long established faith, fervent in prayer, encouraging and very supportive. As a church, we came together to write a book called "Glimpsing The Past With An Eye To The Future", where the funds raised were donated to the Annexe Project at St Helen's.
- **Weaknesses:** Lack of younger people, and of reaching out wider into the community, for example, the new housing estate close by.
- **Outreach:** We hold Summer Fairs and charity events, have afternoon teas, where members of the congregation are encouraged to bring guests. In December, we open the church up for people to come and light candles, as well as holding a Carol service, We pray around the streets of St Luke's and deliver invites to our special events. We display a large wooden cross outside during Easter and at other special times, like when we adorned it with poppies as part of the "Stapleford Remembers" campaign during the centenary anniversary of the end of the first World War.

The Church @ Montrose Court's Profile

This is a unique, independent congregation started in 2017. A few people from St Helen's answered the call to prayer walk around an estate of mixed private and council housing, with patches of significant social deprivation. This is the main catchment area for the church. The premises, which became available just at the right time, are an ex- hairdresser's in the parade of 4 shops serving the estate.



Serving food for one of the Fun Days



Our first Baptism and Confirmation



BACKGROUND

Church activities before lock-down were divided fairly equally between social and spiritual. These included 'drop-ins', on 3 mornings a week, at which simple, free refreshments were provided. All had an 11:00 prayer time which most people stayed for. At all these drop-ins the foodbank was open. Sunday services at 4:00 are completely informal. They start with free refreshments and simple craft activities for children and adults. There follows Sung worship, a short talk and prayers, the service ending with more refreshments. The premises hold about 35 people, adults and children, and services are usually fairly full.

On special occasions, such as the end of school terms, the church has held events on the green and parade outside, featuring free food, outdoor activities and indoor crafts, both mainly aimed at children. These events have drawn upward of 200 people from the estate. Another highlight was a visit by the Bishop of Southwell to baptise and confirm members of the congregation.

Other activities of the church have included the distribution of Fare Share food, done in partnership with the Stapleford Community Group and 'Christmas giveaway' of donated goods, toys and clothing. There have also been Pancake Days and other celebrations, and a notable Nativity production, starring children from the church, starting with a procession around the estate including live donkeys!

Some adults and families from the church have become part of the wider parish family, joining in activities at St Helen's, such as 'Messy Church', 'Cake, Pray, Love' and 'Faith On Thursday' and St Luke's social /outreach activities. Members have also joined St Helen's congregation for special occasions, such as the Christingle services.





**Online
March
2021**



Pandemic Response

Unfortunately, during the pandemic, with social distancing, the premises have been too small to open, except for the Montrose Church Hope food-bank in the cellar. This has become the main activity of the lock-down, distributing between 300 - 400 of food parcels to date, most of these delivered by the team. Prayer walking and pastoral work have also continued throughout the pandemic.

Because our church premises have been closed, there has been a necessary switch, during the pandemic closure, to online activities. Where regulations have allowed, these monthly videos have been accompanied by 'Montrose Church in a bag'. This has been a bag of goodies including crafts, tea, coffee, fruit juice, cake and biscuits, prayer activities and small presents including, at Christmas, 'Holding Crosses'. Over a hundred bags have been distributed to the estate each time this has been done. The 'Messy Church' team have also donated bags to distribute to families.

The Montrose church team are 6 volunteers drawn from St Helen's Church congregation and led by Emma Jones.

The Church@Montrose Court provides an exciting and successful outreach opportunity into this neglected estate on the edge of our Parish.

The immediate challenge is to restart and grow the activities of the church. As any church, our work in the estate is both pastoral and spiritual and there are opportunities as we reopen in both areas. Pastorally, we need to continue to strengthen our relationships in our community, but also to reach out to new groups, including youth, people in debt and possibly people who are addicted to drugs (a significant problem on the estate). Spiritually, our aim is to grow the congregation in discipleship and have community members leading activities.

Ministry Team



Rev Karen Hanford
Associate Minister



Rev Canon Joan Whysall,
St Luke's Church

In the recent past, St Helen's was blessed with not only a vicar, but two curates and a paid youth worker.

In the last 12 months or so we have lost all these people, leaving us in vacancy with a large and vibrant church with little clergy support. However, Rev Karen Hanford was appointed and licensed as part time Associate Minister at the start of the vacancy. She works with a small team of lay volunteers to provide leadership and preaching at our four weekly Services (two on a Sunday, one midweek and one online) which re-commenced on Easter Sunday 2021 with the easing of COVID restrictions.

Rev Canon Joan Whysall was commissioned by Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham in 2015, as Minister of St Luke's Church Stapleford. Joan, working with the Church Wardens and Management Team has helped the build a close knit church, pastorally caring for each other continuing right through the COVID period. Many people have been encouraged to take an active role in services which has helped people to grow in Faith.

There are two Licensed Lay Ministers, though both, for different reasons, have currently stepped back from active ministry. There are two Licensed Lay Ministers in training, and an Ordinand on placement who is training for ministry at St Mellitus College (East Midland).

There are a number of members of the Congregation involved in other areas of ministry, including running Messy Church, leading Sunday School and groups for older children, leading Nurture courses and small groups, as well as involvement in our regular pattern of worship, including our music group. There is a shortage of leaders for some of our children's and young people's groups, especially male role models. There is also currently a shortage of Worship Leaders.

St Helen's is part of Nottingham North Deanery and pre-COVID, was regarded by the Diocese and Deanery as a resource church.

We arranged for one of our lay readers to help out at another church in the Deanery, currently in interregnum, and she has now been taking services for several years. In addition, we have helped support children and youth work, with some of our volunteers helping to provide resources.

THE PARISH OF ST HELEN STAPLEFORD

Children, Young People and Families



The Church for Children

The children and young people's work in the parish has really flourished over the past decade, with increasing numbers of children involved, and has served both regular Sunday attendees and children in the wider community.

St Helen's is certainly a family friendly church that actively encourages children and young people and we feel that it is important that our future vicar will support this going forward so that families in Stapleford will continue to see St Helen's as a welcoming home in which their children can enjoy growing up in the Christian faith.

The children's groups and activities are all currently run by volunteers, many of them long term and dedicated individuals, supported by other helpers. We do not currently have a youth worker.

There is certainly a challenge to ensure sufficient leadership going forward to maintain this important ministry. Also, we do face the challenge of encouraging children and young people back to face-to-face groups and activities and, indeed, relaunching some events and groups.

On a Sunday Morning at St Helen's.,.

On 3 out of 4 Sundays, children and young people stay for the start of the service, normally including a child friendly action song before heading out to their groups.

Sunday School

Pre-COVID, St Helen's ran four groups for children on a Sunday morning up to age 10 and quite a large team of leaders and helpers were needed. There is Bible-based teaching, activities, games and lots of craft. 'Fun' is definitely a word used by our children to describe Sunday School. The annual Nativity play performed in church is a much enjoyed highlight of the year.

During lock-down, we were able to put online weekly or bi-weekly 10 minute Sunday School videos aimed at young children to offer some teaching, music and prayer while we could not meet. We even managed an online nativity. We are currently opening up bi-weekly face to face Sunday school with a limited number of children.

Prior to 2020 we had 44 children on the register and would regularly expect around 28 children to attend on a Sunday morning. About 20 of those have attended at various times since COVID.

We would love to get back to regular larger numbers in the near future and grow beyond that in the long term.

'Energise'

'Energise' is a long-standing group for the year 6's up to 14 year old's which runs during the Sunday morning service. It helps the young people to learn more deeply about Jesus and how to live out their Christian faith. 'Energise' is run by a team of 3 volunteers. Sundays consist of Bible study, prayer and fun activities.

There are Lent challenges plus pre-COVID, monthly social events in evenings or at weekends.

One member says, "*Energise is fun, engaging and you learn lots*". The group continued strongly though lock-down with new Friday evening zoom sessions, including Christian teaching and games.

The pattern of meetings may change as we emerge from lock-down restrictions.



Encounter

This is a group of 14-18 year old's who have met on Tuesday evenings, led up until now by a curate. It is aimed at helping teenage Christians to grow together in friendship and faith. The group goes to the annual Soul Survivor festival. It has become smaller in recent times due to some members moving away to university and is looking to grow and renew its leadership.

Encounter and 'Energise' have around 20 members in total.

At other times...

Messy Church

Messy Church is a family event that has been run at St Helen's for 10 years. With a huge volunteer effort from young people, with leadership from clergy, pre-COVID it attracted, on average, one hundred people to come and do Bible related crafts, take part in a short worship time and enjoy a meal once a month on a Saturday. Since 2020 there have been some in-person meetings, plus delivery of lots of Messy Church activity packs reaching around 30 families. During summer holidays 240 activity bags, together with sandwiches, were handed out to members of the community.

Annual Events

St Helen's runs an annual youth weekend event at Harby Centre for 10-18s. It has been a great highlight of the year for the young people and has been led by volunteers with clergy input.

Summer holiday club has been run for 3 days of the school holidays each year by volunteers and the vicar. It has attracted a hall full of children to come and have fun and learn about God which is especially pleasing as most of these children would not normally come to church on a Sunday.

Tuesday Break

This is a popular toddler group run by St Helen's volunteers which is open to parents, grandparents and carers with babies and preschool children within our local community. It has been closed during COVID but previously numbers were good, with 25-35 adults and 30-40 children attending. It is intended as an act of service to the community plus an opportunity for outreach, as the children and adults are invited into church for 'Tuesday Special' worship times with the vicar at Harvest, Easter and Christmas. It is hoped it will re-open later this year.

"Tuesday Break gave me a great sense of belonging and friendship at a time when I was quite isolated with a young baby"



Messy Church

Pastoral Care



St Helen's

The previous clergy (vicar and curate) were very active in pastoral visiting, listening and generally looking after the congregation pastorally, and would involve trained individuals when necessary. Also, in the past, the pastoral care was supported by CHIPPS (Churches In Pastoral Partnership - a training team supported by the diocese), the core team of which included the previous pastoral coordinator. The coordinator met regularly with the clergy to keep them aware of pastoral situations. She had various leaders of teams, such as bereavement and visiting, gardeners and small group leaders.

Since she stood down a couple of years ago, pastoral care has been done in the context of small groups and pastoral needs have been picked up, and often dealt with in those groups - the case of individuals not in groups falling to friends, and those trained within the church.

Therefore this might be an area for development coming out of covid. Small groups have continued to support one another by meeting over Zoom, and individuals have been regularly contacted to support them while not being able to meet physically. But co-ordination would be desirable, especially with regard to bereavement support and after care, visiting, and hospital visiting once this is allowed.

A prayer ministry team with people from all three worship centres exists to support those who would like more extensive and healing prayer, and again it would be good to see new people join this and for training to be offered.

Pastoral care of young people falls to Sunday School leaders and those leading 'Energise' and 'Encounter', our older teenagers, and young adults groups.

During COVID, Home Communion obviously haven't taken place so it's too early to say how much they will be in demand: previously we had a vicar, curate, or curates, and a retired clergyman, so these were easily available on request. It is anticipated, that the groups which will restart, are those run in partnership with others, such as The Friendship Club for older people, which offers a weekly meal and talk midweek, and The Helpful Bureau, which again uses our premises to offer care and support.

St Luke's

St Luke's has a small pastoral care team made up of 4 people including the Rev Canon Joan Whysall, who leads the team. Prior to COVID, prayer ministry was offered following the morning service, usually with Joan and one other person. Besides having a small care team, this is seen more as a 'whole church participation and we are aware that people have also made their own group of people they look out for.

During the lock-down, when the church was closed, a real effort was made to contact everyone on a monthly basis. This involved phone calls, delivery of small gifts, and whenever possible, literature to encourage our congregation in their continued journey of faith, for example, we delivered everyone the "Live Lent course" booklet. Moving forward we are looking at ways to keep in touch with those still not wishing to return to church. For this group, at present, Joan repeats the Sunday service on a Monday afternoon over Zoom.

The Church @ Montrose Court

The nature of pastoral support at The Church @ Montrose Court must respond to the presence of patches of significant economic deprivation in the surrounding area. This position is common to many urban churches but is, arguably, distinct from St Helen's and St Luke's.

The folk attending our church do include working or retired people where support needs are mainly spiritual and social, both during Sunday worship and the midweek drop-in sessions.

There is also however, a high proportion of people who, for a variety of reasons, are not in employment and reliant on benefits as their only source of income. The emphasis of pastoral support is, of necessity, directed towards this second group.

Needs are varied and stem not just from low income but the effects of ill health or social isolation. Direct support may include offering lifts to medical and other appointments, help filling in official forms, where literacy levels are low; or sign posting to other agencies. Occasional financial support may include topping up gas or electric prepayment meters, also support from the food bank may be possible. We offer events for children during school holidays. The midweek drop-in sessions are particularly important by enabling social contact to counteract loneliness. The most welcome support is often simply to offer a friendly and non-judgemental listening ear to people as they talk through their troubles.



Groups

At present there is no small groups coordinator. We currently have 10 small groups, (originally called Home Groups), The Men's Group and Wednesday Friendship Club, all very different in character and size, with responsibility for their own choice of study materials. This varies widely from group to group.

All would be classed as support groups. Most groups meet in people's homes, with 'Cake Pray Love' and 'Friendship group' meeting in the Church Hall, and The Men's Group frequenting the Horse and Jockey. In recent years, at Easter, each group is offered the chance to follow a church-organised study based around the sermon topics.

Obviously, with there only being 10 small groups, there are a lot of church members who are not in groups, and possibly lacking support, This is a situation which could be reviewed moving forward, as an opportunity to disciple more of the congregation.

During COVID a lot of the groups moved to Zoom meetings and some changed into more of a support group than an opportunity for bible study. This has been essential at this time. Other groups have tried different activities, such as distanced walks and prayer support, also supportive telephone calls, but again the overriding theme of the moment was support.

Home Groups

Below is a short summary from each of the group leaders.

While unable to meet at our usual home, we did briefly meet at St Luke's until lock-down, we now meet on Zoom, Monday evening, for chat and prayers. Peter and Christine left and Ian and Mariam have joined us recently. We still miss our group leaders, Paul and Julia, but as we go forward we are hoping they will soon be back to lead us. *Colin*

Formed with Simon and Julia in the Autumn of 2017 primarily with 'young adults' and grandparents, Paul and Fran, we meet on Wednesday evenings to study the bible and pray for each other...which for the last year we have done through Zoom. *Paul*

The group moved to Zoom in March when the first lock-down was announced and has met on-line weekly. We have laughed and supported each other over the year and found great fellowship. The group has studied The Lord's Prayer with a little success with sign language, shared stories of what makes us bloom, studied a series on Hope, Peace and Love, plus reading and understanding Leviticus. We look forward to meeting in person. In sadness we will miss our lovely member Jean.

In joy we have welcomed new members who have energised and motivated us. *Joanna*

The Bridle Road Home Group has continued to meet throughout the pandemic on Zoom. It has been a great way to maintain fellowship and faith but we very much look forward to enjoying the advantages of face to face meetings before too long. *Kerry*

A small group grew out of an alpha course started during the first lock-down. We then enjoyed following the Bible Course together and have since looked at John's gospel and Psalms. We enjoy getting to know each other and learning to read the Bible and pray together. *Susan*

Our group of ladies meet on Monday afternoons. Since COVID, we've been zooming in the morning and, having reflective walks, in twos, in the afternoon.

The group has been crucial to all of us during our time in isolation and having WhatsApp has meant we've been able to share our concerns and pray for one another. We've been pleased to welcome a new member to our group recently. *Chris*

During the last year we have kept in touch with the group by regular phone calls and meeting one to one when possible. One or two others have kept in regular contact with those who are ill and a small group have supported people in prayer when asked to. *Irene and Peter*

We are a small, intimate house group that meet at the Church at Montrose Court when it is allowed. We have discussions, DVDs and fun, and are looking forward to celebrating all the birthdays we've missed when we can meet again. *Linda*

The Escape Group are a home group of mums with children, plus some grandmothers. During COVID we normally met monthly, including for social get-together.

During COVID we have tried to stay in touch and we completed the Prayer Course. In the 1st lock-down we shared a weekly prayer sheet on WhatsApp. We've also met on Zoom. We lit Advent wreaths at home and prayed through Advent and had a family Zoom Christmas party. We have worked through some of Luke and some of us joined Jamie's Lent Course. We look forward to resuming meetings in our homes. *Liz*

Prior to lock-down, Cake, Pray, Love were meeting together as a group on Monday afternoons to chat, pray and study a bible passage together. The group is comprised of mums and occasionally their children, and caters for people of all stages of faith. As lock-down came in, the group continued to meet online with a similar pattern of discussion and prayer as in person. However as lock-down progressed, group meetings became less regular, and focused more on chat and fellowship alongside prayer.

The group has not recently met online/in person, and we are now at the stage where discussions around what the group might look like, moving forward, are happening. This includes a change of group leadership, and also space to pray about how such a group might expand and/or change format, in order to meet new needs coming out of national lock-down. We look forward to where God will lead us next in this small group setting. *Jamie*

Friendship Club

St. Helen's Friendship Club began in 1985 by brother and sister Jack and Joan Auckland. After Joan's death Jack continued until his retirement in 1998 when Iris and Fred Wheeler took over the reins. After Fred's death, in 2008, Iris continued as chairperson and being responsible for finding the speakers, until Jo Clements, together with a small committee, took over.

We meet every other Wednesday with a full afternoon of friendship, along with interesting speakers on a wide range of topics, films, quizzes along with tea and biscuits. We welcome all ages to join us. Members have the opportunity to join the Wednesday Morning Service in church, followed by coffee break, before a home cooked lunch in the church hall and Friendship Club in the afternoon.

Attendance is 40 - 50 people for lunch and approximately that number in the afternoon. People can pick and mix any of the activities.

Some of the highlights for the year are: a Carol service, occasional theatre trips and a day-out in spring. Our numbers have grown in recent years and we urgently need more help to keep the club growing. *Jo*

Men's Events

In a normal year we arrange a mixed programme of events for men who come to church, friends, or indeed any men who would like to join us. These events are friendly and informal and would typically include; Men's Breakfasts, Dinner/Speaker Evenings, tenpin bowling, a visit to T20 cricket and, of course, the monthly get together at the 'Horse and Jockey'.

Because of the COVID restrictions this program wasn't possible but we have held a couple of successful Zoom Quiz Nights, and, in January, we held a well supported online speaker evening with our friend Leigh Winsbury, formerly at St Helen's, and now a vicar in rural Devon.

We look forward to life returning to something like normal and the chance to meet together again! *Iain*



A meal in the Church Hall



The home to many a Men's Group discussion!



Visit our website: www.staplefordparish.org.uk
for more information.

Giving Report - St Helen's , St Luke's and Montrose Court

2020	<u>QE</u>	<u>No. - envelopes</u>	<u>Giving - Envelopes</u>	<u>No. - Standing orders</u>	<u>Giving - Standing orders</u>	<u>Plate</u>	<u>Total Giving</u>
	31/12/2020	14	£841	59	£18,221	£1,716	£20,778
	30/09/2020	20	£4,166	57	£18,311	£1,443	£23,920
	30/06/2020	2	£263	55	£15,619	£253	£16,135
	31/03/2020	30	£2,604	59	£21,940	£2,198	£26,742
			<u>£7,874</u>		<u>£74,091</u>	<u>£5,610</u>	<u>£87,575</u>
2019							
	31/12/2019	32	£3,475	59	£17,691	£2,919	£24,085
	30/09/2019	34	£3,315	60	£17,771	£2,355	£23,441
	30/06/2019	36	£4,351	62	£14,534	£2,679	£21,563
	31/03/2019	30	£4,020	60	£22,498	£3,168	£29,686
			<u>£15,160</u>		<u>£72,494</u>	<u>£11,121</u>	<u>£98,775</u>

It will be noted that the money received from the envelope scheme has fallen since the start of the pandemic as people stopped attending church.

In the current year , this appears to be compensated for in part by plate giving as some people who have not attended church and collected the envelopes have sent in cash and cheque donations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ST HELEN'S CHURCH in this COVID-19 time

Back in February our PCC met and looked at how we could raise everyone's awareness of the size of the enterprise we are as a church and how much it costs each year to run as the growing church we are. We were running at a deficit, big enough for us to need to address increasing our overall level of giving.

Peter was on the verge of putting together a communication to everyone with a diagram that looked a bit like this...



... and then the virus struck... PTO...

The parish accounts The parish accounts comprise the accounts of St. Helen's, St. Luke's, the Church @ Montrose Court and the Community Annex. At the October 2020 APCM the financial position of the parish was considered to be reasonable and accounts for the year 1st January to 31st December 2019 reported an income of £187k (£134k excluding the community annex) and expenditure of £210k (136k excluding the community annex). All invoices relating to the building of the community annex were paid with the final loan repayment due to be made in June 2021.

Expenditure under normal circumstances is in the region of £140k per annum.

Throughout the pandemic giving has continued on-line, through standing orders and via the website. However, our two salaried employees were furloughed during last spring and summer saving salary expenditure and further cost savings have been achieved due to the closure of the church buildings and associated activity.

The annual parish share in 2021 is £72,204. At an average of £71,971 over the last 5 years it has been paid in full and the PCC is committed to maintaining full payment.

The Church @ Montrose Court received several grants and the food bank is paying its way.

Accounts for 2020 are not yet finalised but are expected to be approved and filed by October 2021 reporting a small deficit. The PCC approved a deficit of up to £20,000 for the period 1st January to 31st December 2021. A delay in handover to a new treasurer has created a backlog in the reporting during the first half of 2021. However a new treasurer was appointed by the PCC in May 2021 and preliminary figures show the overall parish deficit to be running at approximately £8,500 over the half year to 30th June 2021.

Church & Buildings



St Helen's Church was started in the 13th century on the site of an earlier building mentioned in the Domesday Book. Additions and changes over the centuries have resulted in the present building. The major addition was the Memorial Chapel, the town's official memorial to those who died in the First World War.

Major internal refurbishments took place in 1775, 1877 and 2008; each generation adapting the building to the needs of the time.

Even older than the church is the Saxon Cross, which was discovered lying in the churchyard in 1790, erected in Church Street until 1928 and is now mounted in the Churchyard.

Some experts have suggested that the figure on the cross represents St Luke. This is why the daughter church in Moorbridge lane was named St Luke's.

Church

Dating back to 1221, St Helen's Church is a short walk from the centre of Stapleford. The church has gone through extensive refurbishment and is now a more flexible and welcoming space for worship. The chancel has a raised, curved fronted dais projecting slightly into the nave, which has a new stone floor and underfloor heating. There is a computer projection and sound system, multi-mood lighting and a small, limited use kitchen has been built at the back of the church.

Comfortable chairs give the church a seating capacity of approximately 170, with the Memorial Chapel seating a further 25.

The Church hall was built in 1970 and is adjacent to the church. The hall is being upgraded in stages, with a disabled toilet being installed and a new kitchen. The hall is functional, if slightly dated now, but has been kept in good repair and condition. The Quinquennial review, 2 years ago, revealed no major problems.



“Stapleford is very much a Parish with St Helen's being a parish church for the people”.

Church Community Annexe

Completed in December 2018, our Community Annexe, funded almost entirely by the generosity of the congregation, has proved to be a valuable addition to the church.

Designed to be used by both the church and for letting out to the wider community, the annex comprises a glass wall way leading on from the church into the annexe building itself, capable of being self-contained from the church. The building provides two toilets, a fully equipped kitchen and a light and airy meeting room capable of accommodating around 40 people.

It is equipped with a computer projector and WiFi; it has proved popular with both church members and the community at large with a number of lettings prior to COVID. The meeting room looks out over a self-contained courtyard area, which provides pleasant spot for outdoor use.



Church@Montrose Court

The building was leased some 4 years ago on a 5-year lease and was previously used as a ladies Hairdressers.

Planning consent for use as a church has been obtained. The former retail area functions as the main area of worship and currently has a counter where teas and coffees are served when the church is open as a church cafe, and also Sunday services.

There is a small kitchenette at the rear and a single toilet, which is in need of some renovation and plaster work. From there, steps lead down to a large storage area, mainly used as food storage for the Food Bank but also storing crafts and other items used for services and children's activities.

Negotiation for the lease renewal will likely start towards the later part of the year, subject to action by the private landlord.

Although the renewal of the lease will need to be approved by the PCC, there is no doubt that this approval will be forthcoming.



St Luke's

Situated at the northwest end of Stapleford, on Moorbridge Lane, St Luke's church is a traditional brick construction built around 1890. The main room is both light and clean, with a hearing loop. This room is used as the main point for services, seating about 70 people, and has recently benefited from the installation of an overhead computer projector and screen.

The back room is used for smaller gatherings and has a small but well-equipped kitchen. There are adequate toilet facilities for the building.

New fascia were fitted in 2020 and, apart from some plaster damage due to historical leaks, the main fabric of the church is in good condition, except for a small amount of rendering to the front of the church. This was mentioned as a future repair in the quinquennial report which took place in July 2018. The report stated that St Luke's is maintained on an ongoing basis by a dedicated team and is in an excellent state of repair, with only a few minor items to consider over the next 5 years."



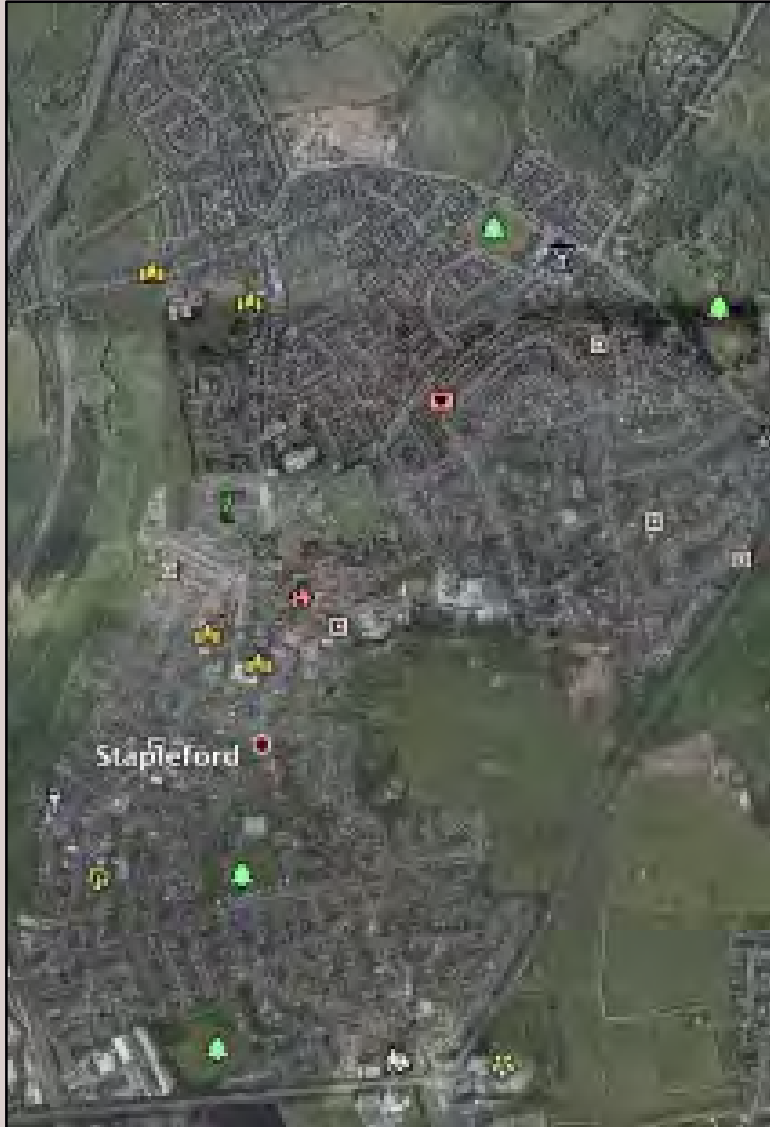
The Vicarage

The vicarage is a 1950's detached house situated on one of the main roads into Stapleford, close to the town centre. It has a large, enclosed garden, which backs on to the church yard. There are two garages attached to the house and space for parking to the front of the property.

On entering the front door there is a study and downstairs WC, which are separated from the main accommodation by an internal door, which leads into the main hallway.

This in turn gives access to a living room, dining room, and a large kitchen with utility room. Upstairs are four good sized bedrooms with fitted wardrobes and a family bathroom with separate WC. It is in good decorative order.





INSPIRE Magazine

The focus of this printed publication is to be a community magazine, not solely reflecting on St Helen's parish church and subsidiaries but reporting good news stories from the Stapleford community as a whole, including all churches, schools, sports, people, and general news related to the area shedding a positive light on Stapleford.

This magazine has been produced for the past 10 years, with a gap of two publications that were produced online given the restrictions of the pandemic.

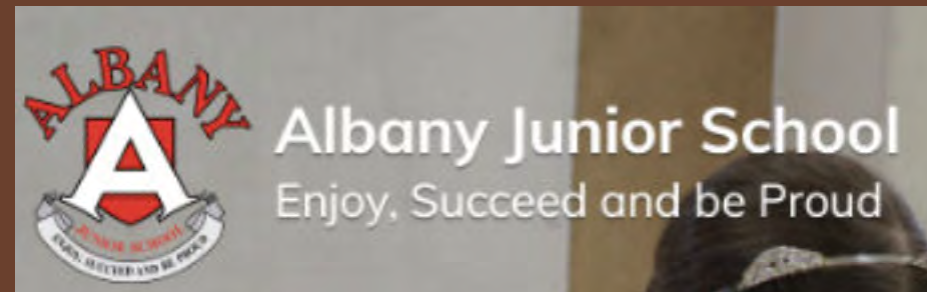
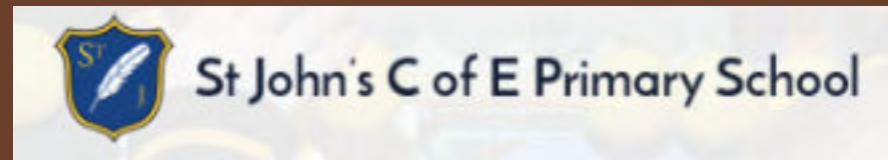
The website <https://staplefordinspire.co.uk> is now maintained to reach out to the wider public who may have an interest in Stapleford.

To reflect the Christian focus of this publication, the centre spread is dedicated to church life in Stapleford, in general, with St Helen's represented as the main focus. When publications coincide with major festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, we use the back page to advertise all the church services and events.

To date, feedback has been very positive and it's publication is much appreciated.

INSPIRE Magazine





"The first service one owes to others in the
Community is to listen to them."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



St John's C of E Primary School

History of our links

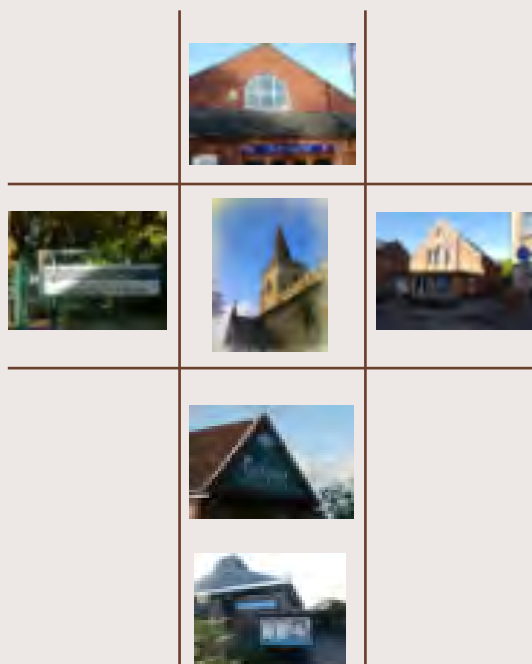
Over the last few years, the links with the 7 local primary/infant/junior schools and the secondary school have been very good. The strongest link is with St John's Primary School. There are 3 foundation governors from the Church. The incumbent is an ex- officio member of the Governing Body, together with two PCC elected governors. The clergy and church staff are often in the school for weekly assemblies and the school have end of term services in church, when parents will also be present. There is a strong Christian ethos in the school. There is the potential for further developing the links, possibly with 'after-school clubs', after school Family Alpha courses, or all age service, The school is very appreciative of the input from the church. There have also been recent suggestions of a prayer group between the school, church and parents.

Very good links have developed with the other primary schools. The clergy have taken assemblies in the schools on a regular basis as well as other school visits. There is a timetable produced with the other churches in Stapleford to give these assemblies. Two of the schools have Christmas services in church, the Cubs and Beavers also have a Christmas service, Links with the secondary school have ceased at the moment in the absence of a youth worker.

Time travelling

Time Travelling takes place every year in St Helen's Church, and all schools are invited to participate. This is organised by church members and gives the children an insight into the history of the church and its practices. Dressed in period costume, and in role, the volunteers lead groups of children round the building to discover the links between present and past, history and Christianity, through a variety of activities. It has been very successful over a number of years and all schools look forward to it. Figures for children attending Time Travelling and the Christmas services are in excess of 1000 with over 500 adults accompanying them.

Ecumenical Links



St Helen's Parish enjoys ecumenical links with Stapleford Churches Forum, which currently comprises of Stapleford Baptist Church, Pastures Community Church Independent), The Salvation Army, The Haven (Assemblies of God) and Stapleford Methodist Church. The Forum unites around the Evangelical Alliance Statement of Faith.

The leaders meet approximately four times per annum (currently chaired by the Baptist Minister) to plan joint services, share information and pray together.

Prayer Ministry



It has been a long term value and practice at St Helen's and St Luke's to offer prayer ministry after services and in this way 1 or 2 people would be prayed for each Sunday. In addition there have been two healing services. One takes place at St Luke's on St Luke's day and one at St Helen's at Pentecost, where a general offer of prayer for healing and anointing has been made.

This ministry has depended on a small, but dedicated team, who are now inevitably getting older, and one of the main challenges for the future will be to recruit and train new, preferably younger, prayer ministers.

Unfortunately, during COVID, prayer ministry was a casualty, and there has been little opportunity for teaching or practising the healing ministry in church. The main challenge, as services resume in the future, will be how to restart and expand this ministry. This will require a lot of support, encouragement and teaching for prayer ministry to again flourish.

St Helen's has long-standing links with overseas mission partners. Currently we support the following organisations and individuals, financially and through prayer:-

Tearfund. Support is provided in three ways:-

- General Funds to be utilised wherever the need is greatest, often in response to events around the world, such as famine and refugee crises.
- specific support for the Kigezi diocese in Uganda, as they work with local village communities to install new running water and sanitation facilities.
- specific support for the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) in Uganda as they also work with local communities to take advantage of local resources and so help people to lift themselves out of poverty.

Individual Missionaries include:

- **Dorcas Letasi.** Works for UNESCO in Uganda, she also mentors missionaries working with the Ugandan mission agency, Global Link Afrika. Alongside this she cares for her two young children.
- **Alejandro Mesco.** Works for a medical charity, Medical Ministry International, in Peru. Has recently moved away from Arequipa to care for his wife Doris's health while Covid restrictions are in place.
- **Beom-Jin and Marie Shin.** Work with CMS in South-East Asia. They were recently forced to leave their home due to Covid and have been unable to go back. They are now staying in South Korea while they explore how best to continue their work.

The total of overseas financial support in 2019 (reflecting the pre-pandemic position) was £11,945. This was the total of an 8% tithe on St Helen's general income plus specific fundraising and a mission box scheme.

Note: In addition to overseas support, 2% of general income was sent on to CPAS in the UK, bringing the total tithe on St Helen's general income to 10%.



Our Vision for a New Leader

We are looking forward to welcoming a new vicar led by the Holy Spirit to lead forward our parish with its three very different community churches.



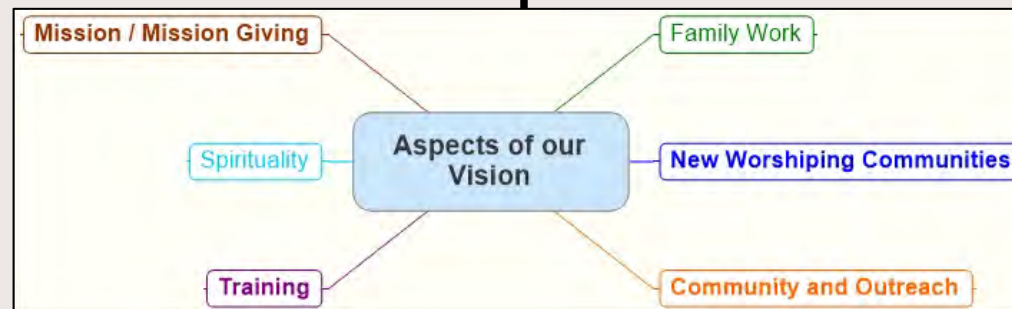
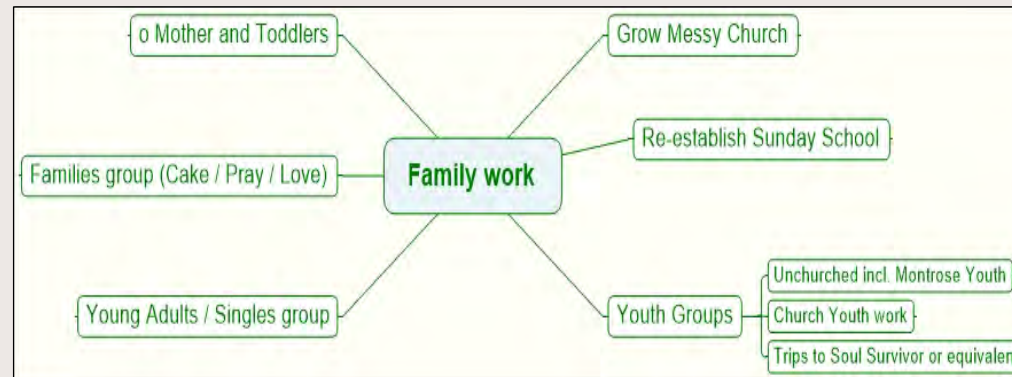


We have listed below the qualities that we consider important in the person called to this parish, ideally, someone who is:

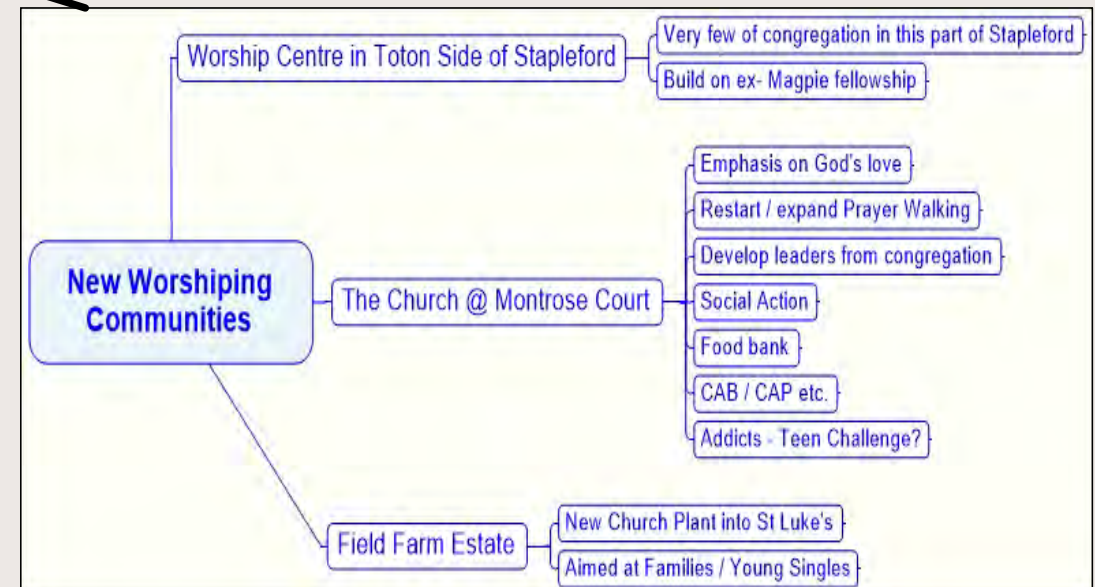
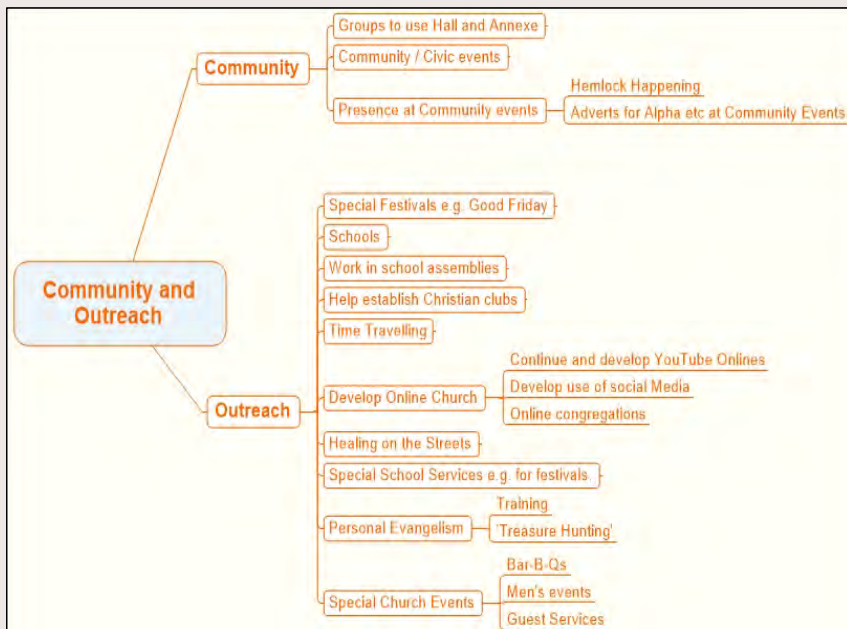
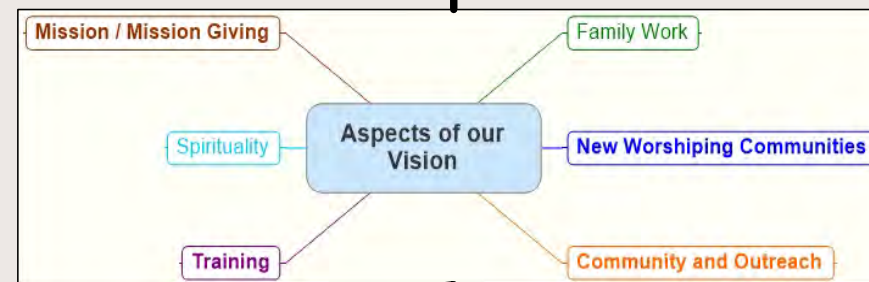
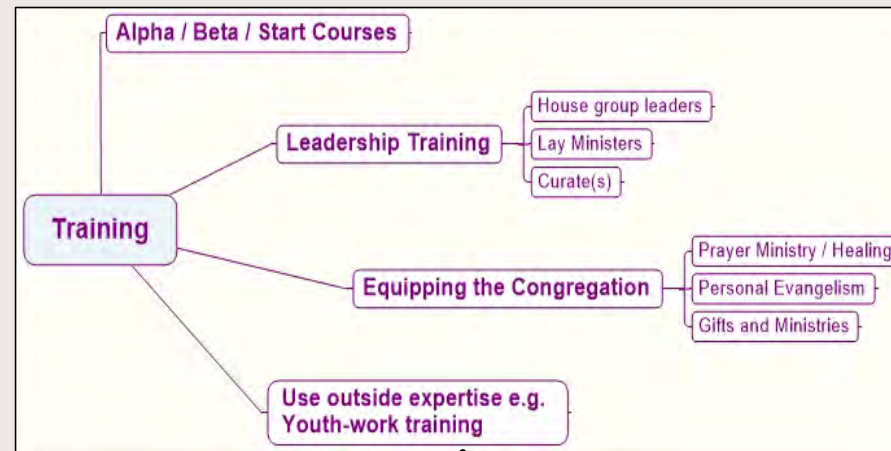
- Jesus- centred , spirit-filled , a bible- based leader with a servant heart who will lead by example
- friendly, a good communicator, who places a high value on relationships
- able to encourage others to grow in their gifts and ministries, fostering an ethos of valuing and acknowledging the contributions of others
- missional in outlook and keen to develop outreach in the community to impact Stapleford, maintaining and developing established links, including schools
- willing to develop the strengths of existing services and be open to online ministry, where appropriate
- keen to foster the place of small groups in the life of our church
- enthusiastic about the pastoral care and the spiritual needs of people of all ages
- able to develop the work with children, young people and families, including Messy Church
- a leader who can unite us , inspire us and lead us forward post-COVID
- a trainer and enabler of people at all levels

If God is calling you to Stapleford, we commit to supporting you in prayer and practically. We look forward to a partnership with you as you help us to develop a future vision for our three churches and the community.

Some Aspects of Our Church Vision for the Future



Some Aspects of Our Church Vision for the Future (Continued)



T H E P A R I S H O F S T H E L E N S T A P L E F O R D

