



St HELEN'S WINDOW

Redressing the 'Nearly Perfect Crime'

Revd Dr Charles Miller

Guest Editor

'It was a nearly perfect crime'. That's how Catholic layman Francis MacNutt begins one of his numerous books on healing. 'You can see the body lying there, almost cold, the heart barely pumping. This dying body once kept Christianity alive. What we see lying there, scarcely moving, is Christian prayer for healing.' That was in 2005, when he published his book *The Nearly Perfect Crime*, plotting the fall and rise of Christian concern for healing. He wrote as a Roman Catholic, and a reader could reckon that the morbid state of affairs he describes might also pertain to the Church of England. However, among Anglicans, there is the Guild of St Raphael, and the Guild of St Luke the Physician, and there are now many centres of healing and wholeness in this country and abroad, so things aren't as criminal now as MacNutt insists.

This issue explores God's work of healing and restoring wholeness as we understand it at St Helen's. Our perspective is but one of many current within and outside the bounds of the Church. Still, we think this perspective is important and worth sharing, not least because, like so many ministries of the Church, many, even most, Christians know little about it, and fewer still have ever experienced it. We hope this issue may help change that.

Our 'Healing Ministry Group', as we call it, has set itself three aims. First, to explore, so that we might grow in our own understanding of God's desire for human healing and wholeness. Second, to explain. This issue is one of the ways in which we seek to do that. The group hopes, third, to encourage others to experience this aspect of God's care for his people, and to help them understand healing and wholeness in their own lives.

Our contributions include the views of several members of the group reflecting on what healing and wholeness has meant to them. That theme of personal testimony also informs the 'inventory', in which four people who have attended the Service for the Celebration of Wholeness and Healing reveal something of their personal experience of it.

The idea of a healing service may conjure up cinematic or other images of people thrown to floor in paroxysms, then to rise limber and with sound mind and body. Such seeming violent happenings may prejudice people against attending a healing service. So, we include too a brief description of the service and its tone at St Helen's so that, whether you choose to come or not, you know what happens.

Finally, speaking from both a professional and a spiritual point of view, a highly-skilled psycho-therapist talks about her experience in aiding wholeness and healing with the use of a rich assemblage of psycho-therapeutic skills within the golden ring of Christian *caritas*, or love.

Altogether, we hope you will find this issue comforting, enlightening and challenging.

The Editors

Jane Baun
Alexandra Green
Sheila Hills
Silvia Joinson
David Pope

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preceding month

St Helen's Church
Office: St Helen's
Court, Abingdon
OX14 5BS

Tel: 01235 520144

E-mail:
StHelensWindow
@gmail.com

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‘Thou the anointing Spirit art...’

The Service of Wholeness and Healing at St Helen’s

Charles Miller

On most fourth Sundays of the month at 5.30 pm a forty-minute ‘Service for Celebration of Wholeness and Healing’ takes place at St Helens. What does it involve and what is the atmosphere?

It is important to say first that over the past two and a half years, St Helen’s Healing Ministry Group has proposed experimenting with a variety of forms of worship that focus on our Church’s concern for wholeness and healing. We began with a format used at the well-known Christian healing centre, Burswood, in Kent; in fact, a number of us participated in the service when we spent a day there. We then experimented with a Eucharist with a similar focus as provided in the Church of England’s *Common Worship* resources. On balance, we discerned that the non-eucharistic service best served our group’s vision, so we then set about adapting the Burswood format to render it ‘our own’. So, that is what a worshipper will currently share in.

What, more exactly, does this service for wholeness and healing involve?

The service includes, first, a prayer and a Scripture reading related to wholeness and healing. That does not mean that stories of, say, Jesus’ miraculous healings are always read. Far from it. We seek inspiration from the story of salvation generally, and so we listen to passages that plot God’s involvement with us from our first calling to grow into God’s likeness — what St. Paul calls ‘the full stature of Christ’ — to God’s provision of the ‘tree of life’ and the river for ‘the healing of the nations’ in the vision of the end and fulfilment of all things in the Bible’s last book, Revelation. It may be that a brief sermon is preached on some aspect of healing and wholeness.



Second, we intercede for others, both those who need healing (who doesn’t?) and those who practice the healing arts. We include in our prayers the medical and dental practices throughout Abingdon, and we inform them with a note that we hold them in our prayers. This work of intercession by everyone present is important because it means that those who seek

healing still make an active contribution to God’s healing work. In the eyes of God and the Christian community a person who needs healing and who seeks wholeness is not on that account passive, a victim. He or she has an active, positive contribution to make which grows out of the soil of the sense of weakness and need.

The service involves, third, an act of penitence. In Christian tradition, healing and wholeness are understood within the wider notion of God’s freeing us from all that separates us from him (this is, sin). It’s useful to remember that our word ‘salvation’ is, in Latin, also

the word for health: *salus*. We could say in the Creed: ‘...for us and for our wholeness and healing he came down from heaven...’ Psychiatrists and therapists know well how close the mind-body link can be, and that a sense of inner freedom is a vital aspect of healing.

Next follows the laying-on-of-hands and anointing. First, both

ministers and people prepare by joining what will follow to the work of Christ and his Spirit. We all invoke the Holy Spirit upon the clergy and lay minister (a team of two) who will lay-on hands and anoint, singing the ancient hymn ‘Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire’ which speaks of the ‘anointing Spirit’. That anointing is both actual, with the Oil for Healing blessed by the Bishop on Maundy Thursday each year, and metaphorical: in the Bible the entrance of the

Spirit into a person is often described as an anointing. The congregation then comes forward, standing, to receive, first, the laying-on-of-hands, placed gently on the head, and then the anointing by the priest who makes the sign of the cross with the oil upon the forehead. Music is played softly in the background. This is an intense moment, yet at the same time deep and peaceful. People return to their seats and sit quietly.

The service includes, finally, prayers and the Lord's Prayer, and a resolve to return to 'the world' as witnesses of God's desire for the world's healing and wholeness.

As to tone and atmosphere, the service is reflective. The purpose is not to induce an emotional state nor to stir-up expectations of the 'miraculous'. The 'inventory' below in this issue represents a sample of

what participants—people just like you and me—have experienced. The spiritual point is to affirm and encourage what I would call expectant openness to God's creative and transforming—'anointing'—Spirit.

On Sunday, February 19th the Sung Eucharist will include the ministry of laying-on-of-hands and anointing for those who wish it. As part of our Sacraments sermon series this Epiphanytide John Wesson will preach on the subject of Christian healing and the sacrament of anointing that day. I hope regular and non-regular members of the congregation, and subscribers to the *Window*, will come to experience this Christian 'mystery' at 10.30 that day. Everyone is welcome. Or come along to the evening service on the fourth Sunday of any month to 'taste and see'.

The Experience of Healing & Wholeness

This is What They Say:

Charles Miller

Four participants in the service for Wholeness and Healing responded to six questions about their experience. This is what they said.

For three out of four the service was a new experience. A few knew of such services but had never attended one. In some cases an event or series of events or situations had prompted attendance—a traumatic grief, the collapse of a personal relationship, or serious illness—but others attended on the basis of a general sense of the need for inner and physical help.

As to expectations respondents differed. Some knew what to expect; others had no idea and came 'without a clue'. Some joined the congregation fully from the outset; others remained on the edge in a less obvious part of the church. Those who hadn't been before used words such as 'helpful', 'supportive' and 'well-presented' to describe the format and its execution. The service includes some music and a few hymns or songs. One person thought a said service would be better. Clearly the force of the experience depends a lot on what a person brings, and that varies from occasion to occasion. It can be, as one respondent said, 'overwhelming', and that can be challenging if a person is concerned about the display of emotion. Generally, though, people felt the presence of others supportive and non-judgmental, and realise that that sense,



with the knowledge that 'someone cares', increases over time.

I've mentioned reasons for attending and whether a particular matter drove it; it's important to emphasize that in response to that question answers varied widely from 'everything really' to the feeling of 'spiritual emptiness', and needing 'mending in some way'.

So does the service make a difference? On one occasion a respondent 'really felt the presence of God'; another felt it helps sustain faith. Overcoming a sense of isolation was important to one respondent. Another said that it makes a 'tremendous difference' and clearly saw its impact, also working in combination with the Sunday morning Eucharist which 'further straightens me out spiritually, uplifts me and gives me a good sense of peace'.

Finally, what about the laying-on-of-hands and anointing? One respondent felt led to share in one or the other or both 'as the Lord leads'; for the others the two go 'hand in hand'. Yet another said that the anointing is especially important.

So, amid the variety of experiences the common threads of support, waiting upon God, and concrete help in going forward in the midst of outward and inward pain can be seen. Would your experience be different? Try it and see.

My Journey of Healing Ministry

Holly Holman

I first became aware of healing ministry for emotional issues after a period of deep depression in the early 90's. I was severely burnt out after many years of working as a missionary. Previous to my period of the 'dark night of the soul' counselling wasn't really 'on my radar' and I wasn't even aware that Christian ministries specialising in the healing of emotional issues existed.

Normally a happy-go-lucky person, I was shocked to find myself in this condition. The Lord showed me the origin of the pain I was feeling, and so began my healing journey.

As a result I've come to the conclusion that professional help may be needed (counselling etc) but prayer ministry brings very real and deep healing. The Lord after all said that the very reason He had come was to bring release to the oppressed and to comfort those

who mourn (Luke 4; Is. 61). He wants to heal our emotional wounds, great or small. Many experiences in life we tend to 'push down' and 'get on with it' but actually these experiences may have hurt us. The Lord cares about all of this and wants to come and bring healing to our wounds.

For me the healing wasn't instantaneous but through it being a 'journey' I came to know the Lord in new and deeper ways. I am sure that the thing He is most concerned for is our heart, the core of who we are, and deepening our relationship with Him.

I found I needed to have the attitude 'Come and do your work in me Lord' and to keep seeking opportunities for prayer and help. Now I can say that the pain (although I wouldn't want to go through it again!) was worth it.

The Doing of Love

Judith F Miller, DPhil, MBACP

I work on an acute adolescent psychiatric unit as a consultant psychotherapist. Our patients have experienced such extreme relational dysfunction that their own sense of personhood becomes negligible or distorted and they usually have tried to end their lives. My task is to use the gift of psychotherapy to bring them back to the love which is available to them, and to help them locate it within themselves. I do not wear a cross openly and I cannot mention Christ, but when I am with a patient, it is a comfort to me to know that no case is hopeless because Christ is already in them, waiting to be found and grown. I love watching young people walk away from self-destruction and choose life.

My task is to try to hold a person with such unconditional positive regard (a theologian might call it 'love') that there is safety enough to explore the ways in which we become fragmented within ourselves and distanced from others.

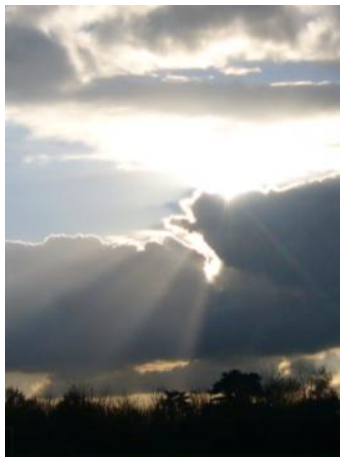
[Ed.: the following is a composite case study]

Recently a young man from a privileged background tied a cord around his neck and jumped off a window-sill. He survived. He told me that when he was little his nanny had severely mistreated him, subjecting him to abusive punishments. He told his parents but they were busy and tired and ignored him. He spent over a decade coping with overwhelming feelings of self-

hatred ('I must have been a horrible child'), and utter betrayal by his parents ('I am unloved and unlovable').

In our conversations he learned that he would be believed and he wasn't going to be judged: he hadn't 'failed' by being unwell, and that however long it took, we would together try to recreate the person he was designed to be. He slowly made sense of what had happened to him and remembered what love is. Eventually we included his parents in our work and light came back into those murky relationships. He will be taking up a place at medical school next year.

You can see why I have a sense of divine purpose and privilege in what I do. There is no doubt that for me, as Robert Sardello puts it, 'the doing of psychology is the doing of Love - consciously, actively, and for the sake of others and the world'.



After ten years of a productive foray into teaching, and having emigrated to the United States, Judith Miller's training as a psychotherapist clarified her sense of God's hand at work in her life. Hospital work with sufferers from eating disorders led to a successful private practice in Manhattan and then, having returned to the UK, to work as a consultant psycho-therapist at the Priory Hospital, Roehampton, and as a private practitioner in London, with a special interest in adolescent and family therapy.

Christian Healing and Wholeness

Ann Whitworth

*Christian healing is Jesus meeting you
at your point of need.*—Bishop Morris Maddock

Praise is inner health made audible. —C. S. Lewis

*Praise to the Lord,
the Almighty, the King of creation;
O my soul praise him,
for he is thy health and salvation,
Come, ye who hear,
Brothers and sisters draw near,
Praise him in glad adoration*

—Common Praise # 558

The quotations above and the verse of the hymn define for me what this subject is about. It is important to recognize that this encompasses concern and care for the whole person—body, mind and spirit.

In reflection on my life with the ups and downs I am becoming more and more aware how Jesus has indeed met me at my points of need. Often it has been in completely unexpected ways. The reality is it has been ongoing and continued to be so. Without it I should be without the joy and peace which have come to me.

I am coming to learn the necessity of placing myself in the hands of God. There is no better place for this than at a service which includes the laying-on-of-hands and anointing. Then it is time to wait upon God's grace to provide for whatever the challenging issue or situation might be. I do not always find it easy literally to 'let go and let God', to trust sufficiently and believe that, 'All shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well' (Julian of Norwich). Yet I do believe, and indeed know, that if I am willing to wait, to let the Lord teach me through his love, then all will be well.

The present small group involved with the Ministry of Wholeness and Healing at St Helen's began in 2009 with an invitation from the Associate Priest, Tim Hewes, to attend a number of sessions on the subject using material provided by the Acorn Christian Healing Foundation which was begun by Bishop Maddock and his wife Anne. Since then, while participants in the group have fluctuated, we have continued to reflect, read, discover, explore and plan. Our current task is to plan for the inclusion of healing ministrations at the Sung Eucharist on Sunday, February 19th at 10.30 am when the final sermon in the 'Sacraments' series will be anointing.

Over a long period God has brought me great healing, but has also led me to discover more of the subject and to be involved with the field. It is an enormous subject of which I have discovered but little. I certainly do not understand it, but I know that Christ does heal, in his way and his time, in this world now. God continues to want to heal us, and bring us to wholeness step by step through our lives. As the Revd Teresa Scott has written, 'We are only human and our wholeness involves the acceptance of limits, for we are all limited in one way or another. Healing is the transformation of our limitations, our struggles can paradoxically become the very places where we discover the deepest truths of our faith'.

I urge everyone to take all the challenges with which they live to Jesus, by attending the services of Wholeness and Healing, with the laying-on-of-hands and anointing at St Helen's. Let our God of Surprises be that for us all!

Healing Wholeness

Dorothy Donald

Most people are afflicted at some time in their lives with bouts of ill health and doubtless will go to their doctor for healing from their symptoms. A large portion will be healed as they know it and be grateful, others may still suffer. Depending on their temperament they may back alternative therapies, or they may try other remedies available over the internet or other channels. Maybe their last resort will be to pray.

*Don't fret or worry.
Instead of worrying, pray.
Let petitions and praises shape
your worries into prayers, let
God know your concerns.
Before you know it, a sense of
God's wholeness, everything
coming together for good, will
cure and settle you down.
It's wonderful what happens
when Christ displaces worry at
the centre of your life.
Philippians 4:6-7 (The Message)*

Christians will usually have come to prayer earlier in this chain of events, in fact it may be their first thought. The verses quoted from Philippians 4:6-7 spoke to me clearly of God's purposes in healing and wholeness. Whilst we all may not achieve healing as we would wish it, we may in time and with faith come to an acceptance of our condition which brings a whole new conception of where we are and how we may continue.

What's on in February

St Helen's Church

Sermon series on Holy Sacraments

Sunday 5 February

10.30 *Reconciliation* – Revd Jane Baun

Sunday 12 February

10.30 *Celebrating Marriage* – Revd Tim Hewes
 Invitation to those recently married at St Helen's
 The boys' choir of Christchurch Priory, Dorset
 directed by Hugh Morris, will be singing
 at this service.

Sunday 19 February

10.30 *Anointing* – Revd Prebendary John Wesson
 The Eucharist will offer laying-on-of-hands
 and anointing.

Tuesday 7 & 21

Face2Face

10.00 – 11.10 Church Centre Hall

Follow up course from Alpha Cafe; all welcome
 Sessions led by the Revd SokHan Yong
 Details face2face/sthelens@gmail.com

Friday 10 February

Musical Feast in aid of the Archway Foundation

Sharing the Love

19.30 at the School of St Helen and St Katharine,
 Faringdon Road

Guest speaker Nicola Blackwood MP
 £10 adults £7.50 concessions includes wine
 & light refreshments from Archway 01865 790552
 or the school 520657 or on the door

Tuesday 14 & 28 February

Desiring Life Group

14.30 Church Centre Lounge

Essential Writings by Evelyn Underhill
 Details Susan Scott 522960

Tuesday 14 February

Mothers' Union AGM

20.00 Church Centre Hall

Wednesday 22 February

Ash Wednesday

10.30 Holy Communion

19.30 Corporate Communion at St Michael's

Sunday 26 February

10.30 **CiA Pulpit Exchange**

Tuesday 28 February

St Helen's at Lunch

12.00 at White Horse Ock Street

Details Susan Scott 522960

Church in Abingdon

Thursdays 2 & 16 February

Back to 35

10.30-11.30 Baptist Church Hall

Opportunity for cake coffee and a chat

February 2 *Abingdon Hydro Scheme*

Richard Riggs

February 16 *Medical Mission in Peru*

Elizabeth Allen & Joy Dodswell

Monday 27 February

Lent Course

20.00 at All Saints Church

Led by Canon David Winter

Facing the Darkness and Finding the Light

Volunteers needed to transport David from Thatcham

Ten people doing one run each? Contact Beryl Fudge

Berylfudge1@hotmail.co.uk or Ab. 523087.

Wednesday 29 February

Fresh Vision

19.30 at St Ethelwold's House

Led by Revd Laura Hodges

Friday 2 March

Women's World Day of Prayer

At Trinity Church

Details TrinityLearning@gmail.com or 520282

If you would like an event listed on this page let us know by the 5th of the previous month and we will try to include it. Contact Silvia at alanj@phonecoop.coop or 01235 521247

The Wednesday Club

We regret that the Wednesday Club closed down at the end of 2011 due to lack of people with time available to organise the future programmes. It started more than 25 years ago as a way of getting to know new members of St Helen's Church and other local people through talks and social events. Thanks to all the members of the Club and its Committee for their support over the years, especially to those who have been continuously active since its foundation.

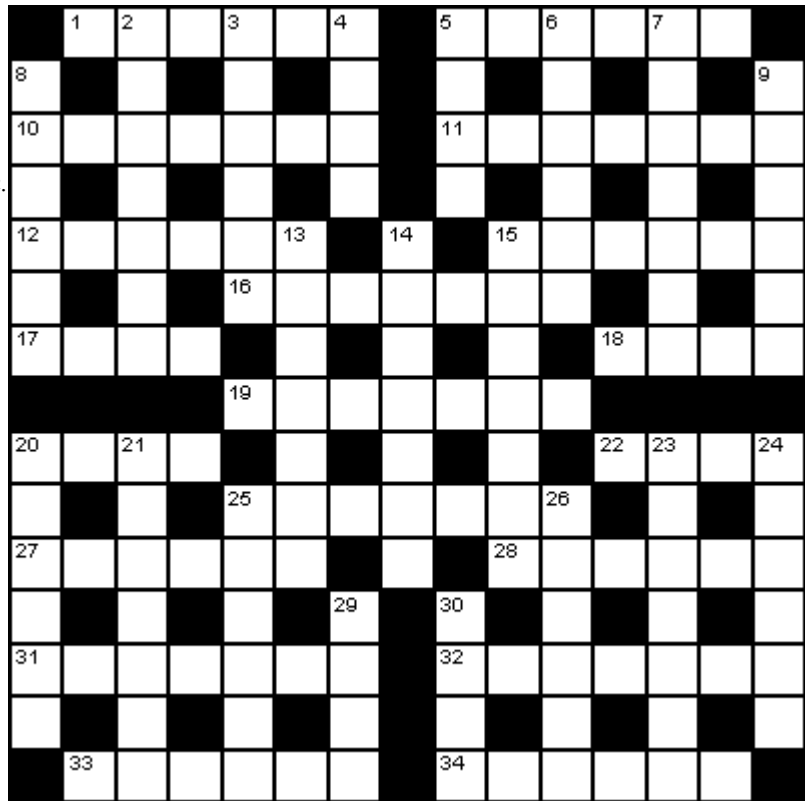
Members are invited to join The Friends of St Helen's, whose activities have much in common with the Wednesday Club. FOSH raises money to pay for the maintenance of the lovely fabric of St Helen's Church and has a varied programme through the year. The next meeting is a talk by Revd. Paul Smith called, 'Does he take Holy Communion? A Pilgrim's Journey in an Able Bodied Church' on Friday 27th January in St Helen's Church Centre Hall, preceded by wine and nibbles at 19.30. The full year's programme will be available in March.

Sue Austin

Love in the Air

February Crossword by Ian Miles

*A few chill weeks into the year
The birds and we look on to Spring;
St Valentine will soon be here:
A sense of joy is just the thing!
Of these words, almost every one
'S to do with Love, or Hearts, or Fun.*



Across

- 1 'Alf a 'ug does one no good (6)
- 5 Unwind and strike attitude afresh (6)
- 10 Marriage the two of us would make fast (7)
- 11 Cute angels excited Unfinished composer (7)
- 12 ... Arousing hesitation in the ear (6)
- 15 Picturesque tryst venue came in about 100yrs ago (6)
- 16 First brief clue on ticket is hearty (7)
- 17 Grasps significance of dates (4)
- 18 Ray to smile broadly (4)
- 19 Warm tonic (7)
- 20 'Eye-candy' to come alive after degree (4)
- 22 No real lyrics; cast improvised ... (4)
- 25 ... Around tidiest love-songs (7)

- 27 Positive outcome for hospital area (6)
- 28 Excitement of cash desk absorbing personnel (6)
- 31 Vivid, fashionable and maybe perfect! (7)
- 32 Adore to paddle back craft (7)
- 33 Allegedly pursued virgin (6)
- 34 After a fashion, holy one bashful (6)

Down

- 2 Communist stood for floral tribute (3,4)
- 3 Merry prank, if left company right in lurch (6)
- 4 Enjoy match (4)
- 5 Raunchy excerpts no less lurid (4)
- 6 Edgar Allan's mannerism in verse (6)
- 7 Play concertina for one's dearest (7)
- 8 Chicks' chirpy communiqués? (6)
- 9 No cooler than bees clustering round queen (6)
- 13 One card to open: it comes from the heart! (7)
- 14 Casual tryst, unlike Valentine's Day (3,4)
- 15 Comic act about nude for nightclub musical (7)
- 20 Iconic doll's hot picnic down under (6)
- 21 Charm someone, while spelling trouble? (7)
- 23 151 Latin revolutionaries say nothing new (7)
- 24 'Kissing-mouth icon' bloomers (6)
- 25 Round mark permanently adopted in practice (6)
- 26 Tortoise's rival (in old money) - it's mutual (6)
- 29 Pair of us briefly own fabric, it's said (4)
- 30 Dipped away endlessly in submarine (4)

Solution to Dec/Jan Crossword, *Machine Gums* by Eccles. The asterisked clues were all fruit.



February at St Helen's Church

Divine Services

Sung Eucharist	10.30	Every Sunday with Junior Church
Holy Communion	08.00	Sundays
Morning Praise	09.15	Sunday 12 February
Morning Prayer	09.10	Monday to Friday
Evening Prayer	17.10	Monday to Friday
Junior Church	10.30	Sundays
Silent Prayer	18.10	Mondays 6 and 20 February
Wednesday Church	10.30	Wednesdays, Holy Communion followed by refreshments.

Services in Lent

Feb 22	Ash Wednesday	10.30	Holy Communion with ashing
		19.30	Corporate Communion with ashing at St Michael's
Feb 26	Lent 1	10.30	Sung Eucharist with Litany

Meetings and Gatherings

all in Church Centre Hall unless marked

Face2Face	10.00	Tuesdays 7 and 21 Feb
Baby and Toddler Group	09.30 & 11.00	Mondays except 13 Feb
Beavers	17.15	Wednesdays in term time
Brownies	18.15	Tuesdays in term time
Clergy consultation	19.00	Wednesdays by appointment
Cubs	18.20	Wednesdays in term time
Desiring Life reading group	14.30	Tuesday 14 and 28 Feb – Lounge
Faith Forum	09.15	Sunday 5 Feb
Junior Church	10.30	every Sunday – starts in Church
Marriage Prep.	20.00	8,15 and 29 February – Lounge
Mothers' Union	20.00	Tuesday 14 February

Events

Saturday 4 Feb	10.00	Peal attempt	Tower
Saturday 18 Feb	10.00	Coffee Morning	Church Centre Hall, Abingdon Hospital League of Friends
Saturday 25 Feb	10.00	Coffee Morning	Church Centre Hall, Cursillo
Monday 27 Feb	17.30	Visiting Bell Ringers	Tower
Monday 27 Feb	20.00	CiA Lent Course	All Saints Church (see p6)
Tuesday 28 Feb	12.00	St Helen's @ Lunch	White Horse, Ock St

*The services and events listed here are correct at the time of going to press
– please consult the weekly Newsheet if in doubt.*

To arrange baptisms, weddings and funerals contact the Church Office.
Clergy are available in the Church Office between 19.00 - 20.00 on a Wednesday.
Call the office to book an appointment.

Rector:	The Revd Dr Charles Miller
Assisting Priest (NSM):	The Revd Tim Hewes
Curates (NSM):	The Revd Dr Jane Baun, The Revd SokHan Yong
Director of Music:	Christopher Fletcher-Campbell
Parish Administrator:	Linda Barker

Sunday Evening Services All at 17.30

5 Feb	Eucharist
12 Feb	Taizé
19 Feb	Choral Evensong
26 Feb	Service for Wholeness and Healing

Morning Praise

A short service for families
Sunday 12 February
09.15 in Church

Faith Forum

*Discussion groups
for adults and for young
people (10 -18)*
Sunday 5 February
09.15 in Church Centre

St Helen's Church Office: St Helen's Court, Abingdon, OX14 5BS
01235 520144

Normal opening hours 09.00 to 14.15 Mon, Tues, Weds; 09.15 to 14.15 Fri
E-mail: administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk
www.sthelens-abingdon.org.uk