



# St HELEN'S WINDOW

## The Winds of Change are Blowing

Charles Miller

Understandably, it probably escaped your notice. Earlier this summer the triennial 'General Convention' of the Episcopal Church in the United States (rather like the General Synod of the Church of England) met. While I don't count myself an Episcopalian any more I still follow its doings and decision-making on a very occasional basis. Part of my interest is because the United States has been the flash-point for various changes in church practices which, like it or not, have rocked the whole Anglican Communion since the 1970s. And like MacDonald's and a host of other styles and habits, what begins there seems inevitably to come this way. (Why do so many Brits now wear baseball caps when we don't even play baseball here?)

The most recent flash-point has been the matter of gay partnerships and, more particularly, the blessing of them, and the ordination of men or women in such relationships. When the General Convention met this summer it needed to consider whether it would honour its moratorium on such things, keep in line with the views expressed at the 1998 Lambeth Conference, or blaze its own trail.<sup>1</sup>

What interests me in the evolution of this business, is how the Archbishop of Canterbury has engaged with those and other questions where constituent churches within our Global Anglican Communion propose courses for themselves locally, that threaten their relationship and sharing in faith, sacraments and mission—Christians call that 'communion' (the Greek New Testament word (*koinonia*))—with the rest of the Anglican Communion.

It is fair to say that the Anglican Church did not begin in sixteenth-century England as a global church but merely as the national, territorially-bounded national church of 'this realm of England'. However, as the Archbishop has rightly reminded us, churchmen and theologians of that defining era were nevertheless very much aware of the Church of England's part in a larger, super-national, European-wide fellowship of churches, and they prized the inheritance of doctrine and customs bequeathed by the Church Fathers, both Latin and Greek.<sup>2</sup> So, the 'Anglican spirit' at its best has never been that of mere 'little Englanders' at prayer. It sits ill with mere local autonomy.

Throughout the Anglican Communion each church is considering an 'Anglican Covenant', that is, a document that spells out in greater detail the form which our mutual discernment of important (even contentious) matters might take, and proposes stronger bonds of accountability between and among the many churches of the Anglican Communion. Some fear a loss of local independence, of losing what's 'theirs'; others want to include powers of sanction so as to keep order in and among our different churches, even a power to decide who's 'in' and who's 'out'.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear to me (and, I think, to the Archbishop) that any Anglican Covenant must involve greater self-imposed disciplines of accountability. It's a basic axiom in political theory that the whole takes precedent over the parts; historically Christians with a robust doctrine of the church have taken that view too. The Archbishop encourages us not to see that as a threat. 'I don't believe that when I invite someone else to share my own process of prayer and decision-making, I'm resigning something which I ought to cling to. I believe rather that I'm trying to discover more fully who I am in Christ by inviting others who share my life in Christ into the process of decision-making'.<sup>4</sup>

1. Another issue of this order arose in an Australian Diocese where they have allowed 'lay presidency', that is, non-ordained people to preside at the Eucharist.

2. Address to the General Synod of the Church of England, February 12th 2009 (see [www.archbishopofcanterbury.org](http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org); 'speeches').

3. I suspect that the final Covenant structure will indeed include such a power; but it is wholly up for grabs what being 'in' or 'out' of the 'Communion' would actually mean.

4. From the speech cited above.

### The Editors

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## A Message from the Bishop of Oxford TO BE A PILGRIM

I invite you to join me on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the autumn of 2010. During the nine days we will spend travelling in the homeland of Jesus Christ, we will visit many of the sites associated with his birth, death and resurrection – an experience which many Christians over many centuries have found nourishes and stimulates their faith in a unique way. As well as visiting places that remind us of the historical story of Jesus, we will also visit his heirs – the Christian communities living in difficult and pressurized circumstances in these places today. Our aim in doing this is to offer the Christians of today's Holy Land our support and prayers, and to hear their stories – stories which are sometimes as profoundly moving and inspiring as the stories of the Gospels.

Each of our two or three coaches will have members of the Bishop's Staff to lead and encourage our pilgrims. It's always a rich experience when Christians journey together, and this will be a life-changing pilgrimage. Do come!

October 5<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> 2010. Inclusive tour price £1,645. Details from *Lightline Pilgrimages Ltd, Coopersale Hall Farm, Epping, Essex, CM16 7PE. Tel: 01992 576065 email: info@lightline.org.uk*

## Is Bible Society on your Team?

What do you know about Bible Society? As a supporter I receive their award-winning magazine “*Word in Action*” and *Prayer Notes* three times a year. The Society is more than 200 years old. There are now 140 national Bible Societies – passionate for everyone to receive God's written word. Zimbabwe Bible Society launched the *New Shona Common Language Bible* last February. It was front-page news. God isn't a foreigner or a colonist, so even among people who can understand English, it's worth the £7 a verse that a new translation costs. In the West Indies, officially they speak English, but in their hearts, streets and yards they live in Patois so that is where God belongs! They are excited about the *Patois New Testament*, soon to be finished. Times change. Darkest Africa now has huge numbers of lively Christians whilst many in Britain have no idea what the Bible is about. Bible Society conducts research into how we inform ourselves and puts forward the Bible's claim to be relevant and trustworthy, for instance:

### A Pop-Opera

A stranger in a strange land, Esther's story unlocks some of the Bible's essential messages for life today, from justice to intimacy, mercy to worship. Bold, brave and beautiful, Esther chases after God, risking her life in the process. The Pop-Opera *Luv Esther* portrays Christians as a community of activists. Called for such a time as this, we too have a purpose to reach out with compassion for the poor, broken and lost throughout the world. Launched in 2005, the show is still on the road, mainly visiting schools.

### Local outreach

*Reel Issues* is a Bible Society resource for local groups to explore the spiritual and ethical meaning of current films. Clips from a film and informed notes enable an enjoyable evening around a well known film. Examples include *Blood Diamond*, *Evan Almighty* and *Amazing Grace*. Just one of the resources that BS makes for local Christian work.

### Teachers

*Biblos* is a partnership with Exeter University School of Education. It has resulted in a series of 15 children's books graded by school year. “*Everybody hurts Sometimes*” uses Bible poems and stories about Jesus, Moses, and David to teach 7-9 year olds about vulnerability. Others cover ages up to fourteen.

### The Affluent Majority

“*The Poverty and Justice Bible*” is one of the latest publications. In it every reference to poverty or justice is highlighted. Dare you read it? If you can afford £9.95, it's for you!

Bible Society is a charity well worth your support for its work overseas and its range of up-to-the-minute resources for the reconversion of England. However your Christian life develops, in study, work or prayer, the Bible experts should be on your team. For more information ring 01793 418222 or click on [www.biblesociety.org.uk](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk)

*Alan Joinson*

## A Visit to Sister Julian's Cell at Norwich



Sister Julian was an 'anchor-ess,' taking her name from the church to which her cell was attached *i.e.* St Julian's (the patron saint of ferrymen) in Norwich. This church was bombed during the Second World War so the buildings we saw had been restored. Sister Julian had a number of visions (which she referred to as 'show-ings') during a serious illness when she had been given the

last rites and was at the point of death. She meditated on the meaning of these for 20 years before publishing them in the first book to be written by a woman in English. Her views were revolutionary at the time (1363) when the church was divided, having a Pope in Avignon and one in Rome. If she had been condemned as a heretic she might have been burned at the stake, so it took courage to publish such unorthodox views. As an anchoress she was confined for life to her cell at the church, having only a visiting servant for her needs. One cell window opened on to the street (through which she could give spiritual help to whoever asked for it) and one window opened into the adjacent church for her devotions and to receive mass.

This was the time of the Black Death that first came to Norwich in 1349 and recurred several times thereafter. It was also the time of the Hundred Years' War.

We don't know her real name, or anything else about her apart from her time as an anchoress. There were about 40 anchorites in Norwich at that time. No miracles are recorded, so she could not be beatified in sainthood. It is recorded that she was visited by a woman called Margery Kempe in about 1413. One translation of her work from medieval to modern English is *Revelations of Divine Love*, a Penguin publication, by Clifton Wolters in 1966. The internet is also a good source of information about her.

The Church's teachings during her time were focused on sin, death, punishment and hell. Her visions made her focus on the love of God, the passion of Jesus and the forgiveness he bought for us. She was led to visualise all

that God made, as an object small enough to hold in the hand. It was small enough to disappear altogether but she understood it would last forever because God loved it.

*"What, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was his meaning. Who reveals it to you? Love. What did he reveal to you? Love. Why does he reveal it to you? For love. [...] So I was taught that love is our Lord's meaning. And I saw very certainly in this and in everything that before God made us he loved us, which love was never abated and never will be."*

Despite the very real existence of pain and sin, in ourselves and in our world, says Sister Julian, *"with God all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."* It is through her unshakeable confidence in the transformative power of God's unconditional love that this extraordinary claim comes as an assurance that resonates in our own troubled times with a profound ring of hope.

I visited Norwich with a group from St Helen's Parish Church, Abingdon. This was intended to be (and, indeed, was) an enjoyable and 'bonding' time together. On the way to Norwich, we visited Ely and Wymondham Abbey. The next morning, we went to St. Julian's church.

The church had been destroyed by bombing during the war and then restored using some of the original rubble.

We entered and admired the church's construction and artefacts, chatting to each other about this and that. Then, in small groups, we entered the small cell that had been Sister Julian's.

In there, we fell silent. Somehow, the atmosphere of this small area got to us. We looked at a single, flickering candle and imagined Sister Julian being in there with only God for company.

Our Rector reminded us of the story of the conquering Roman soldier who entered the Temple at Jerusalem. He looked at the vessels of gold. Then, thinking that the inner sanctum must be even richer, he entered and was amazed to find it empty.

He found the quiet 'emptiness' more awesome than the riches outside.

Thus, the simplicity of that little cell reminded us of how we should empty ourselves of all clamour and distractions to get nearer to God.

*Harry Simpson*

## Uganda adventure



During our stay, we also visited other projects supported by *Mission Direct*. The photo on the left shows me talking to Vernon Kazooba, a nurse practitioner at Rugarama Diocesan Clinic. Here we saw many patients with malaria.

One highlight was the visit to the clinic for children with clubfeet. Our son Charles had clubfeet and so I found it very easy to relate to the mothers there. This clinic had been founded by Pat Gilmer, a British missionary. It is now run by Rukungiri

On 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2009 Sally Mears and I met at Terminal 3 at Heathrow. We were both slightly nervous as we were off on an adventure: we were going to Uganda with the Christian organisation *Mission Direct*. It had been founded in 2005 by Nigel Hyde, a City accountant. (Sally and I met friends of his parents at Aston Tirrold Retreat Centre. Their story was that he had sacrificed a glittering career. His version was rather more modest!) Their aim is to work with some of the poorest people in the poorest parts of the world, working on local projects, where God wants us to be. *Mission Direct* sends out a team of three or four volunteers for 3-4 months to oversee the project and then groups of volunteers for two weeks at a time. Sally and I and a man called Geoff formed team 1, although the teams can have up to 24 volunteers. Being in a small team was nice!

The Ugandan Mission Partner is Rukungiri Modern School, founded by Alice and John Tumusiime in 1996. Alice and John took some AIDS orphans into their home following a family funeral. More orphans followed and by the time they had 27 children living with them, they decided they had better found a school to educate them! The school now has 932 pupils and some of the best exam results in Uganda. Our mission was to fund and help build another classroom in the nursery school, although I spent much of my time on the building site being the photographer.

Growers' Orphan and Disabled Children's Project (donations always welcome.) The clinic gets very good results from splinting and I reminded myself how to massage and stretch clubfeet!

*"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."*

*Mission Direct* is very good at making sure its volunteers get adequate rest and relaxation, and we spent the last two days going on a safari at Queen Elizabeth National Park. Here we saw lions, elephants and hippopotami, amongst other animals. However the highlight of the trip was the final dinner when the staff team comprising the long-term volunteers showed us a photo round-up of the fortnight. They also presented us with certificates - mine complimented me on being a "teacher extraordinaire and clinical consultant, your expertise have proved a real blessing. You have been an essential component of an unforgettable team." I am still grinning!

My sincere thanks go to all my friends at St Helen's whose support made the trip possible, and in particular to Rosemary Smith. Not only for the financial support, but I carried with me also the knowledge of your love and prayers. Thank you.

*Hazel Glennie*

## My Hobby and Me

### ON MANOEUVRES

Somehow the idea of a church organist donning khaki (or rather DPM as uniform 'colour' is known these days) and sallying forth into the field for occasional afternoons and weekends seems somewhat incongruous. My involvement started, compulsorily, at school, where everyone had to join one of the sections in the Combined Cadet Force, the in-school equivalent of the Army Cadet Force, the Sea Cadets and the Air Training Corps rolled into one organisation. In those (now distant!) days an awful lot of time was spent 'square-bashing', especially in the (sometimes) hot summer months in preparation for the annual inspection by some impressively-ranking regular officer when the school contingent was expected to stage its own mediocre version of Trooping the Colour.

After a break while at university and embarking on a teaching career, I found that some out-of-classroom and preferably outdoor activity was essential to enlist some sort of 'street cred' amongst pupils, and as I had always been hopelessly lacking in talent in any sort of sport I enrolled in the CCF as a very junior officer. The syllabus had changed a great deal in the interim, and I found myself split between helping staff on overnight field exercises in shelterless training areas, usually in February frosts or April showers, and learning to walk the British hills, something I had never attempted theretofore. Instruction in both these activities was readily available, on the one hand from a former Fusilier Regimental Sergeant Major, who embellished every activity with inimitable army banter (some of it not repeatable in polite society), and on the other from the Commanding Officer, a colleague teacher of chemistry (CCF officers are generally teachers) whose love of the mountains was infectious. I learnt lessons from both which proved invaluable when I found myself running the contingent at my next school almost solo for twenty years.

There is of course an ethical issue about dressing young people up in military uniforms and letting them run around carrying rifles on mock military manoeuvres. This issue is tempered by the heavy emphasis on safety; it can be argued that, with the current proliferation of and attraction to illicit weapons within youth culture, teaching a proper respect for firearms, which the cadet movement certainly does, can be socially valuable. Civilian paintballing is potentially far more damaging! Also, while cadets are taught military techniques, the cadet forces are officially designated as the MoD's youth club rather than a recruiting tool.

However, the over-riding value of the cadet movement is the way in which it encourages self-reliance and leadership in a manner which is largely absent from educational provision these days: having to look after oneself out in the field, sleeping under a sheet of plastic in adverse weather conditions, while working as part of, or even leading, a patrol in physically and mentally demanding tasks can prove more intrinsically character-building than more conventional team-building activities. That is why it has proved such a rewarding 'hobby' for over 35 years.

*Christopher Fletcher-Campbell*

## Prayers for use during the 'flu pandemic

*For those who have contracted the virus:*

May our Lord Jesus Christ  
who healed the sick and brought  
comfort to those in need,  
by his risen presence be with all  
who have contracted the virus,  
take from them all that harms and hinders them,  
and fill them with his healing and peace.  
Amen.

*For those dealing with the pandemic:*

Almighty God, bless with your wisdom  
those fighting this pandemic,  
be with doctors and nurses as they care for sick and dying,  
be with scientists working for an effective cure,  
be with those who cared for loved ones now departed,  
be with emergency services and public health  
authorities as they seek to protect us,  
and protect us all beneath the shadow of your wing,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## St. Helen's Church and Church in Abingdon News

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### St. Helen's Church

**Abingdon Artists' Exhibition**  
Saturday 5th September, until 13<sup>th</sup>

**ALPHA SUNDAY**  
Sunday 6th September

**Mothers' Union Eucharist**  
Saturday 12th September  
Coffee, ploughmen's lunches & tea in the Church Centre

**St. Helen's Patronal Festival**  
Sunday 13th September  
The launch of the Stewardship campaign. There will be a Newcomers' Lunch on that day for which you may sign up or contact Susan Scott on (01235) 522960

**"Desiring Life" Reading Group.**  
September 1st. Visit to European School Chapel to see the mural on Job. 2.15 pm at the school car park, followed by tea at Benson

15th & 29th September. Group meets in Church Centre Lounge, at 2.30. Queries to Susan Scott on (Ab) 522960

**Wednesday Club**  
September 16<sup>th</sup> *Toys, Tools and Magic*  
8.00 pm in Church Centre. A light-hearted and intriguing talk by Richard Kelly on the fascination of numbers

**Promenade Concert with Tea**  
Sunday 20th September 3.00pm  
*The Box o' Whistles - An Organ Deconstruction*  
Come and discover something about how the organ works and hear how different bits fit together.  
Families/children particularly welcome.  
Followed by Evensong at 4.30 pm

**Abingdon Hospital League of Friends**  
**Coffee Morning**  
Saturday 26th September 10.00 to 12.00 noon  
in the Church Centre

**Back to Church Sunday & Lunch**  
Sunday 27th September

### St. Nicolas' Church

**Tudor Banquet**  
Thursday 10th September, Abbey Buildings. Tickets £29.50. Proceeds to St. Nicolas' Church and to a school for slum children in Bangladesh.

**Afternoon Tea in the Millstream Garden,**  
Abbey Buildings @3pm 13th September. No charge but donations welcome. For more information on both events, contact Pauline Burren on (01235) 521873

**Harvest Thanksgiving Service & Lunch**  
Sunday 20th September 11.00 am  
All welcome. Information from David Howard (01235) 526275 or Barbara Beach (01235) 531392

### St. Michael's Church

**Lunch Club**  
September 23rd, at 12.30 pm. Two course meal for £3.75.  
Contact (01235) 522591 or (01235) 538758 if coming.

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### Church in Abingdon

**ALPHA Introductory Dinner and Jazz**  
Thursday 1st October, The Guildhall.  
To reserve your FREE ticket call (01235) 555985  
Contact Jane Wyatt on (01235) 559112  
or jane\_wyatt@hotmail.com

**Annual Celebration of the Church in Abingdon**  
Sunday 4th October, 4.00 pm at St. Edmund's  
An environmental theme to the Service.  
Refreshments afterwards and a display of stalls.

**Abingdon Emergency Food Bank**  
Thanks for contributions that have helped 25 families (60 people). Tins of meat and veg. please! Information from Jenny Corps (07925) 309042 or foodbank@cca.uk.net

**35 Ock Street**  
Reopens on Wednesday 2nd September at 10.30 am

**FLOWER FESTIVALS**  
**All Saints Methodist Church** as part of their 50th Anniversary celebrations on:  
Saturday 12th September, 12 noon until 5.00 pm  
Sunday 13th September, 12 noon until 6.00 pm  
**St. Mary Magdalen Shippon**, as part of their Harvest Festival, 25th until 27th September

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*St. Helen's Church* by Rod Hunt

In this quiz each clue is a familiar double-worded item, person, place or saying - the first letter of the *first* word is **H** and the first letter of the *second* word is **C** as in St **Helen's Church**.e.g. *Posh frocks - Haute Couture*

- 1 Elevated seat for a baby .....
- 2 Tough luck to do with dairy product? .....
- 3 Limbs put in and shaken all about .....
- 4 Not entirely inebriated? .....
- 5 A pair of rhyming iambic pentameters .....
- 6 A way of tucking in sheets used by nurses .....
- 7 Fowl - cramped living quarters? .....
- 8 East End boxer 'oo floored Ali .....
- 9 Person who enjoys being fired .....
- 10 Squatter crustacean .....
- 11 Two shillings and sixpence .....
- 12 Short whip for riders in the pink .....
- 13 Carle's very famished larva .....
- 14 Head-wear much favoured by Hilda Ogden .....
- 15 Errol Brown 70s pop group -*You Sexy Thing* .....
- 16 Bakery item that's angry & flustered .....
- 17 Very rude, extreme foundation rubble .....
- 18 Former US first lady - nee Roddam .....
- 19 People lined up passing a bucket .....
- 20 Incomplete bird is not quite ready .....
- 21 The shires close to London .....
- 22 Visit from the doctor .....
- 23 Very posh cookery .....
- 24 Brand of naïve enthusiastic Christianity .....
- 25 Tree whose shade is enjoyed by blacksmiths? .....
- 26 Religion near top of the candle .....
- 27 Top drawer, best possible quality etc .....
- 28 Home of the Mappa Mundi .....
- 29 No options - take it or leave it .....
- 30 Horse-drawn transport sounds good looking! .....
- 31 "You must have the body" (*Lat*) .....
- 32 A sooty creator and also a sweep .....
- 33 TV hospital drama .....
- 34 Prussic acid - HCN .....
- 35 Discoverer of Tutankhamun's tomb .....
- 36 Astral body due to appear in 2061 .....
- 37 Commander and senior officers of the military .....
- 38 Celestial singers .....
- 39 Tense, fraught social atmosphere .....
- 40 TV Western (1967-71) about "Big" John Cannon's ranch .....

Solution to the  
July/August Crossword

J	O	I	N	S	O	N		A	S	S	U	R	E	S
A	N	P	O	A	T		K	E	A					
W	E	S	S	O	N	N	W	I	N	D	O	W		
B	E	R	O	U	N	D	E	L	D			M		
O	C	C	U	R		R	A	Y		I	C	E	N	I
N	T		A		G		N		F		E		L	
E	S	S	E	N	C	E		E	N	T	H	R	A	L
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I	N	V	A	D	E	D		S	P	E	N	C	E	R
S		A		I		E		T		T		A		E
T	O	N	G	A		A	P	E		H	I	L	L	S
H		I		P	E	L	O	T	O	N		I		E
M	I	L	L	E	R		P		K	I	M	B	E	R
U		L		R		P	E	G		C		R		V
S	W	A	N	S	E	A		O	B	S	C	E	N	E

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## September at St. Helen's Church

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### Divine Services

Morning Prayer	09.10 every weekday
Evening Prayer	17.10 every weekday
Sung Eucharist	10.00 every Sunday
Silent Prayer	18.10 Monday 7th & Monday 21st
Monther's Union Eucharist	20.00 Tuesday 8th
Patronal Festival Eucharist	10.00 Sunday 13th
Marriage	14.30 Saturday 19th
Choral Evensong	16.30 Sunday 20th
Baptism	15.00 Sunday 27th

### Meetings and Gatherings

Baby and Toddler Group	09.30 every Monday
Beavers and Cubs	17.15 every Weds. in Church Centre
Central Church Meeting	18.00 Tuesday 1st
Baptism Preparation	20.00 Wednesday 2nd & Wednesday 9th
Abingdon Museum Friends	Thursday 3rd in Church Centre
DCC Committee	19.30 Thu. 10th in Church Centre Lounge
Preaching Group	19.45 Tuesday 15th
PCC Committee	Thursday 17th
<i>Desiring Life</i> Reading Group	14.30 Tuesday 15th & Tues. 29th in Church Centre Lounge

### Events

<i>Desiring Life</i> Outing	14.15 Tuesday 1st
Abingdon Artists Exhibition	Saturday 5th to Sunday 13th
Abingdon Bellringers	09.00 - 16.00 Saturday 5th, 10.00 Wednesday 23rd
Stewardship Launch and Newcomers' Lunch	Sunday 13th
Promenade Concert and Tea	Sunday 20th
Abingdon Hospital League of Friends Coffee	Saturday 26th
Back to Church Lunch	Sunday 27th

### "3rd Sunday" Music at St. Helen's

Music and Tea at 15.00, Choral  
Evensong at 16.30.

20th Sept: *'The Box o'Whistles'* - a  
deconstruction

Come and discover something about  
how the organ works and hear how the  
different bits fit together. Families/children  
particularly welcome.

18th Oct: *Brass Bonanza*  
with Bloxham School Brass Ensemble  
A selection of solos and group items for  
trumpets and trombone.

15th Nov: *Cello Collection*  
Music for up to 8 cellos. NB: Sung rather  
than Choral Evensong on this occasion.

20th Dec: *Christmas Readings and Carols*

17th Jan: *Come and Sing Messiah*

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To arrange baptisms, weddings and funerals contact the Parish Office.

Clergy are available in the Church Office between 19.00 - 20.00pm on a Wednesday.  
Call the office to book an appointment.

Rector:	The Revd. Dr. Charles Miller
Assisting Priest (NSM):	The Revd. Tim Hewes
Director of Music:	Christopher Fletcher-Campbell
Parish Administrator:	Linda Barker

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[www.sthelens.abingdon.org.uk](http://www.sthelens.abingdon.org.uk)

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