

Groby United Reformed Church





April 2024



Noah Parker and Holly Hung
celebrate their birthdays in April
Happy Birthday to You
May the Good Lord Bless You

Sue Lawrence-Brooks

Our Church website can be found at https://grobyurc.com/
Our Facebook page is at https://www.facebook.com/grobyurc
A link to recordings of our services can be found on both our
church Website (click on the 'worship' Tab at the top) and on
our Facebook page.

Our Church Safeguarding Team



Rachel Parker

Ric & Helen Fracchia



Groby URC is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, and to ensuring their well-being.

WELCOME FROM PHIL, CHURCH ELDER

forward!

April Contact is usually the Easter edition, but due to Easter being earlier this year our Good Friday and Easter Sunday services are detailed in the March edition. Only Easter Monday falls into April, a bank holiday and not only an opportunity to finish eating Easter eggs but to look



I do always look forward to April each year, not only because it is my birthday month, but it is a month when we are surrounded by the hope of renewal as life's cycle continues. After the long dark cold days of winter our gardens and the countryside are showing positive signs of growth as the days get longer and hopefully warmer. May we also find it a time of positivity and renewal. To be positive about our church growth, both spiritually and in numbers.

We welcome Louise Brown, our Extend Youth and Children's Worker for Groby and pray for her and all our groups that involve young people. 'Tasters' on a Saturday morning continues to play a pivotal role in our association with our local community. Please do try and support this in whatever way you are able.

We are starting to plan church social events for the summer. We also have an opportunity this month of a 'Quiet Day' at Launde Abbey on Thursday 25th April (see details on the next page). Richard Knott will be visiting the URC as part of his 'prayer pilgrimage' at 10am on Thurs 18th April, do join him at church if you are able.

So we have a lot to look forward to. Please take whatever opportunities you have to 'wrap' all we do in prayer as we seek God's guidance for the future. Phil.

LAUNDE ABBEY

A QUIET DAY is to be held at Launde Abbey for our 5 Area Churches on

THURSDAY 25TH APRIL

led by Rev Mike Playdon

on the theme of 'Thresholds and Doorways'

Arrival time: 10.00 for 10.30am

Lunch: 12.45pm

Worship: 3.30pm

Afternoon tea: 4.00pm

Morning coffee & biscuits, lunch and afternoon tea will be provided at a cost of £10.00 per person

Please add your name to the list on the church noticeboard if you would like to enjoy this opportunity - lifts will be available.



Launde Abbey



TEACHING AND READINGS FOR **APRIL 2024**

In April, we continue our sermon series through Matthew's Gospel (having jumped to the latter chapters to fit around Easter). We resume in chapter 12 of 28, so we are barely half way though yet, having started last September.

Matthew's Gospel tells the good news that Jesus is the promised Saviour, the One through Whom God fulfilled the promises He made to His people in our Old Testament. Yet the good news is not only for the Jewish people, among whom Jesus lived, but for the whole World: for you and me!

Paul

April 7th	Matthew 12 vv38-50	John Filsak	
	"Show us a sign, unclean spirit, mother and brothers"		
April 14th	Matthew 13 vv 1-23	Gary Wood	
	"Parable of the Sower"		
April 21st	Matthew 13 vv 24-43	Rev. Paul Ellis	
	More parables		
	This service will include sharing Holy Communion.		
April 28th	Matthew 13 vv 44-52	Rev. Paul Ellis	
	More parables		

April's Helping Hands

	Elder	Music	Media	Welcome	Coffee
April	(Mary)	(Tim)	(Tim)	(Joy)	(Joy)
7th	Mark	David	Barry	Sue & Mike	Mary & Trevor
14th	Phil	Debbie	Dave	Joy & Peter	Pat & Linda
21st	Wendy	Sue	Chris	Barbs & Anita	Ruth & Roger
28th	Margaret	David	Mark	Elaine & John	Barry & Kathy



Sunday Flowers

(Barbara Conlon)

April 7th: Cherryl Read

April 14th: Rachel Edwards

April 21st : Joy & Peter

April 28th: Jane Hinds

"The Clean Team!"

(Kathy Du Boulay)

Week Beginning

April 1st: Our Chores

April 8th: Dave & Hilary

April 15th Our Chores

April 22nd : Linda & Tim

April 29th: Our Chores

NEWS FROM THE WEST LEICESTERSHIRE CHURCHES

I have been waiting to write this until I could confirm details of our joint Area Quiet Day at Launde Abbey on Thursday 25th April, starting with coffee at 10.00 and ending with a cuppa at 4.00. I am very pleased that Rev Mike Playdon has agreed to conduct this and we have agreed with his suggested theme of *'Thresholds'*. Thanks to a large grant from the URC's Disciple-ship Development Fund, we only need to charge each attendee £10, which will pay for your lunch and drinks. Now we know the cost, each Church should provide a list for you to sign to attend, if it has not already done so. Places are limited to 40 because of the size of the room, though.

At **Enderby** two members have celebrated their 90th birthdays in recent months. Their Annual Church Meeting last month, among other business, set dates for a variety of social events, starting with a recent Big Breakfast.

Groby is excited to welcome its full-time Children & Youth Worker, Louise Brown, to work equally with Groby Parish Church. Its Annual Meeting approved the accreditation of one of its Elders, Wendy Hall, as the first official Lay Pioneer in the whole of the URC. She leads a new group for families with children with special needs, called *Under the Willow Tree*, which is getting established and being appreciated by the parents.

St Stephen's is making real progress on a list of fabric issues in its Victorian building, thanks to the perseverance and hard work of its Property & Finance Committee. I look forward to leading a Communion service there on Maundy Thursday evening and to a Film Afternoon after Easter.

Braunstone continues to hold two services a month, usually one in the morning and one in the afternoon, but during the week its building is used every weekday by the 'United Play' Nursery (where do you think they got that name from?)

Christ Church has turned its tall Christmas tree into a Lenten cross as a centerpiece for Sunday worship and is also holding a weekly Lent course based, perhaps surprisingly, on the film *Mary Poppins Returns*! Joint fortnightly Bible studies with St Stephen's have resumed this month.

Each of the Churches will gather to worship on Easter Day, some with breakfasts too. You may though like to attend a different Church from your usual in Holy Week.....

Maundy Thursday

12.00 Holy Communion at Christ Church*

7.00 Churches Together Holy Communion at Groby

7.30 Holy Communion at St Stephen's

Good Friday

10.00 Service at Groby*

12.30 Service at Enderby

7.00 Reflective meditation at Christ Church

Two of these, marked *, are new initiatives this year.

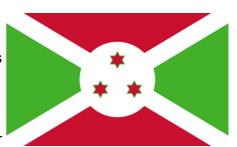
These are both such important days in the Christian year that I hope you will all be able to attend something prior to celebrating Christ's resurrection on Easter Day.

With best wishes for a blessed Easter, Paul.

Did you work out the answer to the 'Where in the world' quiz in last month's Contact?

The answer is **Burundi**.

This year Christian Aid Week, 12-18th May, is focussing on stories from Burundi, where families are working hard to transform their lives



For many, each day is a struggle for

survival – many people head out on an empty stomach each morning to look for casual work to buy food for the evening. Most families don't have a water supply, so they'll also walk to collect water from rivers or communal water points.

Christian Aid has been working in Burundi since 1995 when it first offered humanitarian assistance to people surviving the civil conflict

Now, alongside local partners, Christian Aid helps establish Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). These community-led groups mean people can save and borrow money, making small businesses possible, offering reliable and diverse incomes so families can eat regularly, get medicine when they need it, and build safer homes.

Aline Nibogora, who we will hear more about next month and whose photo is on the next page, says the support of Christian Aid has made her whole community feel comforted and empowered.

"We feel we are not alone in our initiatives. Without your support we could not go further, you empowered us by changing our living conditions."

As in previous years, Churches Together in Groby will be delivering Christian Aid donation envelopes to every home in the village. These will be returned to local drop-off points in homes and businesses.

In addition a team of people from both churches will be taking part in **Christian Aid's 70K in May Challenge**.

The team aims to litter pick 70 kilometers in Groby during May to raise awareness of the campaign and encourage donations.

More volunteers to help with either of the above would be most welcome!

Mary and Trevor





Aline Nibogora

PRAYER PILGRIMAGE

In April, **Richard Knott**, our Children and Youth Development Officer, is endeavouring to undertake a Prayer Pilgrimage, visiting every URC in the East Midlands Synod to pray for them and with them.



He will be at Groby URC on Thursday April 18th between 10.00am and 10.40am and invites us to join him in prayer before he travels on to the next church.

Please consider meeting with Richard, Rev Paul, Louise and others for this focussed time of prayer.

OUR CHURCH PRAYER CHAIN

The Church Prayer Chain continues to operate and its purpose is to circulate urgent prayer requests in a very short space of time.

If you are made aware of an emergency prayer need, please initiate the chain by ringing any one person on this list.

(A copy of the Prayer Chain is also on the noticeboard at the back of the church)

Anne Brandon - 2875585 or 07752 585555

Ruth Ivens - 2910397.

Joy Russell - 2996164,

Barbara Conlon - 2387805 or 07886319361,

Kay Blick - 2321254,

Barbara Lomas - 2876013.

Sue Lawrence-Brookes - 2312866 or 07780342253

Kevan Hall - 07807036944

Groby URC Prayer Sheet



"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

Proverbs 22: 6

Welcome to our April prayer sheet.

This month we are continuing to base our prayers on the reports submitted to the church AGM by different groups within the church. April's focus is on children's activities, including Y Church, Noah's Ark and Under the Willow Tree. We are continuing this theme with our prayers for the world, encouraging you to pray for children affected by the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

Prayers for Y Church

Our church is blessed with a faithful group of families and children who regularly attend services. The children in this group all enjoy attending Y Church and have built strong friendships through the group and other church activities.

There are challenges for running Y Church which mostly revolve around resources, including time, space and volunteers, all of which are needed to run the sessions safely and well.

- Please pray for:
 - Thank God that we have children who regularly attend our church, when we look around at some many other churches it is clear to see what a blessing this is.
- Pray for the children that attend: Luca, Roberto, Emilia, Noah, Megan, Harley, Kezi, Holly and Caris, that God will bless them and they will be given the foundations for a life lived with Him

- Pray for more volunteers and ask God if you can serve Him by helping as a volunteer. In particular pray that there will be more volunteers willing to lead sessions.
- Pray for the leaders and helpers who currently give their time for Y Church, thank God for their commitment and ask that He strengthens them and gives them wisdom as they teach our children.
- Pray for God's wisdom in how we move forward with the challenges that we are faced with in running Y Church session.

Prayers for Noah's Ark

Noah's Ark is a baby and toddler group which runs every Monday during term time in the church building.

Please thank God for His blessing for the group, including:

- The opportunity to introduce the Love of God through play, songs and stories.
- The friendship and support of our leadership team, Ann, Pat, Judith and Hilary. Please pray for their continued good health as they lead this important work.
- The kindness of our parents and carers.
- The time spent with babies and young children.
- The resources / equipment available to us.
- Paul telling us a monthly story



Prayers for Under the Willow Tree

'Under the Willow Tree' aims to provide a welcoming space where children with special needs and their families can get together and receive support and encouragement in a Christian context. We have had three sessions this year, all on Sunday afternoons and we have been delighted to have had six families who have attended at least once. Next term we shall begin meeting regularly, on the first and third Sundays of each month. So far each session has been something of an experiment, as we get to know the children and what activities work for them, both as individuals and as a group. We have been very encouraged by the enthusiasm and gratitude of those who have attended.

We would appreciate prayers for:

- Guidance for planning each session, as we work out how best to meet the needs of a diverse group of children.
- For the parents to feel welcome and to find the support they need from this group
- Our applications for funding for the equipment we would like to buy
- Enough volunteers to run fortnightly sessions safely
- That our faith will be at the heart of all we do for Under the Willow Tree
- That we will know the best way to make our Christian faith a part of every session, without alienating those who may be less comfortable with Christian content



Prayers for Children and Young People affected by the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

Children are often the first to suffer in times of conflict. Here are some suggestions of how to pray for children caught up in conflicts around the world.

- Pray for children and young people whose childhood has been stolen, who have lost parents or family members and are grieving. Pray that these young lives will know love and belonging.
- Pray for those suffering mentally and / or physically, traumatised by what they have seen, heard or lost.
- Pray about safe access to food and water
- Pray for the safe delivery of humanitarian aid.
- Pray about interrupted education
- Ask God to provide stable homes for displaced people.
- Pray that God will quell violence and protect children from harm.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will diminish hatred in the hearts of the aggressors.
- Ask God to provide those in leadership with wisdom and that they will make right decisions.
- Pray for global leaders to be moved to help protect the innocent civilians in harm's way

And a prayer written by a child. (from Cafod)

God of love,

We pray for peace in our world, and an end to war.

Instead of hatred, let there be love.

Shelter your children and protect us.

Guide us and keep us from harm,

so we can build a world of love and live our lives in peace.

Amen.

HOW DOES GOD GUIDE US?

Monday April 8th at 7.00pm at URC

This is a 'one off' follow-up session for all who attended the

Alpha Course last Autumn.



The invitation is also extended, however, to anyone who may be interested in a future Alpha Course.

The evening will begin with a hot meal, followed by a short video and discussion, and will finish around 9pm.

Pause for Thought...



"O Lord, grant that we may not be like porridge: stiff, starchy and hard to stir.

But like cornflakes: crisp, fresh and ready to serve"

Sent in by Sue Lawrence-Brooks

MY HOPE IS BUILT ON NOTHING LESS...

Often, when I visit Christians and ask for what they would like me to pray with them, they refer to the lamentable state of the World. Then, when I was at Melton Mowbray URC for the February meeting of the four Leicestershire URC ministers, I picked up a copy of their current magazine and was struck by these words, which it quoted: they are anonymous but not written recently.

"The general moral corruption of society, sin rampant in official and family life, will bring the state to ruin. The foundations are rotting, being eaten away; the canker-worm of sinful practices are growing at the heart and the whole structure will fall apart... It is the truth...for the nations of every age. There are fundamental moral laws underlying the structure and woven into the very fabric of human society. When they are ignored and violated disintegration sets in and the structure is sure to collapse. For the confirmation...it is only necessary to scan the page of history...

The fact that Messiah is hope of the World...is true to-day, it will be true of the future. There is no other hope of the World. Education, culture, legislation, politics, cannot save the World. In the shifting of foundations, the breaking up of the moral, religious and social orders, with growing disintegration, the hope... is the Christ."

Paul.

We continue with L is for Lifestyle – Christian Living that Doesn't Cost the Earth, from the book by Ruth Valerio.

K is for Kippers (but actually Fish)

Environmentalists encourage us to reduce the amount of meat we eat, so is it okay if we switch to fish instead of meat?

With a growing population and greater demand for fish from ethical sources, do we need to eat less fish and think about having a more plant based diet?



Prawns in particular have a high carbon footprint and incredibly a 1lb bag has a carbon footprint of 1 tonne of CO2. As with salmon should we return to thinking of them as an occasional expensive treat? This

really applies to all fish and seafood.

SO WHERE SHOULD WE BUY OUR FISH FROM? Waitrose & M&S sell fish with a logo that guarantees its ethical origin and the onus is on us find out which supermarkets offer well-farmed produce.

ACTION:

 Voice 4 Justice are planning to contact our local Aldi, Lidl, Sainsbury's & Tesco to ask them where the fish and seafood on their shelves comes from.



 You could load the MSC's Pocket Good Fish Guide app on your phone.



This subject continues next month when we get to grips with 'L' is for Letter Writing' and making our presence felt!

Afternoon Tea with the Lord Mayor

Some people spend their lives doing amazing things, never seeing themselves as anything special, and receiving an accolade would be the last thing on their minds - **Sarah Shepherd** is one of those people. So, when she was invited to be presented with the Lord Mayor of Leicester's Honoured Citizen Award, Sarah was more than a bit shocked!



Sarah Shepherd with her mum Mary, being presented with her surprise Award by the Lord Mayor Councillor Dr Sue Barton

Passionate about Fair Trade

In 1996 Sarah gathered around her a group of capable friends to open the first 'Just for Christmas pop up shop' in a church foyer in the centre of Leicester. Robin Pointon* used his PR and marketing skills to engage with the local press allowing Sarah to enthusiastically explain her plans to the local newspaper editor. The eminent press coverage, succinctly explained what fair trade means and the idea of making ethical choices when we shop.

Theatrical friends created a flash-mob of Christmas shepherds and supporters following a huge 'star' to the 'Just pop-up' where Rosemary Connolly, a local celebratory, opened the shop before a large crowd.

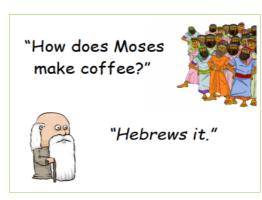
The 'pop up' was considered a huge success with celebrity shop assistants - actors from the local theatre production, Leicester Tigers' Rugby players, local MP's and a radio presenter spent an hour working in the shop. All this backed up by a roster of amazing volunteers, inspired by Sarah, to give freely of their time to make the Just shop what it is today, with a reputation of being one of the best fair trade ethical shops in the UK.

*Robin Pointon worshipped at Groby URC during the 1970's and enjoyed a special relationship with a small group of 'likely lads' in our Sunday School.

Our own Roger Ivens aka 'Tuesday Roger' has been a regular volunteer at the shop since 2001. He says: Like all shops JUST has had to adapt to include new product ranges; to promote sustainability as well as fair trade, and welcomes tourists & students from around the world. The coffee, hot chocolate, tea and olive oil, used at **Tasters** all come from the shop, as does the tea and coffee we drink on a Sunday morning!

The JUST shop in Silver Street is open 5 days a week Tues-Fri (11am-4pm) Sat 10.30am-4.30pm All are welcome!

This article was adapted from a post written by Wendy Bebbington.



MARTHA

Mary or Martha, what am I to do
One or the other, or should I be two.
The hurry and rush my service to bring
Or to sit and dwell, on everything.

It's an honour of course, to have such a guest My little home, is far from the best.

And a servant's role is honoured and true,
Of course I am busy, wouldn't you be to.

As a woman we know, what's to be expected
For the master is the one, to be respected.
And I wouldn't complain, for it's what I do
When the men get to sit, and talk things through.

There's bread to bake and food to prepare I hope there will be enough wine to share. There's so much to do, no time now to wait will the olives be ripe, and there's fish to scrape.

Yet I ask myself, why should I be busier
When another pair of hands, would make it easier.
And guess who's sitting at Jesus' feet
It's Mary, not thinking of what's to eat.

Now don't get me wrong, I love her so much She's gentle and kind with a loving touch. And perhaps these thoughts, say more about me But it would have been nice, if I were free. Then in that moment, with all I dare I confronted the master with, "Don't you care" There's so much to do, so tell her to help me Martha he said, come, let me comfort thee.

His voice so gentle, as He spoke my name The words I said, now seemed so lame. You're worried and upset about so much Let Me heal your distress, with just a touch.

In your mind the food is what's right to bring And Mary's help would seem the perfect thing. Yet do you not see, there's another way And Mary has chosen, to take that today.

For life is more, than just bread and meat As Mary has found, when she sat at My feet. For to feed on Me, is worth so much more Come and find My treasure, I now implore.

There is a better way, for <u>ALL</u>, this day For soon, I will have to be on My way My time is short, and will soon be no more So come and receive, My blessings galore.

Stephen Burrage

(The story of Jesus' visit to the home of Mary and Martha can be found in Luke chapter10, verses 38-42.)



European Tour

The arrival of spring, with the slightly milder weather, lighter evenings and thoughts of summer holidays, has rejuvenated us all as we embrace Groby Sings' latest season, the *European Tour*. Rehearsals have been very well attended and it has been good to welcome back old friends together with lots of new faces who have finally decided to give the Groby Sings experience a try, often after having been to our previous concerts or being encouraged by friends who already enjoy our choir. We are a friendly and inclusive group which aims to cater for all kinds of people who want to sing and socialise in a comfortable space.

Our songs this season represent an interesting combination of places in Europe, notably Sweden, Germany, France and Italy as well as all four countries of the British Isles. Thankfully, we haven't had to learn a host of new languages though a few 'foreign' words have slipped in! Our trip round Europe promises to be yet another success for Groby Sings in our 11th year so do join us every Wednesday during term time at The Groby Club, Leicester Rd, Groby to see what a good time we have with lots of laughs, socialising, singing and cake. We especially welcome singers with disabilities or memory problems together with their friends and carers.

Adult singers: 1.30-3.00pm or 7.30-9.00pm,
Youth & Children's Choir (7 years and over): 3.40-4.40pm.
Pre-school children are welcome in the afternoon in the care of their adult with a crèche area available. Please note that we don't meet in school holidays.

Concerts will be held on Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd June – dates for your diary.

Enquiries via our <u>website www.grobysings.org and check out our</u> Facebook page too.

Groby Sings is a Registered Charity no. 1180490

June L. Ward

We have a new Contact Magazine Distributor!

Following Barbara Lomas's decision to stand down as the Contact Magazine distributor, Sue Annable has kindly agreed to take on this role.

Volunteers who deliver the magazines will still receive their bundles in the usual way (mostly from the vestibule table), but Sue will now maintain the distribution list. Therefore, please let Sue know if you're aware of any changes that need to be made to the list. Sue can be contacted on 07728 831827 or mikeandsue5453@gmail.com.

Our thanks to Barbs for her 20 - 25 years of handling Contact distribution and to Sue for her willingness to take it on!





DIARY DATES



How Does God Guide Us: a one-off follow-up session to Alpha. Monday April 8th at 7 pm. See page 15 for more details.

Prayers for Ukraine: Thursday April 11th and 25th, both at 6.30 pm in church

Focussed Prayer as part of Richard Knot's Prayer Pilgrimage: April 18th, between 10 - 10.40 am, at our Church (see article on Pg.10)

Groby URC Church Meeting: Tuesday April 23rd at 7.30 pm. Please speak to our Minister Paul, or secretary Sue, if you have any agenda items you would like to see included.

West Leicester Area Churches Quiet Day: Thursday April 25th at Launde Abbey, to be led by Mike Playdon.
See page 5 for all the info. and how to join the day!

Rock Solid: Every alternate Fridays (term-time), 7.30 - 9 pm at our church. For Year 5 - 11 children.

Messy Monday's: every Monday (term-time) 3.15 - 4.15 pm at Ratby Parish church

Save the dates:

Saturday June 1st - URC Synod Picnic at Everards Meadows
Saturday June 22nd afternoon - West Leicester Area Churches
social at Christ Church URC

More details on both events to follow!

Christ Church now have their own church website and the Christ Church Communicator can be found here. https://christchurch-urc.org/

May 2024 issue

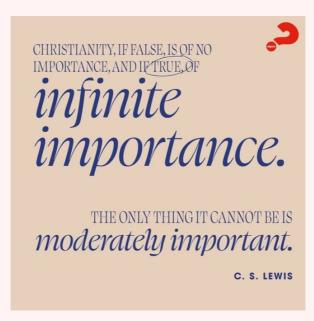
The deadline for the May issue of Contact is SAT 20th April 2024 but happy to accept articles sooner if prepared and ready to go!

Please submit to magazine@grobyurc.com or to Kathy (5 Hawthorn Rise, Groby) Preferred via email.

Print or Hard Copy of Contact?

Contact magazine is published in print and on the church website, grobyurc.com. If you would like to be added or removed from the monthly hyperlink email list, please let Kathy know at the magazine email address magazine@grobyurc.com

If you receive a paper copy and no longer wish to, please let us know through the magazine email address.



Groby United Reformed Church member: Evangelical Alliance UK La family friendly Church' www.grobyurc.com, LE6 0FE



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YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORKER: Louise Brown.

07450 688217 / youthworkergroby@gmail.com

CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS: Jane Hinds 07530 957022 / janesnips@hotmail.com

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Our Sunday morning services start at 10 am and are recorded. A link to the recording can be found on our website and Facebook page (see page 2 for details of this.) Our worship includes monthly Holy Communion

The church building has a loop hearing system, wheelchair access, a toilet for the disabled & baby nappy changing facilities.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Mon: Noah's Ark parent & toddler group - 9.30-11.30 (term time)

Thurs: 'Fair Cuppa'* at Groby village Hall-10.30-12 am

Fri: CatCH* parent & toddler group-9.30 - 11 am (term time)

Fri. (alternate Fridays during term time) 7.30 pm Rock Solid

Games and Grub for children in Years 5 - 11.

Sat:Tasters* Coffee, hot cobs. Kids activities -10-12am

There are also regular Homegroups running throughout the week.

Our Secretarial Contact has more information.

* These activities are run jointly with St Philip & St James as part of 'Churches Together in Groby'.