



St HELEN'S CHURCH
ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

Sunday 25th October 2026

Last after Trinity

Serving at the altar

We know from the Hebrew Bible that in the Tabernacle they carried with them in the desert, and later in the Temple at Jerusalem, the Jews maintained an inner sanctuary known as the Holy of Holies, the Most Holy Place. To enter the Holy of Holies was to come into the presence of God, yet only the High Priest of Israel was allowed to enter, and even he only once a year to offer the blood of animal sacrifices at Yom Kippur. It must have been a place of great wonder and mystery.

Likewise, our Christian faith today is full of great wonder and mystery. In fact, I suspect we are no closer to comprehending the glory of God than those ancient high priests. But while the mystery of faith still remains great, the rituals that support us in that faith have thankfully become more inclusive and accessible.

At the Eucharist, the ritual re-enactment of Christ's perfect sacrifice, priests do not retreat to an inner sanctuary unseen by the congregation, nor any longer perform their duties with their backs to the people, their actions and liturgical gestures hidden from public view. I'd suggest that our modern liturgy attempts to make a distinction between divine *mystery* (to be acknowledged and embraced) and ritual *secrecy* (to be treated cautiously lest it divides and excludes). How successful do you think this attempt has been? Do you feel included in all aspects of our common worship?

For those of you who feel that the rituals conducted around the altar on a Sunday morning are still a bit opaque, or who would like to have more involvement in the sacrament at the heart of our faith, please consider volunteering to serve at the altar. No prior experience or knowledge is required, and new servers are always supported by more experienced hands. To those who answer this call, I hope you'll find very little by way of secrecy, and I pray you'll find great wonder and mystery.

Rob Bough, Head Server

WELCOME to all joining us this Sunday at St Helen's. **10.30am** *Sung Eucharist*, **5.30pm** *Service for Healing & Wholeness*. The 10.30am service at St Helen's can be accessed on Zoom from 10.15am on: Meeting ID: 865 5159 6523; Passcode: 626891

FOR TODAY'S SERVICE: Celebrant - The Revd Ruth Pyke

Readings: Leviticus 19.1-2, 15-18; 1 Thessalonians 2.1-8; Matthew 22.34-end.

Service Setting: Rutter

Hymns

Processional: 474 Immortal, invisible

Gradual: 426 Firmly I believe and truly

Offertory: 393 Brother, sister, let me serve you

Anthem: Nardone, *I give you a new commandment*

Post communion: 448 God of grace and God of glory

Collect:

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: help us so to hear them, to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word, we may embrace and for ever hold fast the hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

Psalm 1

Response: The Lord cares for the way of the righteous.

Blessèd is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the un-godly:
nor followed the way of sinners, nor taken his seat amongst the scornful.
But his delight is in the law of the Lord:
and on that law will he ponder day and night. **Response**

He is like a tree planted beside streams of water:
that yields fruit in due season.
Its leaves also shall not wither:
and look, whatever he does, it shall prosper. **Response**

For prayer:

- For all those struggling with addiction, their family and friends and all those who support them
- As the weather turns colder and wetter, for the homeless and those for whom home is not a place of safety and refuge
- For world leaders to show humility and wisdom
- For those in this parish and elsewhere preparing for confirmation.

Please pray for the residents Fisherman's Wharf, Fitchett Yard, Fitzharry's Road, Foxcombe Court

For health, consolation & wellbeing: Annelise Dennis, Vanessa Madden, Ann and Ron Moss, Anne Smithson, Sarah Stevens, Katie Stuart, Alli

Intercessory prayer requests to clairembolton@googlemail.com.

5.30 PM Service for Healing & Wholeness

Readings: Psalm 119.89-104

Hymn: 291 Come Dearest Lord

Hymn: 394 Christ for the world we sing

Final hymn: 14 Glory to thee, my God, this night

NEXT SUNDAY'S SERVICE: Celebrant - The Revd Dr Jen Brown

10.30am *Sung Eucharist & Welcome*, **Readings:** 1 John 3.1-3; Matthew 5.1-2

5.30pm *All Souls Service*, **Readings:** 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18; John 6.35-40

The Window: The **October** edition of the Parish Magazine is now available:
https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_window.php .B&W copies available in church.

CiA News: The **October** issue of CiA News is available to download from:
https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html . Copies also in church.

PATHWAYS: Printed copies of the Summer 2026 issue are available in church.

REGULAR SERVICES AND THE COMING WEEK AT ST HELEN'S

ON WEEKDAYS	9.10am Morning Prayer
ON MONDAY	9.30-11.00am Half term: NO Baby and Toddler Group
ON TUESDAY	2.00pm <i>Desiring Life</i> in the lounge 5.00-8.30pm <i>Private Booking (Yellow Submarine)</i> in the hall 7.30pm <i>DCC Standing Committee</i> in the lounge
ON WEDNESDAY	10.30am Holy Communion 5.15-8.00pm <i>Beavers & Cubs</i> in the hall 7.30-8.30pm <i>Confirmation Preparation</i> in the lounge
ON THURSDAY	6.15-8.00pm <i>Private Booking (Life Drawing)</i> in the hall
ON FRIDAY	4.00-6.00pm <i>Young Bell Ringers Practice</i> in the tower 5.30-6.00pm <i>Quest choir practice</i> in the church 6.00-7.00pm <i>Adult choir practice</i> in the church
ON SATURDAY	
ON SUNDAY	10.30am Sung Eucharist 5.30m All Souls Service 5.30pm Taizé (2nd Sunday) 5.30pm Choral Evensong (3rd Sunday) 5.30pm Service for Healing & Wholeness (4th Sunday) 7.00-8.00pm <i>Private Booking (Support Group)</i> in the hall 7.30-9.00pm <i>Private Booking (Handbells)</i> in the lounge <i>The 8am Sunday Holy Communion (1662) service is held at St NICOLAS Church</i>

PROGRAMMES & EVENTS: OCTOBER 2026

Half Term fun at Abingdon Library: Visit abingdon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk for further information, to keep the little ones happy during half term

Abingdon Artists Autumn Exhibition, Tuesday 27th October - Saturday 31st October 10.00am – 4.30pm at Christchurch Barn, Northcourt Road, Abingdon, OX14 1PL. Free entry and affordable art for sale.

Silent Reflections, Tuesday 27th October 7.30pm at St Michael's Church. Sue Scott will provide material for our reflections. We meet initially in the church room. Parking permits are available for use in Park Road.

Confirmation preparation, Wednesday 28th October 7.30pm in the lounge.

PROGRAMMES & EVENTS: NOVEMBER 2026

Parish Service for All Souls', Sunday 1st November 5.30pm at St Helen's Church.
Please add the name(s) of anyone you would like to have remembered to the lists available in each church. The lists are available until 25th October. (See notice).

Sung Requiem Mass for All Souls, Monday 2nd November 7.30pm at St Michael's.

Mother's Union Meeting, Tuesday 3rd November 10.00am in the hall.

Prayers & Bears, Tuesday 3rd November 11.00am at St Michael's, suitable for young children (including babies/toddlers).

Confirmation preparation, Wednesday 4th November 7.30pm in the lounge.

Moving into Stillness, Thursday 5th November 9.45–10.45am at St Michael's.

Circle dancing to Taizé chants with silent interludes followed by

Circle Dance, 11.00am regular circle dancing session. Elizabeth Mitchell will be the teacher. No prior experience/partner needed. Tea and coffee will be provided between the two sessions. Parking permits are available for use in Park Road.

"Music at the Unicorn" folk concert, Thursday 5th November 7.00pm at St Helens. Further details at <https://musicattheunicorn.org.uk/>

ADMS Concert, Saturday 7th November 7.30-9.30pm at St Helen's, with rehearsal from 1.30pm. Come and join the Abingdon & District Musical Society as they celebrate their 80th Anniversary! Eighty years of bringing together singers and musicians is quite a milestone. The programme includes Borodin's Polovtsian Dances, Franck's Symphony in D minor, Shostakovich's Festive Overture and, bringing orchestra and choir together, Elgar's The Music Makers, with Joanna Harries as mezzo-soprano soloist.

Tickets are available at www.wegottickets.com/adms or on the door.

Remembrance Day, Sunday 8th November 10.00am Civic Service at St Helen's;
5.30pm Eucharist at St Helens.

St Michael's Christmas Fair, Saturday 14th November 10am-2pm at St Michael's.

PCC Meeting, Wednesday 18th November 7.30pm at St Nicholas' church.

St Helen's@lunch, Thursday 19th November 12.00noon, at Aston Pottery.

Faith Forum, Sunday 22nd November 12.45 – 1.15pm in the Hall (see notice).

St Helen's Church Jesse Tree Decorating, Tuesday 24th November 10.00am – 12.00pm. Please let the administrator know if you can help decorate the tree!

Silent Reflections, Tuesday 24th November 7.30pm at St Michael's Church.

Mother's Union Service, Thursday 26th November 11.00am in the hall.

St Helen's Christmas Market, Saturday 28th November. Please keep the date free and start collecting things that could be sold. If you are willing to help run a stall, please let Jeanette Thomas (jeanette.thomas@btinternet.com) or Pat Hudson (patricia.a.hudson16@gmail.com) know. *See also church notice.*

Quiet Garden Day, Saturday 28th November 2026 10am - 4pm at Aston Tirrold Centre for Reflection, Spring Lane, Aston Tirrold, OX11 9EJ. Sue Sheppy will lead on the theme *Great Expectations*. Refreshments are provided, but please bring a packed lunch. A donation of £10 would be welcome. To attend it would be helpful to email: atquietgardendays@gmail.com in advance. All are welcome.

Advent Carol Service, Sunday 29th November 5.30pm at St Helen's church, followed by mulled wine & mince pies. All welcome.

DCC Meeting, Monday 30th November 7.30pm in the hall.

SAVE THE DATES - at St Helen's!

AKMA's Ordination Anniversary Mass, Saturday 5th December 1.30pm.

The Revd Naomi Gardom's Licensing, Wednesday 6th January 2027 7.30pm.

Corporate Confirmation Service, Sunday 31st January 2027 10.30am.

ST HELEN'S CHURCH NOTICES

Congratulations! At the recent General Synod elections, Alex Scott from St Michael's has been elected to the House of Laity. Other visitors to the parish on Synod include Ven David Tyler to House of Clergy and Bishop Gavin to the House of Bishops. See the full list at <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/news/meet-our-new-general-synod-representatives.php>

Thank you! To everyone at St Helen's for your generous Harvest donations to Abingdon Foodbank. Harvest donations are more significant than ever to us this year. We have seen a rise in requests for help and a decline in gifts of food this year, both perhaps reflecting the reality of the increasing cost of living. As a result, we have had to spend more on buying food. So, your Harvest gifts are especially welcome!

Faith Forum, Sunday 25th October 12.15pm in the parish hall. Our speaker will be Hannah Mann, Environment Programme Manager for the Oxford Diocese. She will be speaking on 'Creation Care as Act of Praise'. A buffet lunch will be served from 12.15pm. with the talk beginning at 12.45pm.

The meeting can be accessed on Zoom: Meeting ID: 856 4563 3324; Passcode: 656494 <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85645633324?pwd=LYbJpGrcqpTWk1ZfNj9VRq4ILHZMda.1>

Parish Service for All Souls': The parish service of Commemoration of the Departed for All Souls' Day will be held at **St Helen's on Sunday 1st November at 5.30pm**. Please add the name(s) of anyone you would like to have remembered to the lists available in each church. The lists are available until 25th October

St Helen's 2027 calendar: Please support your church by buying one for your friends & family. Mary Anderson will sell them after every 10.30 service for £9.75.

Your Church needs you!

We are fortunate to be part of a very welcoming and active church, highlighted in the events and notices above - but we need your help to deliver this!

HOSPITALITY

If you can help at any of the events listed in the calendar, please do let the Administrator know. There will be sign-up sheets at the back of the church soon.

EVENTS STEWARDING

Between 30th November and 11th December, eight different school events are taking place in St Helen's. These include rehearsals, and services/concerts in the afternoon or evening. This is a great opportunity to learn how to steward an event to help in the future. If you could offer help on one or more occasions, please let the Administrator know or speak to one of the wardens.

CHRISTMAS MARKET NOTICE

We need brand-new goods, pre-loved goods, home baking, books, jigsaws, jewellery, tombola prizes, anything that will sell please. Donations gratefully received **in St Helen's Church on Thursday 26th November 10.00am-12.00noon** and **in the Parish Hall on Friday 27th November 10.00am-12.00noon**. Alternatively, see Pat or Jeanette to make other arrangements.

Please can you volunteer to help set up on Friday 27th November from 3.00pm?

There will be a break while the choir rehearse during which we will enjoy soup and sandwiches together, then continue to finish.

Thank you *Pat Hudson & Jeanette Thomas*

**With such a busy time ahead, please leave the church servery clean and tidy, treating it as you would your own home. Please also report anything you find missing, or unacceptable to the administrator. Thank you*.*

CONTACT US

Team Rector	The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown rector@abingdonparish.org.uk
Team Vicar	(To join the parish after Christmas)
Associate Priest	The Revd Dr A. K. M. Adam (AKMA) akma@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk
Wardens	Ms Margaret Horton and Mr David Pope
Director of Music	Dr Peter Foster
Assistant Organist	Mr Andrew Shouler
Parish Administrator	Mrs Kate Burland
Caretaker	Mr Robin Day
Parish Safeguarding	Mrs Pat Hudson safeguarding@abingdonparish.org.uk
St Helen's Safeguarding	Mr Emmanuel Chukwuma

The **Parish Office** is open Monday – Thursday, 10.00 am to 1.00 pm (closed on Fridays).

Phone: 01235 520144. Checked on Fridays.

E-mail: administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk; Website abingdonparish.org.uk/StH

A copy of this Newsletter is posted on our website.