



St HELEN'S CHURCH
ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

Sunday 5th July 2026

Trinity 5/St Thomas

Doubting? Don't be too sure.

I have a real soft spot for St Thomas the Apostle, whose day we are celebrating today (though it was really on Friday the 3rd). We know him as 'Doubting Thomas', and if you've ever heard me preach about him, you know I think that's a bit unfair. I don't think that Thomas lacked faith. He simply wanted some evidence, something more than just hearsay. After all, the other disciples had seen the risen Jesus. Thomas wasn't asking for anything more than they had had, really.

There are many people in the world who, while not hostile to Christianity, aren't able – or aren't ready – to accept all its claims without some evidence, some good arguments in favour. This is what the whole area of Christian Apologetics is about. 'Apologetics' seems a strange sort of word in our day, as 'apology' is now most commonly used to mean 'sorry'. Historically, however, an apology was a defence, through rational argument, of a position. Christian apologetics, therefore, is the presentation of rational arguments for the claims that Christians make about the faith. In other words, it is the presentation of evidence for what we believe.

Thomas is a disciple with whom many of us can relate – having questions, wanting answers and evidence. Seeking evidence isn't the same as lacking faith, and it doesn't make someone a 'bad Christian'. Thomas was an apostle, a close companion of Jesus and one whom Jesus sent to spread his good news, yet even he had his moment of, yes, we'll call it doubt. Jesus didn't reject him. He gave him the evidence he needed to strengthen his faith. Like Thomas, we can admit when we are unsure, when we have questions. That's not a failure. Just as it makes Thomas more relatable for us, it can make us more relatable to those we encounter who might be wondering who Jesus is and what Christianity is all about.

The Revd Dr Jen Brown, Rector

WELCOME to St Helen's this Sunday. 10.30am *Sung Eucharist (First Sunday) with Baptism*. The 10.30am service at St Helen's today can be accessed on Zoom from 10.15am on: Meeting ID: 865 5159 6523; Passcode: 626891.

FOR TODAY'S SERVICE

Readings: Habakkuk 2.1-4; Ephesians 2.19-end; John 20.24-29

Service Setting: Aston

Hymns:

Processional: 250 All creatures of our God and King

Gradual: 469 I heard the voice of Jesus say

Offertory: 96 Jesu, lover of my soul

Anthem: Foster, Here O my Lord

Post communion: 309 Let all mortal flesh keep silence

Collect: Almighty and eternal God, who, for the firmer foundation of our faith, allowed your holy apostle Thomas to doubt the resurrection of your Son till word and sight convinced him; grant to us, who have not seen, that we also may believe and so confess Christ as our Lord and our God; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE COMING WEEK AT ST HELEN'S

ON WEEKDAYS 9.10am Morning Prayer

ON MONDAY 9.30–11.00am *Babies & Toddlers* in the hall

1.45–3.45pm *Volunteer Group* in the office

ON TUESDAY 10.00–12.00 noon *Mothers' Union* in the Centre Hall

5.00–8.30pm *Private booking* in the hall

7.30pm–9.00pm *Bell ringing*

ON WEDNESDAY 10.30am Holy Communion

3.30–5.00pm *Cursillo meeting* in the lounge

5.15–6.15pm *Beavers* 6.30–8.00pm *Cubs* in the hall

ON THURSDAY 6.15–8.00pm *Private booking* in the hall

7.00–9.00pm *AAAH Book Launch* in the church

ON FRIDAY 5.00pm *Young Ringers Practice* in the church

5.30pm *Choir Practice* in the church

ON SATURDAY 9.00–11.00am *Bell ringing (silent)* in the tower

ON SUNDAY 10.30am Sung Eucharist

5:30pm Taizé service

PROGRAMMES, EVENTS & NOTICES

Abingdon Mothers' Union, Tuesday 7th July 10.30am in the Parish Centre. Speaker: Maureen Weston - Why I joined Mothers' Union. Plus: Discussion, Quizzes, Bring & Buy.

Moving into Stillness, Thursday 9th July 9.45-10.45am at St Michael's Church. Circle dancing to Taizé chants with silent interludes, followed by the regular circle dancing session at **11 am**. Elizabeth Mitchell will be the teacher. No prior experience/partner needed. Refreshments be provided. Parking permits are available for use in Park Road.
NB Irregular date for July; there will be no circle dancing of any kind in August.

AAAHS Book Launch, Thursday 9th July 7.00pm at St Helen's church. Roger Thomas's new book, *England's Oldest Town? The Archaeology of Abingdon* will be for sale after a short talk & refreshments.

The Friends of St Helen's (FOSH) AGM, Saturday 1st August 2.30-4.30pm at St Helen's church. The AGM will be followed by a delicious cream tea in the south aisle, cost £5. *If you are not currently a Friend, do come along to find out more about the Society.*

Garden Party to celebrate 150 years of Mothers' Union, Abingdon Branch, Tuesday 4th August 3.00-5.00pm at 11 Thurston Close, OX14 5RD. Entry £5 for tea, scone and cake.

Heritage Weekend, Saturday 19th September 10.00-4.00pm in St Helen's. The theme this year is 'Working roles, past and present'. Volunteers needed to help welcome visitors, bake and serve refreshments. Please contact Pat Hudson 07787120045 if you can help.

We are starting a new **House Group for Bible Study**. We expect to meet fortnightly during the day. If this interests you, please talk to Cathy Green or Norman Gee.

Open Church Stewarding. If you could do this to support the outreach of St Helen's church, please talk to Elizabeth Simpson, or email on simpsonem123@gmail.com.

Please send contributions or ideas for the July edition of the Parish Magazine by the end of July 5th to candle@abingdonparish.org.uk. We hope to publish it on July 12th.

Contributions are needed for the Christian Forum column in Round & About Abingdon for August onwards. Please send to Debra McKnight dhmcknight@aol.com

Confirmation and admission to Holy Communion: This notice is to ask that if you or your child would be interested in confirmation, please speak to Revd Jen or Fr AKMA so that we can begin to plan confirmation classes. We can also offer preparation for admission to Holy Communion if there are any children who would like to begin receiving Holy Communion prior to confirmation.

Intercessory prayer requests to clairembolton@googlemail.com.

For prayer

- Those who are seeking a relationship with God, those who come with questions, and those who doubt.
- Those who engage in apologetics and help others understand the Christian faith.
- For all who work in the sciences and all who seek truth.

Please pray for the residents of Baillie Close, Baker Road, Banbury Court, Barton Lane.

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

Next week's readings: Isaiah 55.10-13; Romans 8.1-11; Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23

Team Rector	The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown rector@abingdonparish.org.uk
Team Vicar	Vacant
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, morning and afternoon.

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

A copy of this Newsletter is posted on our website.