



St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

4th February 2024
Candlemas / 2nd Sunday before Lent

Regular Service Times

Sundays: Sung Mass, 9.30 am
Tuesdays Said Mass, 12.30 pm
Tuesdays: Silent Reflections, last Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm (except December)
Thursdays: Moving into Stillness, Taizé circle dancing with silent interludes, usually first Thursday of the month, 9.45 am to 10.45 am.

Contacts

Team Rector: The Revd Dr Charles Miller (520144)
Team Vicar: The Revd Paul Smith (534654)
e-mail: paul315smith@btinternet.com

Churchwardens: Miss Joyce Kelly (533555)
(07833 535768)
e-mail: joyceekelly@btinternet.com
Mrs Louise Heffernan (01235 525412)
(07779 650968)
e-mail: lheff@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk

Bookings*: Miss Joyce Kelly (as above)

Parish Office: The Parish Centre Office is normally open from Monday to Thursday, **10 am to 1 pm.**

Administrator: During normal working hours phone or leave a message on:
Telephone (520144) *or*
Mobile (07395 943957)
e-mail: administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk

Web site: <http://www.stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk>

If you would like to receive this pew leaflet electronically, please email pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk with the subject line SUBSCRIBE.

Items for inclusion in the next pew leaflet should be sent to David Duce by midday on Tuesday.
Telephone 522591
pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk

[*for Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals please contact the Parish Office]

Dear Friends

As we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, we mark liturgically the end of the Christmas season. We move into Ordinary Time but this is particularly short with Lent beginning early this year on Wednesday 14 February.

At the end of the Mass this morning we will light candles and be reminded that like Simeon and Anna, here in this temple, we too have greeted the Light of Christ, in the child Jesus, the promised Messiah. During our concluding rite we shall be reminded not to forsake that light. You will recall that at baptism each candidate receives their baptismal candle with the words: 'Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father'. This is not a 'one-off' expectation, but it is lifelong.

We come near to the font too and say: **Help us, who are marked with the cross, to share the Lord's death and resurrection.**

On Ash Wednesday, (14 February) we shall be invited to receive a sign of the cross in ash on our foreheads – another 'marking' of the cross underlining our mortality but also our constant dependence on God.

The rite raises the 'turning point' from the birth of Jesus and towards his passion (and towards his death): **Help us, for whom Lent is near, to enter deeply into the Easter mystery.** And with Lent being nearer than usual this time round, that shift may feel like it has come suddenly. That shift may be good for us as it reminds of our discipleship which calls for an ongoing deepening of our faith

With this in mind, I draw your attention to the notice concerning Faith Forum meeting at 12.45 for 13.00 in the Parish Centre today. This is to offer an opportunity to everyone throughout the parish to attend. This new time will be for this month *only and* then for the next three months it will be at 12.30 for 12.45 It begins with a simple, buffet lunch, followed by a talk and the whole session lasts an hour. During this season the subject will be 'sacraments', which is a chance for us to understand more about the different sacraments of the church. This afternoon our new Associate Priest, Fr Akma, begins the series asking the question '**What is a sacrament?**' With his strong teaching gifts, I am sure Fr Akma, will bring a very enriching talk. I do encourage you to support this and to come along to hear and enjoy what he has to say.

With love and prayers

Fr Paul

SANCTUARY LAMPS, TABERNACLE LAMP, CANDLES AND SPONSORSHIP The feast of Candlemas falls on 2 February, though it will be celebrated in the parish this Sunday, **4 February**. So this is not a bad time to think about church candles and lamps. Long, long ago, Candlemas "was marked by one of the most elaborate processions of the liturgical year, when every parishioner was obliged to join in, carrying a blessed candle, which was offered, together with a penny, to the priest at Mass... [This] took place before the parish Mass, and, in addition to the candles offered to the priest, many others were blessed, including the great Paschal Candle... The people then processed round the church carrying lighted candles, and the Nunc Dimittis was sung." [Source: Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*.]

Sponsorship There is a list on the Notice Board at the back of church (by the pillar near the welcome table) for anyone to sign or tick who wishes to sponsor the lighting of a lamp during next year in memory of a loved one or to commemorate another occasion. Donations of £5 are invited, to be given to one of the Church Wardens, Joyce or Louise. Although we now no longer light the three lamps in the Sanctuary, the lamp by the tabernacle burns continuously during the week and, of course, the altar candles are lit for the Sunday and Tuesday Masses and other festivals. Sponsorship money is now put towards the cost of the tabernacle lamp, the burning of which highlights the continuing presence of Christ in our midst and towards the costs of other church candles.

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT ST HELEN'S CHURCH

St Helen's will live-stream their 10.30 am Eucharist through Zoom. The Zoom link is available from the Parish Administrator. A recording of the sermon (audio and video) will be made available after the service on the St Helen's web site (https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StH/StH_publications.html).

MORNING PRAYER is normally held at 9.10 am on weekdays at St Helen's Church.

FAITH FORUM Our spring Faith Forum series will begin on **Sunday 4 February** in the Parish Centre. The focus of the spring Faith Forum talks will be the sacraments, and our first talk will be given by our new Associate Priest, Revd Dr Andrew 'AKMA' Adam, who will speak on 'what is a sacrament (and how many are there)?'. **Please note** that for this series Faith Forum will be held **after the 10.30 service at St Helen's**. As Fr Paul wrote above, this will be at 12:45 for 13:00 in the Parish Centre. We hope this will make it easier for those attending services at St Michael's and St Nicolas' to take part. The talk will also be accessible via Zoom.

CROWN SINGERS Last Saturday we were treated to a splendid concert by The Crown Singers. Very many thanks to Lottie for bringing her choir to entertain us so wonderfully. Thanks to all who helped make it happen especially Lottie

and Peter and Nicola and Ming and all the cake bakers. The amount raised on the day was £828 which will be shared equally between the choir and the church.

NEW DAYLIGHT BOOKS It is time to re-subscribe for the year for these books of daily readings, comment and prayer which are edited by Gordon Giles and published by the Bible Reading Fellowship. If you would like them, please get in touch with Brenda on 01235 522881 or speak to Eileen by **Sunday 4 February** as orders have to be placed by 9 February. The cost is £14.97 for the year. The prices increase if less than 5 copies are ordered. *Brenda*

BISHOP OLIVIA The latest issue of diocesan eNews contains the announcement that Olivia, Bishop of Reading is to retire on 30 September, after 5 years of dedicated service.

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/bishop-olivia-announces-her-retirement.php>

LET'S TALK! I'd like to invite you to meet me, the director, and the rest of the team for the Abingdon Passion Play 2024 at an open evening at the Trinity Conduit Centre, Abingdon, OX14 1DB, on **Sunday 4 February**, commencing at **7.45 pm**. Find out how you can get involved in next Summer's fabulous community event - as a performer, backstage, in makeup, props, costumes and front of house or as a steward: We still need more actors. We need lots of people to make this a successful venture, communicating God's message to the people of Abingdon. For catering purposes, please let me know as soon as possible if you are coming on 4 February, if bringing others, how many people will be in your party. [*The Producer asked for replies by 10 January if possible, but I wasn't aware of this item in time for the 8 January pew leaflet. Ed.*] The Abingdon Passion Play will take place in the Abbey Gardens on 22 June 2024. Watch out for more publicity over the coming months.

Ralph Westby Producer/Director APP 2024 lowbasse1@gmail.com

ABINGDON MOTHERS' UNION will meet on Tuesday, **6 February at 10.30 am** in St. Helen's Parish Centre for their AGM. There will also be the opportunity for an informal chat over a cup of coffee. Non members welcome – come and hear what we are about and meet our members.

AGNOSTICS ANONYMOUS At the next open discussion meeting, John Barton will give a talk on the question "Do you have to believe everything in the Bible to be a Christian?" followed by a chance for questions and discussion. Everyone welcome. **Tuesday 6 February, 6-7.30pm** in the Parish Centre.

NEW WORSHIP AND MUSIC WEBINARS Part of the new series of free open access talks by the Institute of Sacred Music Oxford at St Stephen's House, Oxford, and in association with the Royal School of Church Music. **Tuesday evenings, 6 to 27 February**, 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, either in person or via Zoom. For further information and booking details, see <https://ismo.ssho.org.uk/events/>. The first session in the series is *Widening Participation in Sacred Music* by Mr Caius Lee (Direct of College Music, Worcester College, Oxford).

COMPANIONS ON THE WAY: A RETREAT IN PREPARATION FOR LENT An on-line retreat "offering a morning of worship and reflection. Speakers include Jay Hulme, Rachel Mann, Rob Marshall and Nick Papadopoulos. Opening and closing worship with Richard Carter and the St Martin's Voices. In association with Canterbury Press." Tickets cost £15, though there is a discount rate for subscribers to The Church Times and a group rate, £25, for groups of up to 10 people to watch the event together. For more details and booking see <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/companions-on-the-way-a-retreat-in-preparation-for-lent>

DIOCESAN CARE FOR CREATION NEWSLETTER The January issue is now available on-line, see <https://mailchi.mp/oxford.anglican.org/care-for-creation-january-2024>

CiA NEWS A printed copy of the January issue is on display on the notice board by the Welcome desk. It is also available to download from <https://www.church-in-abingdon.org.uk/#ReportsandNewsletters>

A CANDLE IN THE WINDOW The first edition in 2024 of the Parish Magazine will be available to download by Sunday 4 February from https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_window.php. Articles, events, pictures, poems, a puzzle and even a cartoon. *Rob Rutherford*

HEATING AND GAS BILL During the week 20 to 27 January (10.00 am), the maximum temperature recorded on the data logger on the pillar by the crossing (North side) was 16.2°C and the minimum 10.1°C. The maximum was recorded on Thursday evening at 20.43, after the Dedication Festival. Last week was unusual in that the Dedication Festival was on Thursday evening and the heating was then turned on early for the Crown Singers event on Saturday. During the previous week the maximum temperature recorded on the data logger on the pillar by the crossing (North side) was 13.7°C and the minimum 8.4°C.

The gas bill for December has now been received, £872.63. The new daily charge is £5.46 and the cost per kWh is 4.957p. The daily charge is more than under the old contract (£2.22) but the cost per kWh is substantially less (20.2 p). As is usual when we change suppliers, the wrong VAT rate has been applied (20% rather than 5%) and a Climate Change Levy has been added when the charge should have been zero. The estimated gas usage for December was less than we actually used. Taking these corrections into account, we should be paying £772.77.

Comparison with this period last year is difficult because of the range of factors that have changed, not least external temperatures. However, one easy comparison is to work out what the gas used in December would have

cost at the old prices. The answer is £2,497.12, i.e. under the new contract there is a saving of £1,724.35, which can be classed as good news. However, complacency should be avoided. We will hopefully use less gas this year than last (especially with the revised pattern of services), but if we used the same amount, the total bill for the year would be around £5,900, which is still a very substantial sum of money.

RETREATS

Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage, Retreats and Quiet Days calendar.

<https://csmv.co.uk/calendar-of-retreats/> The next conducted retreat is from Friday 16 to Sunday 18 February at St Mary's Convent, entitled *Care for Creation*.

Douai Abbey Spring/Summer Programme Come to Douai Abbey for a day or weekend of peaceful quiet and join the Benedictine community at their prayer and in their lovely surroundings. A series of workshops, reflections and retreats have been prepared for spring and summer.

https://mcusercontent.com/14501d5eebc3e98fa3015a290/files/68bd8063-03e7-e42c-58ff-a3916004481d/2024_Programme_Douai_Abbey.pdf

Community of St Clare, Freeland Drop-in Quiet Days The next Quiet Day is on **Saturday 18 March**, led by The Revd Philip Nixon. For more details and further dates see the *Drop-in Quiet Days* link at <http://www.oscfreeland.co.uk/>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

World Day of Prayer: The service this year will be held on **Friday 1 March** at 4 pm in *All Saints' Methodist Church in Appleford Drive, Abingdon*. The material has been prepared for us by the Christian women of Palestine under the title *I beg you, bear with one another in love*. All are welcome; light refreshments will be served after the service.

Come and Sing Bach St John Passion Saturday 30 March at Christ Church Northcourt Rd, OX14 1PL. Singing Workshop Tickets £20. Start time 10.30 am, registration from 10 am. Concert from 5 pm – 7 pm, tickets £12.

Please see website for tickets and further information

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/abingdonpassionplay1/1137048>

Worship

This Week The celebrants and preachers on Sundays over coming weeks are: 4 February, Fr Paul; 11 February, Fr Paul / Mrs Beryl Clements; 18 February Fr Paul; 25 February Fr Paul / The Revd Professor John Barton.

Sunday is the 2nd Sunday before Lent, though in the parish we will be keeping the festival of Candlemas (Presentation of Christ in the Temple) today.

There are two commemorations in the calendar this week: Tuesday: Martyrs of Japan, 1597 and Saturday: Scholastica, abbess, c. 543.

Lent Books Ash Wednesday falls on 14 February this year, so there is only one more Sunday (the Sunday next before Lent) before the start of Lent. So perhaps now is a good time to think about reading matter for Lent. *The Church Times* has reviews of a set of Lent books available on-line

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2024/19-january/books-arts/book-reviews/lent-books-round-up>

Church House Bookshop has a similar list. The two books below are chosen just to give a flavour of the material on offer.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2024 is *Tarry Awhile: Wisdom from Black Spirituality for People of Faith*, by Selina Stone (SPCK).

The broadcaster and *Thought for the Day* presenter, Rob Marshall, is the author of *Transfiguration – 50 Pilgrim Steps*, 50 reflections from Ash Wednesday to Easter and beyond, inspired in part by the gospel reading for the Sunday next before Lent, Mark's account of the Transfiguration.

Presentation of Christ in the Temple The festival we celebrate on Sunday has three commonly used titles, Candlemas, The Presentation of Christ in the Temple and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the Orthodox Church it is also called The Meeting of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The theme of candles has been mentioned earlier in this pew leaflet. From Hugh Wybrew's book *Orthodox Feasts of Christ and Mary*:

The account in Luke's gospel (2.22-38), describes the scene when the time came for "their purification, according to the law of Moses, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord" and offered a sacrifice of two turtle doves, or two young pigeons. [Leviticus 12.6-8 stipulates a lamb and a pigeon or turtle dove, or "if she cannot afford a sheep, then two turtle doves or young pigeons."] Luke presents the episode though in the light of subsequent Christian faith and presents Jesus as the awaited "light for revelation to the Gentiles." Simeon and Anna, in welcoming Jesus welcome the fulfilment of Israel's hopes, and so, in Luke's narrative, symbolise the transition from the first covenant to the new, to whose beginning they bear witness. ... The orthodox icon for the feast usually depicts Mary and Joseph advancing with the child, Joseph carrying two doves. Simeon has his hands covered with a cloth to receive the child, while Christ blesses Simeon. The prophet, Anna, is close by, sometimes holding a scroll with the words "This child has created heaven and earth."

The hymns for this feast in the Orthodox Church are based on Luke's narrative.

The Ancient of Days
 becomes for me a child;
 the most pure God
 accepts purification,
 to confirm the reality
 of the humanity
 he took of the Virgin.
 Initiated into these mysteries,
 Simeon recognised him as God
 appearing in the flesh.
 As Life he greeted him,
 and with gladness
 cried out in old age:
 Release me;
 for I have seen you,
 the Life of all.

Hugh Wybrew goes on to write:

... the Messiah has come: we have seen God's salvation in Jesus Christ. Yet we recognise too that the fulfilment of his saving work is for the future, even if its first-fruits are with us now. Messiah has come in humility, but he will come in glory. So we can see in Simeon and Anna types of ourselves. Like them, we are to be ready and waiting for Christ to come. Like them, we have already received the gift of the Spirit, enabling us to perceive him when he does come. ... So we set ourselves, through prayer, worship, and our endeavour to live according to the commandments of love, to become increasingly sensitive to his coming, and as we grow in our ability to receive him, his life in us is strengthened, and God's salvation is seen more clearly.

Violence in Israel and Gaza This prayer is from the Church in Wales.

God of peace, be with all those who live in fear and danger. Heal those wounded by hate and conflict. Teach us to love our enemies and live together with understanding and compassion. Amen.

Ukraine We are encouraged by Fr Paul to light a candle by the reserved sacrament and pray the prayer for Ukraine from Archbishops Justin and Stephen. The prayer, which can be used at any time, is reproduced below.

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace, for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

Please pray for:

- Steven and Gavin our bishops, Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury;
- King Charles, and Queen Camilla, and members of the Royal Family;
- the peace of the world, especially in the Middle East and Ukraine;
- those who live locally with family members living in Gaza, and for the family of Layla Moran our member of parliament;
- the care of creation and all that God has given us;
- one another as we look towards Lent and meditating on the Our Lord's suffering and death;
- our parish and people;
- those preparing for baptism, especially for Lucas and Lachan, to be baptised at St Michael's on 4 February and for their parents and godparents;
- the suffering, the recently departed, and all whose year's mind falls at this time;
- people living in Yewtree Mews and Ypres Way.

Eucharistic Lectionary

Sunday Candlemas	Malachi 3.1-5	Ps 24.7-end	Hebrews 2.14-end	Luke 2.22-40
Mon	1 Kings 8.1-7, 9-13	Ps 132.1-9		Mark 6.53-end
Tues	1 Kings 8.22-23, 27-30	Ps 84.1-10		Mark 7.1-13

Wed	1 Kings 10.1-10	Ps 37.3-6, 30-32		Mark 7.14-23
Thur	1 Kings 11.4-13	Ps 106.3, 35-41		Mark 7.24-30
Fri	1 Kings 11.29-32; 12.19	Ps 81.8-14		Mark 7.31-end
Sat	1 Kings 12.26-32; 13.33-end	Ps 106.6-7, 20-23		Mark 8.1-10

Collect (Candlemas)

Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty, whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh: grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, ...

Post Communion (Candlemas)

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna, who lived to welcome the Messiah: may we, who have received these gifts beyond words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes to bring us to eternal life; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Collect (2nd Sunday before Lent)

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, ...

Some On-line Resources for Worship

A Church Near You Live Streamed events

https://www.achurchnearyou.com/live-stream/?tags=Live_stream&diocese=27

Parish Communications and Links

http://www.abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html

St Michael's Prayer and Worship resources page

https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StM/StM_worship_resources.html

Oxford Cathedral: Livestream events will appear on the cathedral's YouTube channel, see

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqz9I9-LbZJAPGtje0gQbbg>

The University Church of St Mary the Virgin (Oxford) live stream services on YouTube, see

<https://www.youtube.com/c/UniversityChurch/featured>

Community of the Resurrection: live streaming and recordings of the community's daily round of prayer and praise

<https://www.facebook.com/Join-with-us-103095121647089>. Details of services can be found at the facebook page and also at the Community web site, <https://mirfield.org.uk/live-streaming/>. On Sundays Mass starts around 8.10 am, after Matins at 7.30 am.

Walsingham In addition to the daily live-streaming of Shrine Prayers at 6 pm (5pm on Saturdays). the Sunday Mass is live-streamed (usually at 7.30 am, but check the web site).

<https://www.walsinghamanglican.org.uk/whatson-2/livestream/>