



# St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

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**1<sup>st</sup> December 2024**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent**

## **Regular Service Times**

**Sundays:** Sung Mass, 9.30 am  
**Tuesdays:** Said Mass, 12.30 pm  
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 Vicar:** The Revd Paul Smith (534654)  
e-mail: [paul315smith@btinternet.com](mailto:paul315smith@btinternet.com)

**Churchwardens:** Miss Joyce Kelly (533555)  
(07833 535768)  
e-mail: [joyceekelly@btinternet.com](mailto:joyceekelly@btinternet.com)  
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**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](mailto: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](mailto:pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk) with the subject line SUBSCRIBE***

***Items for inclusion in the next pew to be sent to David Duce by midday on Tuesday.***

***Telephone 522591***

***[pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk](mailto:pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk)***

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

## The Joy of Waiting....

Dear Friends

Does anyone actually *enjoy* waiting? There are times when we look forward to particular occasions: holidays; visits from friends or family; parties etc. But generally we see waiting as something to be endured and something which is frustrating and time-wasting. It can range from anything from waiting for a bus; to sitting in a hospital waiting room; or waiting on the end of the phone and between recorded 'music' being told: "you are number 26 in the queue, your call is important to us"!

So can there be joy in waiting? The Venerable Rachel Mann in her book for this Advent: '*Do Not Be Afraid: The joy of waiting in a time of fear*' says there can. She tells of a time when she was in a fearful situation stuck on a broken-down open boat in a foreign land, with few passengers for company. The boat owner used reassuring words: "No worries", yet Rachel was paralyzed by fear. As time passed, darkness fell, and trying to relax she looked up at the night sky and saw something she had never seen. She had to ask a fellow passenger what it was. Rachel discovered she was looking at the Milky Way. It was not something she had ever seen and suddenly she found herself distracted by the wonder of this sight. This distraction not only eased her waiting, as well as her fear, but brought her a sense of joy in the midst of that fear.

The days of Advent call us to a faithful watching and waiting. In this season they are central themes, urging us to prepare for God to come among us again in the birth of his Son, Jesus Christ, and for that same Jesus to return in glory. The Advent call is to lay aside the distractions of what may be around us and to give our attention to God. I wonder if like Rachel Mann we may relax into this time of waiting, looking upon it expectantly, intentionally noticing the things that give us joy.

May we be found watching and waiting when the Lord comes and filled with the ultimate joy which goes beyond all thoughts and words.

***With love and every blessing, Father Paul***

**PARISH PROFILE** As part of our preparation to appoint our next Team Rector, we need to produce a Parish Profile. If you might be interested in being part of a small group to write this key document, please would you let a Church Warden know or email our PCC Secretary ([eluned@hallas.org.uk](mailto:eluned@hallas.org.uk)) know – **by 9 December**.

**OPEN MEETING St Michael's Church, Park Road, 26 January 2025, 3-5pm** You are warmly invited to an Open Meeting to offer your thoughts and suggestions about what we are looking for in a new Team Rector who will lead our parish into the next phase of our Christian Ministry in Abingdon-on-Thames. If you are unable to attend and wish to have your views noted please contact a Church Warden or the PCC Secretary ([eluned@hallas.org.uk](mailto:eluned@hallas.org.uk)).

**NEW BISHOPS OF BUCKINGHAM AND READING** Appointments have now been made to fill the vacancies following the death of Bishop Alan and the retirement of Bishop Olivia earlier this year. There was an announcement on Wednesday that His Majesty The King has approved the appointments of the Revd Canon Dave Bull as the next Bishop of Buckingham and the Revd Canon Mary Gregory as the next Bishop of Reading. Canon Gregory is currently Canon for Reconciliation and the Arts at Coventry Cathedral and Canon Bull is Team Rector of Marlow and Area Dean of Wycombe. For more information see

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/news/bishop-of-buckingham-and-bishop-of-reading-announced.php>

**ST NICOLAS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL** is looking to appoint a new Foundation Governor who will be responsible for preserving and developing the school's Christian character and values. This is a fantastic opportunity for the right person to join a dynamic team in an Ofsted "good" school, and use their passions, skills, and experience to help shape the education and opportunities we provide our pupils. This is a voluntary role that will usually require 5-8 hours per month. Full training is provided. For more information, please contact Katrina Hancock, Chair of Governors, at [cgov3247@st-nicolas.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:cgov3247@st-nicolas.oxon.sch.uk) by **Thursday 19 December 2023**. The school follows a Safer Recruitment policy and procedure for all Governors appointed.

**FOODBANK CHRISTMAS EXTRAS LIST** This year, the Foodbank Team are once again putting together some special extra bags for clients to receive the week before Christmas. Alongside their standard emergency food parcels, they are aiming to provide items to go towards some Christmas dinners and festive treats. Included on the Christmas list are: tinned ham, veg, cranberry sauce, gravy and stuffing, Christmas puddings, mince pies, custard, tinned fruit, trifle mix, crackers for cheese, shortbread, chocolate treats, nuts and assortment boxes. Ideally, the Foodbank would like these donations by the **first week of December**. There is collection box in church and also in local supermarkets.

Thank you for your support.

*Louise Heffernan*

**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CHAIR'S CAROL SERVICE** will be held at St Michael's on **Monday, 16 December from 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.** Councillor Alison Rooke, Chair of Oxfordshire County Council, and The Rt Revd Gavin Collins, Bishop of Dorchester, invite us to join them for this festive carol service. Seasonal refreshments will be

served following the service. Joyce is looking for stewards to help at this event. If you can help, please let **Joyce Kelly** know. Thank you.

### **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](https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StH/StH_publications.html)).

*Advent Service of Music and Readings, Sunday 1 December at 5.30 pm.*

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

**FAITH FORUM** The Faith Forum this **Sunday, 1 December**, which will be the final Faith Forum of the current series on Ways of Engaging with the Bible. Our speaker will be Karen Laister from BRF Ministries (formerly Bible Reading Fellowship), who are based here in Abingdon. Karen will be speaking about using Bible Study notes, either as individuals or in a small group, as a way of engaging with scripture. Faith Forum meets in the **Parish Centre**, with a light buffet lunch served from 12.30 pm and the talk beginning at 12.45 pm.

**ALBERT PARK SINGERS** are seeking to appoint a new accompanist from January 2025. APS is an enthusiastic and friendly community choir of 45/50 members, who rehearse at St. Michael's on Monday evenings.

They are directed by Glynne Butt ([glynnebutt@btinternet.com](mailto:glynnebutt@btinternet.com)) who will be very happy to chat to anyone who would like to know more. This is a paid position and might suit a competent student looking to gain experience of choir accompanying.

**CHRISTMAS LUNCH** Will you be on your own this Christmas? Peachcroft Christian Centre invite you to join them for lunch on Christmas Day. Enjoy a 2 course lunch, entertainment and the company of others all free of charge. If you or someone you know would like to come then please get in touch with Kay Davies via email: [christmaslunch24@peachcroftcc.org](mailto:christmaslunch24@peachcroftcc.org) or phone 07787 629198.

**A CHILD IS BORN** An informal Christmas concert for all ages by *Abingdon Chorale* in aid of The Abingdon Bridge (TAB) in St Michael's Church on **1 December 2024 at 4 pm**. Tickets £10 (£2.50 under 16s) from <https://bit.ly/AbChorale>

**ADVENT LABYRINTH WALKS** The church will be open on **Tuesday 3, 10 and 17 December** between 11 am and noon. There will an opportunity to walk the labyrinth or simply to enjoy the sacred space. Material for reflection will be available on a different Advent theme each week. A short prayer will be said at the beginning and end of each session, but feel free to come and go as you please. Parking permits are available for use in Park Road.

**MOVING INTO STILLNESS** circle dancing to Taizé music with silent interludes on **Thursday 5 December** in the church room from **9.45 – 10.45 am** before the regular circle dancing session at 11 am (now on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month only). Elizabeth Mitchell will be the teacher. No prior experience/partner needed. Tea and coffee will be provided.

**ALBERT PARK SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT** at St Michael's, including carols and music by Bach, John Lennon, Mendelssohn and Vivaldi. **Friday 13 December at 7 pm**. Free admission, donations to *St Michael's Church* and *Crisis at Christmas*.

**SCHOOLS' CONCERT – POSTPONED** The concert at St Michael's Church, **22 November at 7 pm** by *The Joint Chamber Choir* of Abingdon School and St Helen and St Katherine, scheduled for 22 November at 7 pm, had been rescheduled for 24 January 2025 but has now been **postponed** again until **31 January 2025**. See: <https://www.abingdon.org.uk/sports-and-leisure/performance/joint-chamber-choir-concert/>

**CiA NEWS** A printed copy of the **November issue** is now on display on the notice board by the Welcome desk. This includes an announcement that the *Inter-church Quiz* during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2025 will be held on **Friday 24 January 2025** at Abingdon Baptist Church.

**PATHWAYS** Copies of the **Winter 2024** issue of the Diocesan magazine is now available on-line and printed copies should be in church. <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/pathways/>

**A CANDLE IN THE WINDOW** If you haven't yet looked at the excellent November edition of the Parish Magazine do download it from [https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P\\_window.php](https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_window.php). (Earlier issues are also available via this link.) The December edition will be published on 8 December. Deadline for contributions **1 December**. Thank you.

*Rob Rutherford*

### **Worship**

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**December** Celebrants and preachers in **December** are: 1, 8 December Fr Paul; 15 December The Revd Dr Jen Brown/Beryl Clements; 22 December Fr Paul; The Revd Dr Jen Brown will celebrate and preach on Christmas Day and The Revd Elizabeth Birch will preside and preach on 29 December.

Sunday is the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent. Commemorations during the week include: Tuesday: Francis Xavier, missionary, 1552; Wednesday: John of Damascus, monk, teacher of the faith, c. 749 and Nicholas Ferrar, deacon,

founder of the Little Gidding Community, 1637; Friday, Nicholas, bishop, c. 326 and Saturday: Ambrose, bishop, teacher of the faith, 397.

**Lectionary Year** 2024/2025 is Year C in the three-year lectionary cycle and the gospel read systematically is the Gospel according to Luke. John Barton wrote an excellent article about the lectionary and the Gospel according to Luke in the November issue of *A Candle in the Window*. Do take time to read it if you have not done so already.

**Advent** Today is the first of the four Sundays of Advent, this year coinciding with 1 December, the first day on commercial advent calendars! The four Sundays cover four themes: The Patriarchs, The Prophets, John the Baptist and The Virgin Mary. The liturgical colour is purple and in *Common Worship Times and Seasons* the season is described as a season of “awake watchfulness”.

Mass opens with the lighting of the first candle on the Advent Wreath, accompanied by the prayer:

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors:  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith  
and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment.  
May we be obedient to your call  
and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ,  
a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;  
for you are our light and our salvation.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

The Gloria is replaced by the Kyries and the Mass setting is Merbecke. The Eucharistic Prayer also changes from B to E, a new prayer written for *Common Worship*. Prayer E has a few distinctive features, perhaps the most obvious is that the acclamation “Great is the mystery of faith, ...” doesn’t immediately follow the institution narrative, but comes later in the prayer after:

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith, ...

Nicholas Ferrar was born in London in 1592 and entered Clare Hall, Cambridge, where he was a brilliant student, though ill-health meant he had to leave university early. He then spent 5 years travelling on the Continent. He worked for the Virginia Company and became an MP. But he found a vocation in a different direction and in 1625 he established a community at Little Gidding near Huntingdon and lived a common life with his brother and brother-in-law’s families. He was ordained Deacon in 1626. After Ferrar’s death the community fell foul of the Puritans, fearing the return of Romish practices in the Church of England. Most of Ferrar’s manuscripts were destroyed and the community was disbanded.

This prayer of Thanksgiving is taken from the entry for Nicholas Ferrar in *Love’s Redeeming Work – The Anglican Quest for Holiness*, compiled by Rowell, Stevenson and Williams.

Thou hast given us a freedom from all other affairs that we may without distraction attend Thy service. That Holy Gospel which came down from heaven, with all the things the angels desire to look into, is by Thy goodness continually open to our view; the sweet music thereof is continually sounding in our ears; heavenly songs are by Thy mercy put into our mouths, and our tongues and our lips made daily instruments for pouring forth Thy praise. This, Lord, is the work of, and this the pleasure of angels in heaven; and dost Thou vouchsafe to make us partakers of so high a happiness? The knowledge of Thee and of Thy Son is everlasting life. Thy service is perfect freedom: how happy are we that Thou dost constantly retain in the daily exercises thereof!

*Little Gidding* is the title of one of the poems in T S Eliot’s *Four Quartets*.

....  
We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

....  
And all shall be well and  
All manner of thing shall be well  
When the tongues of flame are in-folded  
Into the crowned knot of fire  
And the fire and the rose are one.

One commentator on the poem (Harry Blamires in *Word Unheard*) wrote:

The final and total recovery and reconciliation is symbolized in the uniting of images, fire and rose, supernatural and natural, divine and human, sacrificial and sacramental – for the tongues of flame are folded in upon themselves and tied together in the form of a rose.

**Prayer during the Season of Vacancy**

Almighty God,  
 You have called us to follow in the way of Jesus.  
 By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,  
 we are equipped to build up his body  
 in this place.  
 In this season of vacancy,  
 strengthen us to be faithful to our calling,  
 raise up a faithful shepherd and pastor  
 to serve among us in this parish,  
 and grant that,  
 together with the one you choose and call,  
 we may together proclaim the good news  
 with courage and joy.  
 In the name of Christ, we pray, **Amen.**

**Prayer for the Peace of the World (Church of England)**

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:  
 kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace  
 and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom  
 those who take counsel for the nations of the earth  
 that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward,  
 till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, ...

**Please pray for:**

- Steven and Gavin our bishops in this diocese;
- Archbishop Justin and his family as he prepares to step down at Epiphany and for Stephen, Archbishop of York;
- the national church at this time;
- all victims of abuse, their families and friends;
- that we may be found as those who are faithful in watching and waiting during this Advent season;
- all our preparations for the celebration of Christmastide and all those who work so hard to make this happen;
- King Charles, Her Majesty Queen Camilla, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and all the royal family;
- our government, the opposition and all who serve in public office;
- the miracle of peace in the war-torn places of this world;
- all those working to reduce the impact of Climate Change and for our own response in this parish;
- all Churchwardens of the parish, Fr Paul, Fr AKMA, the Revd Dr Jen Brown, and all our Honorary Assistant Clergy, and LLM’s during the vacancy;
- the suffering, especially those who are known to us and who are on our prayer list;
- all who have recently departed, and all whose year’s mind falls at this time;
- people living in River Close, Riverview Terrace, Ruskin Avenue and Saxton Road.

**Eucharistic Lectionary**

<b>Sun</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent</b>	Jeremiah 33.14-16	Ps 25.1-9	<b>1 Thessalonians 3.9-end</b>	<b>Luke 21.25-36</b>
<b>Mon</b>	Isaiah 2.1-5	Ps 122		Matthew 8.5-11
<b>Tues</b>	Isaiah 11.1-10	Ps 72.1-4, 18-19		Luke 10.21-24
<b>Wed</b>	Isaiah 25.6-10a	Ps 23		Matthew 15.29-37
<b>Thur</b>	Isaiah 26.1-16	Ps 118.18-27a		Matthew 7.21.24-27

<b>Fri</b>	Isaiah 29.17-end	Ps 27.1-4 16-17		Matthew 9.27-31
<b>Sat</b>	Isaiah 30.19-21, 23-26	Ps 146.4-9		Matthew 9.35-10.1, 6-8

**Collect (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent)**

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Prayer after Communion (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent)**

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful as we await the coming of your Son our Lord; that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping in sin but active in his service and joyful in his praise; through Jesus Christ 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](https://www.achurchnearyou.com/live-stream/?tags=Live_stream&diocese=27)

*Parish Communications and Links*

[http://www.abingdonparish.org.uk/P\\_communications.html](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](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.