



St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

14th December 2025
3rd Sunday of Advent
Regular Service Times

Sundays: Sung Mass, 9.30 am
Tuesdays: Silent Reflections, last Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm (except December)
Thursdays: Said Mass, 12.30 pm
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 Jennifer Brown
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Team Vicar: Vacancy

Churchwardens: Miss Joyce Kelly (01235 533555 / 07833 535768)
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Associate Priest The Revd Dr A. K. M. Adam (AKMA)
e-mail: akma@sthelens-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 (01235 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 to 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]

We welcome The Revd David Bevington to celebrate and Mrs Gwen Bevington to preach at Mass today

3rd Sunday of Advent / John the Baptist / Gaudete Sunday

This Sunday is the 3rd Sunday of Advent, also known as Gaudete ('Rejoice') Sunday. In the Patriarchs to The Virgin Mary themes for the four Sundays of Advent, today's theme is John the Baptist. On Wednesday the sequence of seven 'O' antiphons, sung before and after the *Magnificat* at Evening Prayer begins with *O Sapientia (O Wisdom)*.

Last Sunday and this the gospel readings are Matthew 3.1-12 and 11.2-11. Last Sunday's gospel included the Proclamation of John the Baptist, 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'. In this Sunday's gospel, John is in prison and hears that Jesus is 'teaching and proclaiming his message in their cities'. He sends word by his disciples to Jesus asking if he "is the one who is to come or are we to wait for another?" Jesus tells them to tell John what they see and hear, the blind receiving their sight, the deaf hearing, ... Jesus then speaks to the crowds about John, that John is the one of whom it was written 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' The passage concludes that no one greater than John has appeared, 'yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' One commentator on this passage draws out parallels between John and Jesus, both call for repentance, are thought of as prophets and perceived as a threat to their enemies; both are sentenced to death (14.4 'Though Herod wanted him put to death, he feared the crowd, ...), executed and then buried by their disciples.

Gaudete Sunday. The designation comes from the Latin antiphon (Philippians 4.4-5), *Gaudete in Domino semper: iterum dico, gaudete. Dominus enim prope est.* In English: *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.* This suggests a more festive note within the solemnity of the season. In the Common Worship lectionary, Philippians 4.4-7 is included in the 3rd service set of readings for this Sunday. (The 3rd service set of readings is a simple set, not used at Holy Communion as it does not include a gospel reading.)

Today we light the third candle on the Advent Wreath, the pink candle. In churches that have vestments in a fuller range of liturgical colours than we have at St Michael's, Rose Pink vestments will be worn.

The first of the 'O' antiphons is appointed to be sung before and after the *Magnificat* at Evening Prayer on Wednesday:

O Wisdom,
coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,
filling all creation and reigning to the ends of the earth;
come and teach us the way of prudence.

The Church of England has produced a new resource this year, *O Come Emmanuel, Reflections on the Advent antiphons*. For more information about the O antiphons and this new resource, see the Worship section below.
David Duce

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT ST HELEN'S CHURCH St Helen's will live-stream their 10.30 am Eucharist through Zoom. The Zoom link can be found in the St Helen's Church newsletter (on-line). 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).

The next *Taizé Prayer service* will be this Sunday, **Sunday 14 December** in **St Helen's Church at 5.30 pm**. The January service will be on the **first Sunday in January, Sunday 4 January** in **St Helen's Church at 5.30 pm**

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

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS/EPIPHANY SERVICES AT ST MICHAEL'S

Sunday 14 December	9.30 am	Sung Mass – Theme: John the Baptist
Tuesday 16 December	11 am – 12 noon	Labyrinth Walks
Thursday 18 December	12.30 pm	Said Mass
Sunday 21 December	9.30 am	Sung Mass – Theme: The Virgin Mary
Wednesday 24 December		Christmas Eve
	3.00 pm	Crib Service
	6.00 pm	Christmas Lessons and Carols
	11.00 pm	At St Helen's Church: Midnight Mass
Thursday 25 December		Christmas Day
	10.00 am	Sung Mass (N.B. later time)
Sunday 28 December	9.30 am	Sung Mass – The Holy Innocents
Thursday 1 January		<i>No Mass today</i>
Sunday 4 January	9.30 am	Sung Mass for the festival of Epiphany
Thursday 8 January	12.30 pm	Said Mass as usual

A full list of services for Advent and Christmastide is available on the Parish web site:

<https://abingdonparish.org.uk/Christmas2025.pdf> and printed copies are available in church.

PARISH OFFICE will close at 1 pm on Christmas Eve and will re-open at 10 am on Monday 5 January.

PEW LEAFLET The 21 December issue will be a double issue, covering the period 21 December to 3 January. The following issue will be for 4 January 2026. Copy for the double issue should be sent to the editor, pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk by midday on **Tuesday 16 December** and for the following issue by midday on **Tuesday 30 December**.

APPEAL FOR JAMAICA IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE MELISSA The Diocese of Oxford is the sole link diocese for the Diocese of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, and is committed to supporting our partners in mission at this difficult time – both through immediate disaster relief and ongoing reconstruction. The Bishop of Oxford's Advent Appeal 2025 is therefore for the Jamaica and the Cayman Islands Diocesan Disaster Relief Fund. The appeal closes at the end of December.

<https://oxford.anglican.org/jamaica-and-the-cayman-islands-appeal.php>



For tax payers the most efficient way to give is via the Diocesan website or the QR code.

INTERCESSORS AND READERS' ROTAS As a result of this appeal two new people will be joining the current four people who regularly lead the intercessions at Sunday Mass. This is an important lay ministry in the church and hence this appeal for more people to join the rota. If anyone else is interested in joining the rota, please speak to Sue Scott. Also if you are interested in joining the readers' rota, please contact to Sue, email: suescott719@gmail.com.

FROM THE BISHOPS is the title of a monthly online column from our four bishops. The latest post is from Bishop Gavin, *A Season of Hope*. <https://oxford.anglican.org/who-we-are/bishops-and-senior-staff/from-the-bishops/>

CARDS FOR GOOD CAUSES are selling a variety of charity cards in **St Nicolas' Church, Monday – Saturday 10.30 am – 3.30 pm**. <https://cardsforcharity.co.uk/>

ADVENT LABYRINTH WALKS St Michael's Church will be open on **Tuesday 16 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 chants with silent interludes on **Thursday 8 January (NB later than usual date)** in the church room from **9.45 – 10.45 am** before the regular circle dancing session at 11 am. 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.

LAMPS Collective are returning with their brand-new Christmas Show! **Saturday 20 December - 3.00pm and 7.00pm – Peachcroft Christian Centre**. Join the OAPs (Old Angel Pensioners) of retirement home *Heavenly Realms*, as they get ready to celebrate Christmas and share memories of the very first one. Hold on to your halo and enjoy a 'holy' new take on the Nativity story! Festive fun for all the family from age 8 upwards. Come along and invite your friends! Suitable for age 8 upwards. Tickets £10 adult, £5 Child/young person (8-18)

Ticket link: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/peachcroft-christian-centre/heavenly-realms/e-gpygml>

CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH 2025 AT PEACHCROFT CHRISTIAN CENTRE Once again we are offering a Christmas Day lunch at Peachcroft Christian Centre. This is for people who are going to be alone this Christmas, for whatever reason, but who would like to celebrate in the company of others. Our catchment area is Abingdon and surrounding villages. Transport can be provided for those unable to make their own way. The lunch is always a joyous occasion, enjoyed by guests and volunteers alike. If you know of anyone who might benefit from joining us as a guest this year, please get in touch with Fiona on: 07503 178893 or via email: christmaslunch25@peachcroftcc.org.

CiA NEWS A printed copy of the **November issue** is on display on the notice board by the Welcome desk. It is also available to download from https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html.

A CANDLE IN THE WINDOW The December edition of the Parish Magazine (the 60th on-line edition!) is available to download (along with previous issues) from

https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_window.php. Lots of reasons why you should download!

The next issue will be published on 8 February 2026.

Worship

December The celebrants and preachers are: 14 December, The Revd David and Mrs Gwen Bevington; 21 December, The Revd Canon Ruth Pyke and Mrs Beryl Clements; 25 December (10 am Christmas Day), Fr AKMA; 28 December, The Revd Dr Jane Baun.

There is one commemoration this week on Wednesday, Eglantyne Jebb, social reformer, founder of 'Save the Children', 1928.

The Great 'O' Antiphons The origin of the antiphons isn't particularly clear. There is, for example, a collection of texts assembled by Alcuin of York dated around 790 which includes 10 antiphons to the *Magnificat* on the days preceding Christmas Eve. The traditional plainsong chants, for those who like plainsong, are deeply moving. But again the origin of the chants is mysterious, not least because they would have been sung from memory before musical notation was available to capture them. There is a record of the Abbot of Abingdon sending to the Abbey of Corbie (in present day Picardy) for a monk to teach the chant to the monks of Abingdon. The number of antiphons has varied over time. One author lists 18 different antiphons across 33 manuscript sources, though not all 18 were ever used together. Normally the number would range from 8 to 13, 8 being the most common across these sources. In common with many other churches, the Church of England Common Worship book has 7. Earlier books included an 8th, *O Virgo Virginum (O Virgin of Virgins)*. The set of 8 antiphons can be found in the *New English Hymnal*, used at St Michael's, number 503. The hymn, *O Come, O come, Emmanuel* (NEH 11) is based on 7 of the antiphons.

The 7 antiphons, sung from 17 to 23 December are: *O Sapientia* (Wisdom), *O Adonai* (Lord), *O Radix Jesse* (Root of Jesse), *O Clavis David* (Key of David), *O Oriens* (Morning Star), *O Rex Gentium* (King of the Nations), *O Emmanuel* (Emmanuel). The Latin forms are included because the initial letters of the Latin in reverse order are ERO CRAS which is translated as *I will come tomorrow*.

The new Church of England resource, *O Come Emmanuel – Reflections on the Advent antiphons* is available in printed, with beautiful illustrations, from *Church House Publishing* and includes contributions from Jane Williams, Philip North, and Lucy Winkett. There is also an accompanying web site

<https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/advent-o-come-emmanuel>
Unfortunately I only discovered this resource when I was preparing this week's pew leaflet. I say 'unfortunately' because the book contains 24 reflections for Advent, split into groups of three (each group is by a different contributor), divided by the texts of the 7 antiphons and illustration. The 8th section is entitled *Magnificat*. The illustrations of the antiphons are by a Korean illustrator, SunYoung Kim and can also be found on the web site. For each day there is a reading, reflection, invitation to respond and prayer. The resource is also available through the *EveryDay Faith* app. There are also new musical settings of the 7 antiphons and recordings of performances of these are available on *YouTube* through the web site. Composers include Bernadette Farrell (*O Emmanuel*).

At Westminster Abbey the antiphons will be sung at Evensong from 17 to 23 December and this year a set of recordings made in the Chapter House has been released. These are plainsong chants, sung in both Latin and English. <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/worship-music/services-times/advent-and-christmas/the-great-o-antiphons>
3rd Sunday of Advent After the Greeting at the start of Mass, the first, second candles and third (pink) candles on the Advent Wreath are lit as the celebrant prays this prayer:

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, just and true:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
Your prophet John the Baptist was witness to the truth
as a burning and shining light.
May we your servants rejoice in his light,
and so be led to witness to him
who is the Lord of our coming kingdom,
Jesus our Saviour and King of the ages.

Blessed be God for ever.

Prayers during another Season of Vacancy

The prayer below is the prayer used for the appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury. But it is not entirely inappropriate in the current situation as the next stage of ministry in the parish of Abingdon is discerned.

Heavenly Father, shepherd of your Church,
send us a faithful pastor to lead with wisdom, courage, and love,
proclaiming your Gospel, celebrating the sacraments,
and guiding your people in unity and truth.
Strengthen your Church, we pray, and direct us in your ways; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayers for the Peace of the World

The three prayers below are taken from a Church of England liturgy for The Peace of the World. If used in a Eucharistic context they would be the collect, concluding prayer to the intercessions and prayer after communion.

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, ...

Most holy God and Father, hear our prayers for all who strive for peace and all who fight for justice. Help us, who today remember the cost of war, to work for a better tomorrow; and, as we commend to you lives lost in terror and conflict, bring us all, in the end, to the peace of your presence; through Christ our Lord.

God our Father, your Son is our peace and his cross the sign of reconciliation: help us, who share the broken bread, to bring together what is scattered and to bind up what is wounded, that Christ may bring in the everlasting kingdom of his peace; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Please pray for:

- Steven (as he prepares for retirement) and Gavin our bishops in this diocese; Stephen, Archbishop of York, and Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury designate;
- His Majesty King Charles, Her Majesty Queen Camilla, and all the royal family;
- countries where there is conflict, war, persecution, or natural disaster, for Jamaica and the Cayman Islands;
- the work of *Save the Children*, reflecting the commemoration of Eglantyne Jebb on Wednesday;
- 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: Orpwood Way, Overmead, Oxford Road and Palmer Place.

Eucharistic Lectionary

Sun 3rd Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 35.1-10	Ps 146.4-10	James 5.7-10	Matthew 11.2-11
Mon	Numbers 24.2-7, 15-17	Ps 25.3-8		Matthew 21.23-27
Tues	Zephaniah 3.1-2, 9-13	Ps 34.1-6, 21-22		Matthew 21.28-32
Wed <i>O Sapientia</i>	Genesis 49.2, 8-10	Ps 72.1-5, 18-19		Matthew 1.1-17
Thur <i>O Adonai</i>	Jeremiah 23.5-8	Ps 72.1-2, 12-13, 18-end		Matthew 1.18-24
Fri <i>O Radix Jesse</i>	Judges 13.2-7, 24-end	Ps 71.3-8		Luke 1.5-25
Sat <i>O Claris David</i>	Isaiah 7.10-14	Ps 24.1-6		Luke 1.26-38

Collect (3rd Sunday of Advent)

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Prayer after Communion (3rd Sunday of Advent)

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again we may shine as lights before his face; who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

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

St Michael's Publications page https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StM/StM_publications.html

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

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqz9I9-LbZlAPGtje0gQbbg>.

The University Church of St Mary the Virgin (Oxford) live stream, 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. Details can be found at the Community web site, <https://mirfield.org.uk/live-streaming/> and YouTube page

<https://www.youtube.com/@StreamingAtMirfield>. 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/>