



St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

11 January 2026 Baptism of Christ / 1st Sunday of Epiphany 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
Email: rector@abingdonparish.org.uk

Team Vicar: Vacancy

Churchwardens: Miss Joyce Kelly (01235 533555 / 07833 535768)
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Mrs Louise Heffernan (01235 525412 / 07779 650968)
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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]*

The Baptism of Christ

Looking back to Christmas and Epiphany, the celebration of the incarnation of God in Jesus, the manifestation of God in human form is spread across the two festivals of 25 December and 6 January. The allocation of themes between the two festivals came to differ in the Western and Eastern Churches. In the West 25 December celebrates the birth of Jesus and the visit of the shepherds whilst 6 January celebrates the visit of the Magi, the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles and in some places included the baptism of Christ. On the other hand, in the East 25 December celebrates the birth of Christ, the visit of the shepherds and the visit of the Magi with their gifts whilst 6 January celebrates the baptism of Christ. It isn't quite that simple though as in some places the Wedding at Cana in Galilee, the transfiguration and the feeding miracle of the loaves and fishes were added into the mix of themes.

Nowadays the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran calendars observe the Baptism of Christ as a separate feast on the Sunday after Epiphany. Formally in the Roman Catholic Church this is a recent development, first appearing as a commemoration in 1955 then raised to the status of 'feast' in 1969.

Today's gospel reading, Matthew 3.13-end is Matthew's account of the Baptism of Jesus by John. At first John resists baptising Jesus saying that he, John, needs to be baptised by Jesus. But Jesus says let it be as it is and John consented. As Jesus came up from the water the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended on him like a dove and a voice from heaven said 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased'.

Bishop Hugh Gilbert, a Benedictine monk and former Roman Catholic Bishop of Aberdeen, wrote an interesting paper for the Aberdeenshire Theological Club (there is a link to this on our Prayer and Worship resources page) in which he explored the theological and liturgical context of the feast and what the baptism of Jesus is and is not. He lists seven aspects under the 'what it is' heading:

- The climax of John's ministry
- A beginning – the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus
- An anointing for mission as Messiah
- An anticipation of Jesus' Paschal Mystery
- An epiphany – an explosion of light
- 'The sanctification of the waters'
- A source and pattern of our own baptism

The theme of the 'sanctification of the waters' is reflected in the writings of Clement of Alexandria (~150 – 215 AD): 'and for this reason the Saviour was baptized that he might purify all water for those being reborn.' The Epiphany liturgy of the Eastern Church includes the blessing of the waters. On the eve of the feast, a large vessel of water is blessed, the church and congregation are sprinkled and everyone drinks from the water. After the liturgy on the feast day where possible, the clergy and people process to a river or sea and the waters again are blessed. These traditions are also reflected in our own liturgy for the feast and at St Helen's Church the Sung Eucharist includes 'Blessing of the Waters' of the nearby River Thames.

The liturgy at St Michael's opens with Thanksgiving for Holy Baptism, which includes sprinkling with the blessed water.

- 'Come', say the Spirit and the Bride.
- 'Come forward, you who are thirsty,
receive the water of life,
the free gift to all who desire it.'

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) and on the Publications page at their web site. 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/StHpublications.html>).

Sunday 11 January, 4.30 pm at St Helen's Church: *Epiphany Carols and Blessing of Families for the New Year.* A service of music and readings to mark the baptism of Jesus, followed by refreshments. All welcome; especially families with children baptised at St Helen's.

Morning Prayer is normally held at 9.10 am on weekdays at St Helen's 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 **not later than Sunday 1 February** as orders have to be placed by 6 February. The cost is £17.97 for the year, but will be more if less than 5 copies are ordered. *Brenda.*

St Birinus and All That ... On Sunday **11 January at 3pm in Dorchester Abbey** there will be a performance of "St Birinus and All That..." a cantata recounting the history of the Abbey from its foundation as a cathedral by St Birinus in 635 AD, through its monastic foundation, the reformation, and the endowment in 1535 as a Village Church. Admission is free and the concert will last a little over an hour. Retiring collection to support the Abbey.

Reflections And Prayers St Nicolas' Church will be open between **10 and 12 noon from Monday 19 to Friday 23 January 2026**, during the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*. The Chancel will offer a quiet place for people's personal prayers or for people to use the reflections and prayers provided for the 2026 theme that centres on Ephesians 4:4:

There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling.

There may also be some prayer stations to help guide prayers. Everyone is welcome. Coffee and light refreshments will be served.

Annual New Year Inter-Church Quiz This will take place on **Friday 23 January 2026, 7.00 pm for a 7.30 pm start**, at **Abingdon Baptist Church**.

PLEASE NOTE Hilary and John Clare will **NOT** be organising a team this year. If anyone else would like to organise a team (of up to six people), please contact the organiser directly by Friday 17 January: Ian Millgate at i.l.millgate@btinternet.com or on 01235 206583. A second team may be provisionally booked depending on space. Entry is £2 per person and all proceeds will go to Sobell House. Bring your own drinks and nibbles – teas and coffees will be provided. If anyone does decide to organise a team, please send an appropriate announcement to the Editor to include in the pew leaflet.

Agnostics Anonymous The first meeting for 2026 will take place on **Tuesday 27 January at 6 pm in The Parish Centre**. Dr Kathryn Wills, a member of the Las Casas Institute based at Blackfriars Hall in Oxford, will speak about religion and literature. There will be time for questions and discussion aiming to finish about 7.15 pm. All welcome.

CiA News and a Candle in the Window The **January** issue of CiA News and the December edition of the Parish Magazine are available to download. See https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html.

Worship

January The celebrants and preachers are: 11 January, the Revd Rosalind Rutherford, 18 January, The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown; 25 January (Dedication Festival), Fr AKMA (the limit of the current clergy rota).

Sunday is the feast of the Baptism of Christ. Commemorations this week include: Monday: Aelred, abbot, 1167; Tuesday: Hilary, bishop, teacher of the faith, 367; Saturday: Anthony of Egypt, hermit, abbot, 356 and Charles Gore, bishop (of Worcester then Oxford), founder of the Community of the Resurrection, 1932.

Baptism of Christ The feast of the Baptism of Christ which we keep this Sunday has its own Extended Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer:

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

You celebrated your new gift of baptism in signs and wonders at the Jordan.

Your voice was heard from heaven to awaken faith in the presence among us of your Word made flesh.

Your Spirit was seen as a dove, revealing Jesus as your servant, and anointing him with the oil of gladness to preach the good news to the poor.

Therefore, as we celebrate the union of earth and heaven, we rejoice to echo the song of the angels in heaven for ever praising you and saying ...

The Post Communion prayer, a new composition for Common Worship, links Jesus' baptism to our own and emphasises the on-going work of baptism. It also references the creation narrative in Genesis, the creation of water and humanity and the redemption of fallen creation by Christ.

Lord of all time and eternity,

you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son:

by the power of your Spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

A prayer from the 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 (preparing 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;
- all victims of war, injustice, and oppression;
- those who perpetrate violence, that they may turn to a new way of life;
- those preparing for baptism at this time;
- the life and work of Religious Communities in the Anglican Communion;
- 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: Reade Avenue, Regal Close, Reynolds Way and Riley Close.

Eucharistic Lectionary

Sun Baptism of Christ	Isaiah 42.1-9	Ps 29	Acts 10.34 - 43	Matthew 3.13-end
Mon	1 Samuel 1.1-8	Ps 116.1-15		Mark 1.14-20
Tues	1 Samuel 1.9-20	<i>Canticle 1 Samuel 2.1, 4-8 or Magnificat</i>		Mark 1.21-28
Wed	1 Samuel 3.1-10, 19-20	Ps 40.1-4, 7-10		Mark 1.29-39
Thur	1 Samuel 4.1-11	Ps 44.10-15, 24-25		Mark 1.40-end
Fri	1 Samuel 8.4-7, 10-end	Ps 89.15-18		Mark 2.1-12
Sat	1 Samuel 9.1-4, 17-19, 10.1a	Ps 21.1-6		Mark 2.13-17

Collect (Baptism of Christ/ 1st Sunday of Epiphany)

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, ...

Post Communion (Baptism of Christ)

Lord of all time and eternity, you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son: by the power of your Spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation; 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=Livestream&diocese=27>

Parish Communications and Links <http://www.abingdonparish.org.uk/Pcommunications.html>

St Michael's Prayer and Worship resources page <https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StM/StMworshipresources.html>

St Michael's Publications page <https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StM/StMpublications.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, 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, see <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/>