



St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

25 January 2026 – Dedication Festival / Conversion of Paul / 3rd Sunday of Epiphany
End of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – 18 to 25 January

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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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 Fr AKMA to celebrate and preach at Mass today

There are four possibilities this Sunday: our Dedication Festival, the Conversion of Paul, the 3rd Sunday of Epiphany and the last Sunday of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. At St Michael's we are keeping the anniversary of the dedication and consecration of the church in 1867. St Helen's and St Nicolas' churches are keeping the Conversion of Paul. Fr AKMA writes below about St Paul and there is a little bit about the Dedication Festival in the Worship section.

Did St Paul convert from Judaism to Christianity (as the name of today's feast day suggests), or did he make a different sort of change in his life? The three versions of the Damascus Road story in the Book of Acts (in chapters 9, 22, and 26) certainly suggest a dramatic change in direction, but if we read the New Testament carefully, many details imply that his new faith didn't abandon his former life in Judaism, but that he perceived a twist which nonetheless remained true (from his point of view) to the broad stream of Israel's religion.

When people assail our Jewish neighbours with accusations based in conspiracy theories and bigotry, we should keep in mind that although Paul changed his mind about whether Gentiles might be admitted to the people of God, he never repudiated the Torah ('the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good'; Rom 7:12), nor the people of Israel ('They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Anointed One, who is over all, God blessed forever'; Rom 9:4f). Israel is God's firstborn; we are adopted into God's family. Israel is the trunk and the roots; we have been grafted into the branches.

As we have observed the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we do well to work also for reconciliation among Christians and Jews. We have a long history with many shameful chapters for which we need to repent, to seek to make things right — to show the world our gratitude for God's grace shown to us in Christ Jesus.

Fr AKMA

Team Vicar Appointment & Parish Meeting The process for appointing a new Team Vicar for the parish will begin soon, with key meetings taking place in February. We want to hear your thoughts on what we want/need in a new Team Vicar. To that end, we are holding a parish meeting on **Saturday 31 January, from 3 to 5 pm, at St Michael's Church**. All are welcome and we hope many will attend. Please note, parking restrictions around St Michael's will be in place. If you can't make this meeting but would still like to have input into the process, please contact a church warden with thoughts on what qualities/skills do you think we need in our new Team Vicar & what particular hopes do you have in relation to the appointment of the new Team Vicar.

Revd Dr Jennifer Brown

Team Rector

Memorial Service for Greta French, 11 am Monday 26 January Some readers will remember Greta who was a regular worshipper at St Michael's until recent years. At Greta's request the memorial service will be set in the framework of a Requiem Mass. Greta's husband, Barry, died in February 2024 and his funeral was at St Michael's.

Appointment of a new Bishop of Oxford The Diocese is seeking views from across the Diocese as we look for a new Bishop, following Bishop Steven's retirement announcement. A *Statement of Needs* document which will set out information about the Diocese, including its hopes and challenges, and what people think is important in a new Bishop is being drawn up, and the Diocese is seeking our input. To contribute please see the short, anonymous online survey at: <https://oxford.anglican.org/consultation>. The survey closes **5 pm on 4 February**.

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>).

There will be a service of *Healing and Wholeness* at St Helen's Church at **5.30 pm, today, Sunday 25 January**.

Morning Prayer is normally held at 9.10 am on weekdays at St Helen's Church.

Faith Forum The new series of Faith Forum starts this Sunday, **25 January, in the Parish Centre**. Lunch will be served from **12.20 pm** and the talk will begin at **12.45**. In this series, we will be looking at different aspects of liturgy. Our Rector, Jen Brown, will be giving the first talk, 'What we say and how we say it: the words we use in liturgy.' For those not able to attend in person, the Zoom link is:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85645633324?pwd=LWJpGrcqPTWk1ZFhJ9VRq4ILHZMda.1>

Meeting ID: 856 4563 3324

Passcode: 656494

The link should be live from about 12.30 pm.

Retreats at the Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage Details of retreats for 2026 are now available on the Community's web site <https://csmv.co.uk/calendar-of-retreats/>.

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.*

TrinityLearning is looking for a new Education Development Officer. Are you an experienced education professional who could lead this small Abingdon based Charity? This is a two-year contract, starting as soon as possible. 0.4 FTE, salary £33,000 pro rata per annum. (£13,200). For the full job advert, an application form and details of how to apply, please see our website <https://trinitylearning.org.uk/>. For further details, or for an informal conversation about the role, please contact Pauline - revmain@gmail.com. Tel 01235 531028. TrinityLearning is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.

Archbishop of Canterbury According to the St Paul's Cathedral web site, "the legal ceremony marking the date the Right Reverend and Right Honourable Dame Sarah Mullally DBE becomes the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury" will take place in the Cathedral on Wednesday 28 January starting at 11 am.

Wantage Academy Brass Concert As previously announced, our annual fund-raising concert for *The Abingdon Bridge, TARIRO – Hope for Youth in Zimbabwe* will be on **Saturday 9 May at 6 pm**. Last year Wantage Academy Brass were joined by Wantage-based CARITAS Children's choir. The Children's choir will be singing again this year and Wantage Youth Band will also be performing. Please note the date now if you have not already done so. More details in due course.

Agnostics Anonymous The first meeting for 2026 will take place on **Tuesday 27 January at 6 pm** in **The Parish Centre**, aiming to finish about 7.15 pm. Dr Kathryn Wills, a member of the Las Casas Institute based at Blackfriars Hall in Oxford, will be talking on the theme of "Can reading literature help us to encounter God?" (Kathryn is an associate member of Blackfriars Hall in Oxford and has researched widely on the interplay between poetry, drama, fiction etc and an understanding of God). The panel of Revd Professor John Barton and Revd Dr Jen Brown will be there to answer questions as well. For more information about the speaker see <https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StH/KathrynWills.pdf>. Everyone welcome.

Silent Reflections will be held on **Tuesday 27 January at 7.30-8.30 pm**. Sue Sheppy will provide material for our reflections on the theme: *The Small Seed*. We meet initially in the church room. Parking permits are available for use in Park Road.

Moving into Stillness Circle dancing to Taizé chants with silent interludes on **Thursday 5 February** 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.

Concerts at St Nicolas' Church

Sunday 1 February at 3 pm; *Sound, Sense and Soul – when music gives voice to poetry*. Featuring Rachmaninov and Schubert in harmony with Pushkin, Yeats and Shakespeare. Tickets £24/12 (full/concession) and fuller information: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/stephenallen/1982275> Also at Somerville College Chapel, Saturday 31 January 7:30pm

Sunday 8 February at 3 pm, Abbey Chamber Concert, St Nic's 3pm. Classics for Wind Quintet (and one or two treats) with Pavlova Winds. Tickets £12. Read more: <https://abbeychamberconcerts.org/event/classics-for-wind-quintet-and-one-or-two-treats/>

Abingdon Mother's Union will meet in the **Parish Centre** on **Tuesday 3 February at 10.30 am** for the AGM and Bring and Buy. All welcome.

'The Hardest Bridge', Tuesday 3 February, 7.30pm – 10.00 pm, in the Auditorium, **St John's College, Oxford**.

As a Volunteer with the Irish Republican Army, Pat Magee planted a bomb in the Grand Hotel, Brighton, during the Conservative Party Annual Conference in 1984, aiming to kill PM Margaret Thatcher. The explosion killed five people including Sir Anthony Berry MP, father of Jo Berry. Magee was arrested in 1985 and imprisoned in 1986 but released under the Good Friday Agreement in 1999. Jo went to meet him. Ever since they have been on a transformative journey which has taken them to situations of tension and conflict in many countries. Can the wounds of war heal? Can enemies reconcile?

'The Hardest Bridge' (45 mins) focuses those questions through the insights of Pat Magee and Jo Berry. They will be present in person to speak and answer questions after the film. Also present will be the film's director, Dr Imad Karam, an award-winning British-Palestinian film maker, and executive producer Howard Grace. Followed by a drinks reception.

This event, jointly sponsored by OxPeace, the Dept of Politics and International Relations (DPIR), and Pusey House, is free and open to all. Registration is not required.

Abingdon Church Twinning Barn Dance in Trinity Church Conduit Centre Saturday 28 February Alan Fisher from Abingdon Baptist Church will be the caller, and all proceeds will support Church Twinning. The ticket price of £15 to include a welcome drink on arrival and a Ploughman's supper during the interval. Limited spaces! Tickets are available from **John Clare** on 01235 525898 or at johnclare.blunsdon@gmail.com.

Cranmer Commemoration play The Prayer Book Society is staging the play *The Trial of Thomas Cranmer* at the **University Church in Oxford on 21 March, 11 am to 4 pm**, as part of this year's Cranmer Commemoration. More details of the day, the play and how to book are available at this link <https://www.pbs.org.uk/event/cranmer26> The day starts with Choral Mattins at 11 am.

CiA News The **January** issue of CiA News is available to download and there is a copy on the Notice Board by the welcome table. See https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html.

A Candle in the Window The February edition of the Parish Magazine will be published on **8 February**. Do contribute! **(By the end of 1 February)** Material to cheer us up particularly welcome! Email candle@abingdonparish.org.uk Past issues are available to download from https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html.

Worship

January/February Celebrants and preachers are: 25 January (Dedication Festival), Fr AKMA and then (assuming there are no changes to a draft rota) 1 February, The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown, 8 February, Fr AKMA, 15 and 22 February, The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown.

Commemorations this week include: Monday: Timothy and Titus, companions of Paul, Wednesday: Thomas Aquinas, priest, philosopher, teacher of the faith, 1274; Friday: Charles, king and martyr, 1649; Saturday, John Bosco, priest, founder of the Salesian Teaching Order, 1888.

Ash Wednesday falls on 18 February. There is no Mass at St Michael's that day, but there will be a celebration of Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes at St Helen's Church at 10.30 am and a Parish Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes also at St Helen's Church at 7.30 pm.

Dedication Festival On Friday 25 January 1867, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, the Lord Bishop of the diocese, dedicated and consecrated this church building to the glory of Almighty God. It was originally built for those workers who had settled in the town in brewing and tanning, on a plot of land purchased from Christ's Hospital. Common Worship provides sets of readings according to the three-year cycle for Dedication Festivals and other liturgical elements including invitation to confession, collect, intercessions, peace, extended preface to the eucharistic prayer and blessing. All these elements will be used in our Mass today. Where the date of the Dedication is known, the festival is usually kept on the day, and where the date is not known, it may be kept on the first Sunday in October or the Last Sunday after Trinity.

There was an interesting period in the early days of St Michael's Church when St Helen's Church closed for repairs to the walls and roof from June 1871 to July 1873, which were described as being in a state of "extreme dilapidation". Services were transferred to St Michael's. For an overview of the history of St Michael's see the history section of our web site which includes a link to *St Michael and All Angels, Abingdon, 1867-1967* by J.C. Norris.

The collect for the day, which was a new composition for the *Alternative Services Book* (1980) is:

Almighty God,
to whose glory we celebrate the dedication of this house of prayer:
we praise you for the many blessings
you have given to those who worship you here:
and we pray that all who seek you in this place may find you,
and being filled with the Holy Spirit,
may become a living temple acceptable to you;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, ... Amen.

This collect reminds us of the central role of our building as a house of prayer, a place where prayer and worship have been offered over since 1867. It reminds of those who have worshipped in this place and have gone before us. It reminds us of our duty to the present generation seeking God in our church and of our duty as custodians of this house of prayer, and of the living tradition of the church, for generations to come. It reminds us that it is a place where hard questions may be asked and hints to answers may be found. By no means least it reminds us of the importance of thanksgiving in prayer.

The Extended Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer is:

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
almighty and eternal Father,
enthroned upon the praises of your people.
We thank you for this house of prayer,
in which you bless your family
as we come to you in pilgrimage.
Here you reveal your presence in sacramental signs
and make us one with you through the unseen bond of grace.
Here you build your temple of living stones
and bring the Church to its full stature
as the body of Christ throughout the world,
to reach its perfection at last
in the heavenly city of Jerusalem,
which is the vision of your peace.
Therefore, in union with the heavenly Jerusalem,
with angels in joyful assembly,
with all whose names are written in heaven
and with the spirits of the righteous made perfect,
we lift up our voices to join in the triumphal song of praise:

During another Season of Vacancies

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.

A prayer for the appointment of a new Bishop of Oxford to succeed Bishop Stephen when he retires later this year.

Almighty God, giver of every good gift:
Look graciously on your Church and illuminate our path as we seek a new Bishop.
Help us to work together for the good of your kingdom and all who live, work and study in the Diocese of Oxford.
Give wisdom and listening hearts to those who have influence.
Send out your Holy Spirit to call one who will faithfully teach, pastor, care for and equip us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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; for the Vacancy In See Committee;
- Stephen, Archbishop of York, and Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury designate and for her Confirmation of Election on Wednesday;
- His Majesty King Charles, Her Majesty Queen Camilla, and all the royal family;
- all victims of war, injustice, and oppression; Gaza, Iran, Sudan, Ukraine;
- the life, work and witness of our community at St Michael's;
- Unity – such as Christ wills and by the means he chooses [from *The Thursday Candle prayer for unity*];
- 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: Schongau Close, Shepherd Gardens, Sherwood Avenue, Sint Niklaas Close.

Eucharistic Lectionary

The repetition of Monday's psalm (89.19-27) on Wednesday is in accord with the provision of the *Daily Eucharistic Lectionary*, Year 2, Week 3.

Sun Dedication Festival	1 Kings 8.22-30	Ps 122	Hebrews 12.18-24	Matthew 21.12-16
Mon	2 Samuel 5.1-7, 10	Ps 89.19-27		Mark 3.22-30
Tues	2 Samuel 6.12-15, 17-19	Ps 24.7-end		Mark 3.31-end
Wed	2 Samuel 7.4-17	Ps 89.19-27		Mark 4.1-20
Thur	2 Samuel 7.18-19, 24-end	Ps 132.1-5, 11-15		Mark 4.21-25
Fri	2 Samuel 11.1-10, 13-17	Ps 51.1-6, 9		Mark 4.26-34
Sat	2 Samuel 12.1-7, 10-17	Ps 51.11-16		Mark 4.35-end

Collect (Dedication Festival)

Almighty God, to whose glory we celebrate the dedication of this house of prayer: we praise you for the many blessings you have given to those who worship you here: and we pray that all who seek you in this place may find you, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, may become a living temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, ...

Post Communion (Dedication Festival)

Father in heaven, whose Church on earth is a sign of your heavenly peace, an image of the new and eternal Jerusalem: grant to us in the days of our pilgrimage that, fed with the living bread of heaven, and united in the body of your Son, we may be the temple of your presence, the place of your glory on earth, and a sign of your peace in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect (3rd Sunday of Epiphany)

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; 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=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/>