



St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

1 February 2026 – Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)

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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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]

We welcome our Team Rector, The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown, to celebrate and preach at Mass today

Candlemas, oddly, is not a single feast at all. That is to say, it partly corresponds to post-partum purification of Mary in the Temple, in accordance with the Law (Leviticus 19); and partly to the redemption of the first-born son (described in Exodus 13). St Luke tells this story with a view to ensuring that we understand that not only Zechariah and Elizabeth, but also Joseph and Mary were observant Jews, 'living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord' (Lk 1:6).

The liturgical feast also commemorates the prophecies we read about in the day's Gospel readings. Simeon sees the babe in arms and proclaims the *Nunc dimittis* ('Now, dismiss...') which pronounces the double blessing of Jesus, 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel'. He added that some of Israel would rise, and some would fall, depending on their open or secret response to Jesus. Mary, too, would experience the utmost desolation: 'a sword will pierce your own heart, too.' Then Anna, who had been waiting in the Temple for just this day went about telling everyone who, like her, had been waiting for the redemption of Israel about Jesus.

As is the case with many observances, this holy day attracted other traditions and significances. We should notice that Candlemas comes roughly halfway between the shortest day in winter, and the spring day when night and day are equal length. The blessing of candles for use in the rest of the year became common, and these are especially used, two crossed and placed against the worshippers' throats on 3 February, the feast of St Blaise (insert your own 'blaze' joke here).

So, many festal meanings and traditions converge on this Feast of the Presentation, or the Purification, in honour of Jesus, the Light of the Gentiles and the Glory of Israel, with candles that honour the Blessed Virgin Mary and that may be used to bless throats, and revel in the multifarious splendours of this multiply-blessed holy day!

Fr AKMA

Weddings' Coordinator Is there anyone who is interested in volunteering as Weddings' coordinator for St Michael's. This involves being the contact person for the wedding couple. Maggie Davis our previous coordinator has all the paperwork and would be able to hand this over. If you are interested or would like more information, please speak to Joyce Kelly.

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 are 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**.

A prayer resource pack is now available on the diocesan web site <https://oxford.anglican.org/who-we-are/how-we-are-governed/diocesan-synod/vacancy-in-see/prayer> including a collection of prayer points and a full set of intercessions for a eucharistic context. The "headline prayer" is included later in this pew leaflet.

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>).

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

Faith Forum The new series of Faith Forum started on Sunday, **25 January**. This series will be looking at different aspects of liturgy. Our Rector, Jen Brown, gave the first talk, 'What we say and how we say it: the words we use in liturgy.' There are links to a recording of this talk and talks in earlier series on the parish web site: https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_faith_forum.html

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 today, 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. Closing date for applications: **6 pm on Friday 13 February**.

St Michael's Fundraising Cream Teas 2026 The fundraising committee is currently planning events for this year's calendar. We already have the dates planned for the popular Cream Teas events enjoyed by many of our local community.

We are beginning to seek helpers who would like to be involved in making these afternoons a real success.

If you feel that you would like to help at one of the Cream Tea fundraisers this year, either by baking cakes, serving refreshments, general help or selling raffle tickets, we would be extremely grateful.

If you are able to kindly offer your help in any way, please contact Louise, Joyce or Helen mob 07724 160435.

Thank you. St Michael's Church Fundraising Committee.

Dates for Cream Teas 2026

25 April, 30 May, 27 June, 25 July, 29 August (Bank Holiday Weekend), 26 September

Fundraising Events 2026

If you feel that you would like to put forward a fundraising event this year, please contact Louise, Joyce or Helen mobile 07724 160435. Thank you.

Archbishop of Canterbury At a legal ceremony and service in St Paul's Cathedral on Wednesday 28 January the Right Reverend and Right Honourable Dame Sarah Mullally DBE became the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury". The Anglican Communion web site reports that her installation will take place in Canterbury Cathedral on 25 March, the festival of the Annunciation. The report says that her public-facing duties will commence the next day. She will co-preside at the February General Synod session.

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.

General Synod will meet at Church House, Westminster, London from 9 to 13 February. The agenda and papers for the meeting are available at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/governance/general-synod/groups-sessions/general-synod-february-2026#na>

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.

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.

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

February Celebrants and preachers are: 1 February, The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown, 8 February, Fr AKMA, 15 and 22 February, The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown.

Sunday is the feast of The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, Candlemas. Commemorations this week include: Tuesday: Anskar, archbishop, missionary, 865; Wednesday: Gilbert, founder of the Gilbertine Order, 1189; Friday: Martyrs of Japan, 1597.

Ordinary Time The first period of Ordinary Time commences on Monday 2 February and continues to Shrove Tuesday. Ordinary Time then resumes after Trinity Sunday and continues until the eve of Advent Sunday. This year there are only two Sundays in the first period of Ordinary Time, 8 February the 2nd Sunday before Lent and 15 February the Sunday next before Lent. On the days between 2 and 7 February, the Collect for the most distant Sunday from the Sunday next before Lent is used, the Collect for the 5th Sunday before Lent.

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.

Presentation of Christ in the Temple / Candlemas / Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary following on from Fr AKMA's opening piece, these are three of the titles by which the feast of 2 February has been known. In the Orthodox Church it is called the Meeting of Christ (of Simeon and the Lord) and one more ancient calendar refers to it simply as St Simeon. The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary reflects Mary's obedience to the Law of Moses, by offering sacrifices in the temple following childbirth, see Leviticus 12. Leviticus stipulated an offering of a lamb and a turtle dove, though with the proviso that 'if she cannot afford a sheep, she shall take two turtle doves or two pigeons ...'.

The name *Candlemas* derives from the blessing of candles (sometimes for the entire year) which came to be associated with it. One example is recorded in a sermon preached in Durham Cathedral in 1628 'The number of candles burnt that evening was 220, besides 16 torches, 60 of those burning tapes and torches standing upon and near the High Altar', quoted by Benjamin Gordon-Taylor and Simon Jones in their book *Celebrating Christ's Appearing*, intended as an encouragement as they put it.

The shorter preface to the Eucharistic Prayer:

... because by appearing in the Temple,
he comes near to us in judgement;
the Word made flesh searches the hearts of all your people
and brings to light the brightness of your splendour.
... because your eternal Word took our nature upon him
in the womb of the Mary the Virgin.
The sword of sorrow pierced her heart
when he was lifted high on the cross,
and by his sacrifice made our peace with you.

The festival reflects a variety of themes and allusions, "encapsulating the incarnation, epiphany and the passion of the Lord in a celebration that acts as a 'liturgical hinge' between Epiphany and the beginning of Lent." (Gordon-Taylor and Jones)

The pageant of the Weavers in the Coventry Mystery Plays cycle includes the Presentation of the Virgin Mary, the only pageant for which the full manuscript has survived. Possibly less well-known than the Coventry cycle, the Wakefield Mystery Plays also contain the Purification of Mary. The short extract below reflects some of the themes above.

Simeon Lord grant us thy promised grace aright,
Send me thy word both day and night,
Grant me that grace of heaven's light,
And let me never die,
Until such grace to me thou send,
That I may touch him as my friend,
Who shall come our ills to amend,
And see him with my eye.

....

Joseph with two doves and Mary with her baby advance

Joseph Mary, it becoms to pass,
Forty days since that thou was
Delivered of thy son;
To the temple I say we draw,
To cleanse thee and fulfil the law,
Our elders' wont be done.

...

Mary Joseph, that I will with a cheerful heart,
That I live in every part
Be fulfilled in me.
Lord, that all things may,
Give us grace to do this day
What is pleasing unto thee!

1st Angel Thou, Symeon, righteous and true,
Thou has desired both old and new,
To have a sight of Christ Jesu,
As prophecy has told!
Oft has thou prayed to have a sight
Of him that did in maid alight;
Here is that child of so great might,
Now that thou would, behold!

Unfortunately a page is missing in the manuscript at this point.

A digression. There is an interesting story about the late 15th century manuscript of the plays, known as the Towneley Manuscript (the Wakefield cycle is also referred to as the Towneley cycle). In 1922 the manuscript came up for sale at auction. A wealthy industrialist, Lord Edward Brotherton, former Mayor and MP for Wakefield and his niece Dorothy decided to buy the 15th century manuscript for Wakefield. Perhaps wisely, Brotherton set an upper limit on what he was prepared to pay and they were unsuccessful at the auction. The manuscript was sold to The Huntington Library in California. Huntington was a wealthy businessman and also a railroad magnate. (A scanned copy of the manuscript is available in the Huntington Digital Library – see the Prayer and Worship resources page.) Disappointed by this, Brotherton offered to buy Dorothy a book of her choice. The two caught the “collecting bug” and over the next 8 years acquired 35,000 printed books and pamphlets, 30,000 letters and 400 other manuscripts – on average around 20 items per day.

Brotherton was a keen supporter of the newly formed University of Leeds and in 1927 gave £100,000 (around £5.5M in today's money) to build the Brotherton Library (modelled on the reading room at the British Library but larger) and after his death in 1930 bequeathed a further £100,000 along with his entire collection.

Though I knew the library was called the Brotherton Library and I have visited the university many times and have friends there, I had never asked myself who Brotherton was and how the library came about. It was only whilst looking up the Wakefield cycle that I discovered the story of the library.

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:

- Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury and Stephen, Archbishop of York;
- Steven (preparing retirement) and Gavin our bishops in this diocese; for the Vacancy In See Committee;
- 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 appointment of a new team vicar in our parish;
- Nora Maria, and her parents giving thanks for the gift of their child in preparation for her baptism;
- the care homes in our parish, their residents and staff;
- 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: South Quay, Spring Gardens, Spring Road and Springfield Drive.

Eucharistic Lectionary

Sun Candlemas	Malachi 3.1-5	Ps 24. [1-6] 7-end	Hebrews 2.14- end	Luke 2.22- 40
Mon	2 Samuel 15.13-14, 30; 16.5-13	Ps 3		Mark 5.1-20
Tues	2 Samuel 18.9-10, 14, 24-25, 30 – 19.3	Ps 86.1-6		Mark 5.21- end
Wed	2 Samuel 24.2, 9-17	Ps 32.1-8		Mark 6.1-6a
Thur	1 Kings 2.1-4, 10-12	Canticle: 1 Chronicles 29.10-12 or Ps 145.1-5		Mark 6.7-13
Fri	Ecclesiasticus 47.2-11	Ps 18.31-36, 50-end		Mark 6.14- 29
Sat	1 Kings 3.4-13	Ps 119.9-16		Mark 6.30- 34

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, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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 (from Monday onwards, 5th Sunday before Lent)

Almighty God, by whose grace alone we are accepted and called to your service: strengthen us by your Holy Spirit and make us worthy of our calling: 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/>