



# St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

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**8 February 2026 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Lent**

## **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](mailto: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](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 leaflet 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]***

## We welcome our Fr AKMA to celebrate and preach at Mass today

### *Do Not Worry (Matthew 6.34)*

This Sunday is the second Sunday before Lent and the readings at Mass are Genesis 1.1-23, Romans 8.18-25 and Matthew 6.25-end. The heading for the gospel passage in the New Revised Standard Version is *Do Not Worry*. Verse 34 will probably resonate with listeners to the News in recent days – ‘Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.’ Though the original context of the passage was not that.

The late Fr Benedict Green CR in his commentary on Matthew’s gospel writes:

“This is the most extended and most beautiful of the poems of our Lord that has been preserved for us. ...

Matthew offers it as a general counsel to all disciples; ... Those upon whom God lays a special task are to undertake it with confidence: God knows their needs and will see that they are provided for. The context suggests that Matthew is using it as an encouragement to those deterred from generosity by the thought of finding themselves without provision.”

The first reading is the first account in Genesis of the Creation. “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ...” A coincidence certainly, but appropriate in the context of this week’s meeting of General Synod at which one of the items of liturgical business on the Agenda is consideration of a paper entitled *Festival of God the Creator and Commemoration of the Twenty-One Martyrs of Libya* (GS 2408A) which is at a revision stage. The first part of the paper contains proposed texts for a new *Festival of God the Creator* (also known as the *Feast of Creation in Christ*) to be held on the first Sunday of September, linking to the Season of Creation already present in some calendars. As one would expect, the proposals contain texts for the variable items of the liturgy (Invitation to Confession, Kyrie Confession, Collect, etc.), readings for First Evening Prayer, Principal, Second and Third services and *Magnificat* and *Benedictus* antiphons for Daily Prayer.

The Twenty-One Martyrs of Libya were a group of Christian Men, martyred by Da’ish militants on a beach in Libya in 2015, targeted specifically for their Christian identity. Twenty were from Egypt and one from Ghana. The Coptic Orthodox Church swiftly recognised them as martyrs with a feast date of 15 February (next Sunday). The proposal before Synod is to insert this date into the Common Worship calendar along with a proposed biographical text.

*David Duce*

**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.

**Help needed** The Parish office is looking for volunteers who could help in the office when the administrator is on holiday. If you can help, could you please let a Church Warden know.

Also, Norman Gee is looking for help with the IT system, could you please let a Church Warden know if you are able to help.

**Appointment of a new Bishop of Oxford – An Update** taken from Diocesan eNews, Thursday 29 January.

“Thank you to all those who have been praying for the work of the Vacancy-in-See Committee and its sub-groups. The Committee has now met three times, and has four more meetings scheduled, with its final meeting at the end of March, when it will approve the statement of needs and elect six of its number to the Crown Nominations Commission. Work has now started on drafting the statement of needs, and prayer resources have been shared that will support the whole process until a new Bishop of Oxford is in post. We are extremely grateful for the excellent response already to the diocesan consultation. We appreciate the busyness of life may mean you haven’t yet got around to this, but we would very much like to hear from you – every voice counts.”

The 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>

It includes 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>).

The February *Taizé Prayer service* will be today, **Sunday 8 February 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.

**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.

**Stations of the Cross and Silent Reflections during Lent** The plan is for Stations of the Cross to be held on Tuesdays **3, 10 and 17 March**. Silent Reflections will take place on **24 February** and **24 March**, the latter date is earlier than usual to avoid Holy Week. More information will follow in due course when the details have been finalised.

**Faith Forum** Our February Faith Forum will be on **Sunday 22 February** in the parish centre. Continuing our series on liturgy, the Revd Dr Phil Cooke will be speaking on How Music Works in Worship.

Our Team Rector, Jennifer 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](https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_faith_forum.html)

**Annual Charity Donations** Donations of £452 from our general income have been sent to each of the two charities chosen for 2025: *Homeless Oxfordshire* and *TARIRO – Hope for Youth in Zimbabwe*. Acknowledging the donation, Fr Nicolas CR, TARIRO Trustee, wrote to our Treasurer:

"That is wonderful news. Thank you so much. I will shortly be sending money out to Zimbabwe to pay this term's school fees. The bill always turns out bigger than I expect so every contribution we get is most welcome. Please do pass on my thanks to the people of St Michael's for their generosity."

**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/>.

**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](mailto: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.

**Abingdon Foodbank** At present the foodbank is currently asking for noodles, UHT milk, fruit juice, tinned fruit, squash, corned beef, meatballs, sweetcorn and cooking oil. Deodorants for men and women also needed as are carrier bags. In December 2025, Abingdon Foodbank distributed 272 standard emergency food parcels to people facing hardship in Abingdon and the surrounding villages. These parcels fed 731 people, of which 272 were children. The 2025 Christmas hamper campaign saw special Christmas parcels distributed to 388 local families. We worked with schools and local agencies to help us identify people in need, and thanks to your wonderful donations we helped feed 1,233 people, of which, 644 were children.

There is a collection point in church and other points are situated in local supermarkets and some other local businesses. The "Give Help" page has details of ways to donate and a link to the "BanktheFood app" which has frequently updated lists of most urgently needed items. <https://abingdon.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/>

**Quiet Garden Day** at Aston Tirrold and Uphorpe Village Hall, Thorpe Street, Aston Uphorpe, Didcot OX11 2EQ on **Saturday 7 March 2026 10 am - 4 pm**. Leader: Josie Midwinter on a Lenten theme. Refreshments are provided, but please bring a packed lunch. A donation of £10 would be welcome. To attend it would be helpful to email: [atquietgardendays@gmail.com](mailto:atquietgardendays@gmail.com) in advance. (The Village Hall is being used whilst the *Centre for Reflection* is being renovated.) All are welcome.

**Abbey Chamber Concert Sunday 8 February at 3 pm, St Nicolas' Church, 3 pm**. 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/>

**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](mailto:johnclare.blunsdon@gmail.com).

**World Day of Prayer** This year the World Day of Prayer takes place on **Friday 6 March 2026 at St Edmund's Church, 2.30 pm**. The service has been prepared by the Christian women of Nigeria and the theme is 'I will give you rest, come' from Matthew 11:28 – 30. The service shares the stories of four Nigerian women who inspire us to work towards a world without injustice, insecurity, marginalisation, religious persecution, poverty and despair. We will join a great wave of prayer that encircles the globe, all praying with and for the country and people of Nigeria. All welcome, Refreshments will follow the service.

**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](https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html).

**A Candle in the Window** The February edition of the Parish Magazine (the first of 2026) will be available to download on **8 February** from [https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P\\_communications.html](https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html). Previous issues are also available via the same link.

## Worship

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

Commemorations this week include: Tuesday: Scholastica, abbess, c. 543; Saturday: Cyril and Methodius, missionaries, 869 and 885, Valentine, martyr at Rome, c. 269.

**Lent Books** With only two Sundays between Candlemas and Lent, it is perhaps timely to think about Lent books. The books below should not be taken as recommendations, but as examples of what is available and might resonate for some readers. In the words of the modern disclaimer – other books and resources are available.

The Church of England's official Lent book is *Draw Near: Life-giving habits for Lent*. Booklets for adults and children are available, see <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/drawnear>

"The booklet for adults invites you to develop a rhythm of life that will help you grow as a disciple of Christ. Each week explores an activity central to Christian discipleship: worship, prayer, Scripture, communion, service to others and sharing the good news. For each day of Lent it offers Bible readings, short reflections, prayers and practical responses."

*Draw Near* resources are also available online in the Everyday Faith app and on the Church of England web site: <https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter/draw-near-life-giving-habits-lent>.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2026 is *Dancing to the Heartbeat of God: Stories of Discipleship* (SPCK, 2025). From the publisher's promotional material:

"A powerful Lent Resource that brings together voices from across the global Anglican Communion. Through real stories, prayer and reflection, it shows what discipleship looks like in every-day life from remote villages and refugee camps to busy cities and small parish churches."

Another possibility might be *Meeting God in John: A Companion for Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Beyond* by David Ford (SPCK, 2025). David Ford is Regius Professor of Divinity Emeritus in the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Selwyn College. Again from promotional material "Whether you are completely new to John's Gospel or have read it many times before, Meeting God in John will help you see the Fourth Gospel with fresh eyes and gain a deeper understanding of its essential meaning and purpose."

Although it was published in February 2025, Rowan Williams' short book *Discovering Christianity: A guide for the curious* (SPCK, 2025) might be of interest. One reviewer, Mark Oakley, Dean of Southwark Cathedral, London, wrote:

“Rowan Williams offers a typically intelligent, attractive, and beguiling picture of what it means to be a Christian... When I read Williams I feel something coming to birth inside me, whispers from a shore I want to set out for.”

Readers who were present at the Faith Forum talk given by our Team Rector last month or listened to the recording afterwards, will have heard Jennifer Brown refer to the book *The Sound of the Liturgy – How words work in Worship*, by Cally Hammond (SPCK, 2015). It is a scholarly work – Cally Hammond is Dean of Gonville & Caius College, University of Cambridge, but very readable. Chapter titles include: Posture, repetition, rhythm, and punctuation. Another scholarly work, though again very readable, is Juliette Day’s book, *Hearing our Prayers – An Exploration of Liturgical Listening* (Alcuin Club Collection No 99, Liturgical Press, 2024). In the Introduction, Juliette remarks that the idea for the book came from a statement by a philosopher:

“there could be no saying without hearing, no speaking which is not an integral part of listening, no speech which is not somehow received.”

*The Use of Symbols in Worship* edited by Christopher Irvine (Alcuin Club Liturgy Guides, SPCK, 2007) might also interest some readers. The four contributors have all been engaged in teaching liturgy but also have vast practical experience. From the back cover:

“Each chapter of Symbols and Worship provides theological and historical background to the symbols discussed (water, oil, light and incense), as well as practical guidance on the place and use of these symbols in the whole range of Common Worship services.”

It isn’t a simple “why do we do what we do”, but an exploration of what lies behind some of the key symbols in our worship and, perhaps more for those leading worship, some reflection on how key symbols feature or can be incorporated in Common Worship services.

### **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.

The Church of St Mary Magdalen, Oxford, is in an interregnum at this time, hoping that the appointment of a new Vicar will be confirmed in early May. This prayer, slightly adapted to our situation, appeared in their Parish Newsletter last month.

O God, who alone guides and guards the Church  
by your Spirit. Strengthen and encourage us  
in this time of uncertainty and opportunity, and inspire  
those who maintain our worship, and those engaged  
in the discernment and selection of a new Team Vicar.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

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;
- General Synod meeting from 9 to 13 February;
- Elijah Rory to be baptized on 8 February and for his family and Godparents;
- 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**

<b>Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Lent</b>	<b>Genesis 1.1-2.3</b>	Ps 136	<b>Romans 8.18-25</b>	<b>Matthew 6.25-end</b>
<b>Mon</b>	1 Kings 8.1-7, 9-13	Ps 132.1-9		Mark 6.53-end
<b>Tues</b>	1 Kings 8.22-23, 27-30	Ps 84.1-10		Mark 7.1-13
<b>Wed</b>	1 Kings 10.1-10	Ps 37.3-6, 30-32		Mark 7.14-23
<b>Thur</b>	1 Kings 11.4-13	Ps 106.3, 35-41		Mark 7.24-30
<b>Fri</b>	1 Kings 11.29-32; 12.19	Ps 81.8-14		Mark 7.31-end
<b>Sat</b>	1 Kings 12.26-32, 13.33-end	Ps 106.6-7, 20-23		Mark 8.1-10

**Collect (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Lent)**

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, ...

**Post Communion (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Lent)**

God our creator, by your gift the tree of life was set at the heart of the earthly paradise, and the bread of life at the heart of your Church: may we who have been nourished at your table on earth be transformed by the glory of the Saviour's cross and enjoy the delights of eternity; 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/>