



St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

8 March 2026 – 3rd Sunday of 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
Email: rector@abingdonparish.org.uk

Team Vicar: Vacancy

Churchwardens: Miss Joyce Kelly (01235 533555 / 07833 535768)
e-mail: joyceekelly@btinternet.com
Mrs Louise Heffernan (01235 525412 / 07779 650968)
e-mail: lheff@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk

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)
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 Dr Jane Baun to celebrate and preach at Mass today

"But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?" Job 28:12

(Answer at the end)

A Team Vicar for Abingdon-on-Thames

It all began with a meeting, in January. A meeting of minds who could be there from the congregants of our three churches. Rector Jen ably led us to ponder, reflect upon and - in Anglican techno-speak - "discern" what God wants and what we want in a new Team Vicar for our Parish.

The meeting began and ended, encouragingly, with a prayer. That gave me the first clue to the answer to poor old Job's question above.

The parish profile, previously published to attract our new Rector, was dusted off next. Several more meetings, this time of the PCC - all helpfully begun and ended with prayers - followed, in which every full stop, Oxford comma, misaligned bullet point, textual and image improvement was carefully and prayerfully scrutinised: all in search of wisdom to discern and attract the "right" person for the job.

Version 14 of the parish profile now resides with the diocese, together with the wording of the advert and another piece of text called the person profile. This trinity of materials will constitute our offer, to be advertised far and wide after Easter, to whomsoever the Spirit will prompt, we pray, to apply for this important post. We hope to have candidates to interview in June, and the interview panel will summon representatives from all three churches, the Rector, the Bishop, the Archdeacon and representatives of the Deanery. If all goes well and an appointment is made, the person will most likely need to give 3 months notice (depending on his/her current appointment) so we'd expect the appointee to be in post in October.

However daunting this extended panel may appear to our candidate(s), I remain convinced that if they and we keep talking to the Almighty about the process and the appointment, He will provide us with comfort when we are scared, as well as the right person as our Team Vicar, in His wisdom. Please keep up your prayers! After all, even Job discerned the right answer in the end, when God replied to him:

"Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; (and to depart from evil is understanding.)"

Job 28:28 (my brackets)

David Pope, Churchwarden at St Helen's (with thanks to Eluned Hallas, Churchwarden at St Nicolas')

We owe a debt of gratitude to David Pope who has spent hours formatting the parish profile and team profile. In fact all the church wardens of the parish have been heavily involved in the production of the two important documents and in considering how the views of the parish might help us as we discern who might be our new Team Vicar. Joyce has helped with the writing of the Parish Profile and we have all discussed at length how best to shape the contributions to be sure to attract the 'right' person, someone to lead us with 'wisdom, courage and love'. Each discussion has taken place in the context of prayer, as David says. We shall continue to be involved with the selection process and with the interviews which take place at the end of June.

We would ask you to continue to pray that we might find the person God intends to lead us as Team Vicar. And also that those involved might be guided by God in their thinking and judgement. There are some helpful prayers at the end of this pew leaflet which might be used to guide you.

Joyce Kelly and Louise Heffernan (Churchwardens at St Michael's)

Thank you to Gill and Peter Squire for providing refreshments after church last Sunday and our warmest congratulations on their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

Lent Appeal 2026 Last year The Abingdon Bridge (TAB) and TARIRO – Hope for Youth in Zimbabwe – were chosen as our charities for our Lent Appeals in 2025 and 2026. We hope you will feel able to support this year's appeal. There are four ways to donate:

- By bank transfer. The preferred way to donate is by bank transfer to: NatWest Bank, Account no: 61580376 Sort code: 600101, account name Abingdon Parochial Church Council St Michael's Church; please use the reference LENT 2026.
- By credit card. Please speak to Joyce or Louise.
- By cheque. Please make cheques payable to 'Abingdon Parochial Church Council St Michael's Church' and put on the collection plate in an envelope clearly marked LENT 2026, hand to a Church Warden or send to The Treasurer, St Michael's Church LENT 2026, Parish Office, St Helen's Court, Abingdon OX14 5BS.
- In cash placed on the collection plate in an envelope clearly marked LENT 2026 though if you could donate by other means this would be appreciated.

Unfortunately, donations made through the church are not eligible for Gift Aid. Only donations made directly to the charities would be eligible for Gift Aid. Anyone wishing to make such a donation should consult the relevant web

sites: <https://www.theabingdonbridge.org.uk/support-us> and <https://tarirouk.com/donate/>. If you pay directly to the charities and feel comfortable doing so, it would be helpful if you would put an anonymous note of the amount given in an envelope marked LENT 2026 and place on the collection plate. Please indicate if the donation was made through Gift Aid. This will enable us to give a more complete picture of the total amount raised.

Please speak to Joyce or Louise if you have any queries about any of the above. It would be very helpful if donations could be made on or before Palm Sunday.

Joyce and Louise on behalf of St Michael's DCC

Electoral Roll Revision The Electoral Roll is being revised in the period **Thursday 19 March to Thursday 2 April**. The Roll is our official membership list, and you need to be on the Roll in order to be able to participate in, and vote at, the Annual Church Meetings.

If you are not already on the Electoral Roll and would like your name to be added, please complete the simple application form, available from Keith Bowman. Your name can be added to the Roll if you are baptised and aged 16 or over, and you satisfy some other simple conditions.

Please speak to Keith (01235 528962) if you have any questions about this. Would you also let him know if you have changed your name or address (or email address if you had declared it) in the past year.

St Michael's DCC At its last meeting, the DCC considered how they could better inform members of the congregation about the matters discussed at DCC meetings and how they could best provide a two-way channel for ideas and feedback. As a first step, it was agreed that the date of each meeting (meetings take place every two months) would be announced in advance to the congregation and they would be invited to pass on to the DCC via the Secretary (Glynne) or one of the Churchwardens (Joyce and Louise), anything they would like the DCC to discuss.

Our next meeting is on **Tuesday 10 March**, and we would welcome your ideas or comments - good or bad - either verbally at church on Sunday or Thursday, or by e-mail. We really DO want to hear from you, please! My email is glynnebutt@btinternet.com.

Parish Office An issue with telephones in the Parish Office last week prompted me to ask if the mobile number that has been quoted on the front cover of this pew leaflet for some time is still valid. It turns out it is not. If you have stored a mobile number for the Parish Office, ending 957, please delete it.

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. As part of the consultation process, the Diocese is arranging an online open meeting at which they can hear views from any member of the diocese who would like to attend. This will be on **19 March at 6 pm on Zoom**. Registration is essential. This meeting is open to anyone who lives or works in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Berkshire. The [registration link](#) is now open.

A prayer resource pack is now available on the diocesan web <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.

Annual Meetings Note the dates. The Annual District Church Meeting will take place on **Sunday 26 April**. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting and Annual Meeting of Parishioners will take place on **Thursday 30 April**. Further details will be announced in due course.

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 March *Taizé Prayer service* will be this Sunday, **Sunday 8 March 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.

Faith Forum The second talk in the current series was on Sunday 22 February, where the Revd Dr Phil Cooke spoke 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.' Currently [Wednesday] there is a link to a recording of the first 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/>.

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.

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/>

Stations of the Cross will be held on Tuesday evenings at **7 pm** (for about 40 minutes) on **10 and 17 March**; these will be lay led. If you park in Park Road or Crescent, come in to get a parking permit.

Abingdon Artists' Spring Exhibition takes place in the **south aisle of St Helen's Church from Monday 9 to Saturday 14 March, 10 am to 4.30 pm each day**. With over 100 pictures on display, it's well worth a look and it's also an opportunity to buy cards and unframed work.

Abingdon School are holding a concert in St Michael's on **Friday 20 March at 7pm** entitled 'Gerald Finzi: An Anniversary Concert'. The concert will feature his popular *Eclogue*, the *Five Bagatelles* for clarinet, his renowned song cycle *Let Us Garlands Bring*, alongside several other works. Admission is free, although booking is encouraged via Abingdon School's website.

<https://www.abingdon.org.uk/sports-and-leisure/performance/gerald-finzi-an-anniversary-concert/>

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.

Agnostics Anonymous The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday 24 March at 6 pm in The Parish Centre**, aiming to finish about 7.15 pm. "Are you saved. Ideas of salvation in the bible and today", led by The Revd Professor John Barton and the Revd Dr Jennifer Brown. Everyone welcome.

I Will Build This World from Love Friday 27 March at 7.30 pm in Helwys Hall, Regent's Park College, Pusey Street, Oxford OX1 2LB. The Love in Religion Project at Regent's Park College in the University of Oxford, cordially invites you to a screening of *I Will Build This World from Love*, a documentary directed by John Block, a three-time Emmy Award winner, and Oliver Miede, offering a compelling vision of hope through a bold multi-faith initiative at the Peace Cathedral in Tbilisi, Georgia.

At its heart, the film is an intimate exploration of courage, interfaith collaboration, and moral imagination within a society often sceptical of religious pluralism. Through ritual, celebration, and shared vulnerability, it portrays how the Peace Cathedral's pioneering commitment to a shared sacred space — uniting diverse faith traditions under one roof — models reconciliation, constructive coexistence, and the possibility of social transformation in turbulent times.

Programme: • Welcome and Introduction: The Revd Prof. Paul Fiddes • Screening of the Documentary • Response and Reflections: Rabbi Jonathan Romain • Questions and Discussion: The Rt Rev'd Malkhaz Songulashvili
All are warmly welcome. In-person. No need to register.

Mothers' Union Meet on Tuesday 7 April, 2026 at 10:30 am in the Parish Centre. The topic for the meeting is *Abingdon Carousel Family Centre* and the speaker Sharron Jenkinson. All are welcome.

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. Tickets are now available on-line, <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FYLI>, and will be available at the door. Adults price £12, concessions £10, 16 & under free.



CiA News The **March** 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 March issue of the Parish Magazine should be available to download from Sunday 8 March. This and earlier editions of the Parish Magazine are available to download from https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html.

Worship

March Celebrants and preachers are: 8 March The Revd Dr Jane Baun; 15 March The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown; 22 and 29 March Fr AKMA.

There are no commemorations in the calendar this week.

A pastoral letter from the Archbishop of Jerusalem & the Middle East in light of escalating conflict

The Revd Rosalind Rutherford read an extract from the Archbishop's pastoral letter issued on Saturday 28 February. The full text of the letter is available on-line:

<https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2026/02/archbishop-of-jerusalem-the-middle-east-shares-pastoral-letter-in-light-of-escalating-conflict.aspx>

A short extract from his letter follows. He wrote:

“These developments strike at the very soul of our Province of Jerusalem & the Middle East. Every single nation now engaged in this combat, and those bearing the brunt of the retaliatory strikes, resides within our ecclesiastical boundaries. Our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Iran are currently enduring the terror of aerial bombardment; our members in the Diocese of Cyprus & the Gulf are witnessing the arrival of war at their doorsteps; and our faithful in the Diocese of Jerusalem—extending across Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria—face an unprecedented threat of military escalation.”

He issued three pleas:

First, I call upon the global Church to join us in urgent, unceasing prayer. We implore God to protect the innocent—the mothers, the children, and the elderly—who are caught in the crossfire of this 'Operation Epic Fury' and the subsequent 'crushing responses.' We pray specifically for a 'sound mind' for the leaders of the United States, Israel, and Iran, that they might recognize the futility of this bloodshed and turn back from the precipice of a global catastrophe.

Second, we must offer each other the sanctuary of Christian love. I therefore urge our clergy and laity to be beacons of comfort. In a time of 'regime change' rhetoric and military ultimatums, let our message be the unchanging promise of Christ's peace: to build each other up (1 Cor 8:1), for our hope is not in the strength of armadas or missile shields, but in the Prince of Peace.

Finally, we must remain 'Bridge Builders.' Even as diplomatic windows seem to slam shut, the Church must keep the doors of reconciliation open. We refuse to see our neighbours as enemies, whether they be in Tehran, Tel Aviv, or the military bases of the Gulf. I extend an urgent invitation to the wider Anglican Communion and all people of goodwill: Intercede for us now. The hour is late, and the danger is great. We remain “battered and bruised, but not defeated.” May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

TAB and Tariro There are now copies of the latest publicity brochures from both TARIRO and TAB on the literature table by the south porch in the literature holder nearest The Bookstall. Do please take copies and use during Lent. For more information about the two charities, see their web sites: <https://www.theabingdonbridge.org.uk/> and <https://tarirouk.com/>. Here are a few suggestions for prayer, lightly revised from suggestions made last year.

Give thanks and pray for the work of TAB:
for the charity's Trustees that they may govern with wisdom and integrity; for the TAB team, CEO, heads of departments, counsellors, coaches, therapists and office staff, volunteers, their clients.
Lord in mercy, hear our prayer.

Give thanks and pray for the work of Tariro:
for the charity's Trustees that they may govern with wisdom and integrity; for the partner trust, Tariro Youth Project in Zimbabwe; for the on-going financial resources needed to support the children.
Lord in mercy, hear our prayer.

for the youth ambassadors representing the voices of young people and their opinions.
Lord in mercy, hear our prayer.

for the young children who have recently joined Tariro, for their health and schooling. For the five young people baptized earlier this year.
Lord in mercy, hear our prayer.

for the well-being programme of 1 to 1 support for young people; Bridge 18 to 25, support for 18 to 25 year olds.
Lord in mercy, hear our prayer.

for the 100+ young people who have been supported by Tariro over the last 16 years. For their future employment and stability.
Lord in mercy, hear our prayer.

for the healthy lifestyles programme and workshops, for the SMART (Social Media Anxiety Resilience Team) Project enabling young people to become more digitally resilient, for the gym and sports programme.
Lord in mercy, hear our prayer.

for the farming projects (pigs, chickens and vegetables), for the members of the Tariro family now in leadership roles.
Lord in mercy, hear our prayer.

for young people who need mental health support but are unable to access it.
Lord in mercy, hear our prayer.

for all young people in Zimbabwe, living in poverty, orphaned or in abusive homes, without hope for the future.
Lord in mercy, hear our prayer.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his mercy endures for ever. (Psalm 136)

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, provided this prayer when they were recently seeking a new Vicar.

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 for 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; the Middle East, Sudan, Ukraine;
- the on-going work and financial health of TAB and TARIRO;
- our Church Council meeting on Tuesday evening;
- 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: Stonehill Walk, Stratton Way, Suffolk Way, Sutton Close.

Eucharistic Lectionary

3rd Sunday of Lent	Exodus 17.1-7	Ps 95	Romans 5.1-11	John 4.5-42
Mon	2 Kings 5.1-15	Ps 42.1-2; 43.1-4		Luke 4.24-30
Tues	Song of the Three 2.11-20	Ps 25.3-10		Matthew 18.21-end
Wed	Deuteronomy 4.1, 5-9	Ps 147.13-end		Matthew 5.17-19
Thur	Jeremiah 7.23-28	Ps 95.1-2, 6-end		Luke 11.14-23
Fri	Hosea 14	Ps 81.6-10, 13, 16		Mark 12.28-34
Sat	Hosea 5.15-6.6	Ps 51.1-2, 17-end		Luke 18.9-14

Collect (3rd Sunday of Lent)

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord....

Prayer after Communion (3rd Sunday of Lent)

Merciful Lord, grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God; 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/>