



St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

13 September 2026 –Holy Cross Day / 15th Sunday after Trinity **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: (To join the parish after Christmas)

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)
e-mail: administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk

Web site: <http://www.stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk>

Items for inclusion in the next issue of 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 Fr AKMA to preside and preach at Mass today

The Power of the Cross

Today we celebrate Holy Cross Day. Because St Helen is believed to have discovered the true cross on her pilgrimage to the Holy Land, St Helen's keeps Holy Cross Day as the church's patronal festival.

Although it wasn't always, the cross has become the most widely recognised visual symbol of Christianity (and it may be St Helen that we have to thank for that). The cross provides a powerful visual image – a reminder of the horrific death that Jesus suffered, and the cruelty that human society and human sin can inflict, especially when those in power feel threatened. It can also be a helpful visual aid for thinking about prayer, the Church, and our relationship with God. The image of the cross can be helpful in prayer, as it gives a focus; people can imagine laying down burdens at the foot of the cross, or standing at the foot of the cross and looking up, towards God. Some use the shape of the cross as a reminder of the relationships that exist within the Church: the vertical – between us and God, and the horizontal – our relationships with each other. The cross is also a reminder of God's love, the arms of the cross representing God's arms opened wide, ready to embrace all that God made and loves.

The cross is a reminder that ours is a subversive faith! Not only was Jesus crucified as a usurper, the 'King of the Jews', but the Church has transformed the cross from instrument of torture and death into a symbol of peace and love. As we gaze upon the cross, let us allow God to transform our lives into those that spread Christ's peace and love in the world.

The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown

Team Rector

Faith Forum Our Autumn Faith Forum series begins in September and ties-in with Creationtide, offering an exploration of what is often termed eco-theology, that is, the theology that provides the rationale for creation care and informs our approach towards environmental action. Faith Forum meets in the Parish Centre Hall, with lunch from 12.15 pm and talks beginning at 12.45 pm. When possible, talks are also made available on Zoom. *The order of the second and third talks advertised last week has been reversed.* The revised dates for the Autumn Faith Forum talks are:

September 27: The goodness of creation (Margaret Adam)

October 25: Creation care as act of praise (Hannah Mann, Diocese of Oxford)

November 22: A new or a renewed earth? (Jen Brown)

The Revd Naomi Gardom We are delighted to announce that, subject to legalities, the Revd Naomi Gardom been appointed as the next Team Vicar in the Abingdon-on-Thames team. Naomi will join the team from the University Church in Oxford where she currently serving her curacy. Naomi's licensing will be on **Wednesday 6 January 2027 at 7.30 pm in St Helen's Church.**

Confirmation and admission to Holy Communion A parish-wide Confirmation Service is planned for **Sunday 31 January, 10.30 am at St Helen's.**

For those wishing to be confirmed there will be preparation evenings on 14, 21 & 28 October, 7.30-8.30 pm in the parish centre lounge. If you or your child would be interested in confirmation, and have not already done so, please speak to Revd Jen or Fr AKMA. We can also offer preparation for admission to Holy Communion prior to confirmation.

Jennifer Brown

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 Taizé Service at St Helen's Church, this Sunday, **Sunday 13 September at 5.30 pm.**

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

8 am Communion Service Rather than alternating monthly between St Helen's and St Nicolas', the 8 am BCP Holy Communion service will continue to be held at St Nicolas' each month. This is currently for a trial period until the end of the year (the Christmas Day service will be at St Helen's, as in past years), at which time we will review the situation to see how it is working.

Jennifer Brown, Team Rector

Abingdon Foodbank Most needed at present are biscuits, squash, cereal, tinned mac'n'cheese and UHT milk (whole or semi-skimmed) as well as empty egg boxes, carrier bags and wet cat or dog food. There is a collection box in church and goods donated there will be taken to the South Abingdon Foodbank.

There are collection points 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/>

Piano Recital Many thanks to Huw Rhys James who treated us to a wonderful afternoon of piano music last Sunday. The concert was well attended and after expenses we expect add about £430 to church funds. We are extremely grateful to all those who helped in any way, either beforehand or on the day.

Cream Tea The next Cream Tea will take place on **Saturday 26 September between 2.30 pm and 4.30 pm**. Do please bring along your family and friends and promote wherever you can. It should be a lovely afternoon with some delicious cakes and piano music.

Louise

Abingdon Michaelmas Fair will take place this year from **Sunday 4 – Wednesday 7 October**. The Fair Blessing will be in the Market Place **Sunday 4 October at 4 pm**. The St Helen's events programme gives the date of the Abingdon Runaway Fair as **Sunday 11 October**. The formal road closure notice for the main Fair can be found at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/licences-and-permits/licences-and-permits/large-public-events/abingdon-michaelmas-fair> One assumes that for the main Fair the usual road closures will apply to the Park area, i.e. there will be no access from Conduit Road and Victoria Road. The only access will be via the normally-closed gate in Faringdon Road.

Abingdon Mothers' Union will meet on **Tuesday 13 October at 10.30 am in the Parish Centre**. The speaker will be Bee Keeper – David Busby. All are welcome. Note the date – later in the month than usual due to Abingdon Fair.

Raising Faith Thursdays, 7.30 - 9.30 pm starting **17 September at Peachcroft Christian Centre**. As Christian parents, grandparents and carers we want our children to grow up knowing God and developing a mature faith that will last, but sometimes we feel ill-equipped or just too busy to do much more than get them to church on a Sunday. Raising Faith is a series of six evening sessions, exploring a variety of ways to create strong and healthy foundations of faith in our children, using the opportunities that come up in the everyday ups and downs of family life.

Find out more and book a place here: <https://www.peachcroftcc.org/community/parenting-course>

Quiet Garden Day at Aston Tirrold Centre for Reflection, Spring Lane, Aston Tirrold, OX11 9EJ on **Saturday 19 September 10 am - 4 pm**. Leader: Philip Mader-Grayson on the theme *Questioning Faith Matters - growing in maturity*. 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 in advance. All are welcome.

Heritage weekend St Helen's Church will be open for Heritage weekend, **19 – 20 September**. **Saturday 19 September 10 am – 4 pm** for a self-guided quiz, children's craft activities, visits to the bell tower (2 – 4 pm), a chance to play the organ (2 – 4pm) and refreshments all day! On Sunday 20 September there will be a Sung Eucharist at 10.30 am. The church will be open for visiting 12 – 4 pm and Choral Evensong will be at 5.30pm. The full programme of events for Heritage weekend can be found on the web site: <https://www.abingdonheritage.org.uk/>

Oxford Gospel Choir are singing at **St Helen's Church on Saturday 3 October at 7.30 pm** in aid of *Family of Hope*, a school in Uganda for children with special educational needs. Tickets £10 at the door.

United Prayer event The Church in Abingdon invites you to an evening of worship, prayer and vision, as well as the CiA Annual General Meeting, at **Abingdon Baptist Church on Thursday 8 October 2026, 7.30 pm**. Each church will be represented by two specially selected volunteers from their church as well as the CiA representatives and clergy. Each church will be asked to submit prayer requests that we can all join together to prayer for – whether for specific outreach work, their church as a whole, the community, the town or the people who hold major roles in our town. We also hope to invite dignitaries from the local council, TVP and other organisations. All welcome. Refreshments will be provided.

Black History Month An event is taking place on **Saturday 17 October 2026, from 2.30 pm to 6 pm**, at **Trinity Church, Conduit Road**, will bring together civic leaders, community representatives and guests for:

- Inspiring speakers reflecting on Black History Month
- An in-conversation session with The Rt Hon, the Lord Boateng
- A short act of worship led by Dr Sonia Hicks, Chair of the Northampton Methodist District.

Cafe@35 Abingdon Baptist Church is pleased to announce that Cafe@35 has reopened from Wednesday 2 September 2026, initially from **10.30 am to 12.30 pm, Monday to Saturday**. We will be serving drinks with a selection of cakes and teacakes to begin with. We are particularly keen to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer in the catering area so that we can serve lunches in the future. We would also welcome volunteers to serve as catering assistants (washing up and helping with food preparation) and as listeners. If you would like to join the team, please contact 35 Ock Street on office@35ockst.org.uk or ring 01235 530080 during open hours to find out more.

The September issue of CiA News is now available to download and there is a copy on the Notice Board by the welcome table. A digital copy is available to download from the parish web site: https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html.

A Candle in the Window The September Parish magazine will be available from this Sunday, 13 September. Download from https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_window.php.

Worship

September The celebrants and preachers for September are: 13 September Fr AKMA; 20 September The Revd Dr Jane Baun; 27 September (Patronal Festival), Fr AKMA.

Commemorations this week include: Tuesday: Cyprian, bishop, martyr, 258; Wednesday: Ninian, bishop, apostle of the pict, c. 432 and Edward Bouverie Pusey, priest, 1882; Thursday: Hildegard, abbess, visionary, 1179 and Saturday: Theodore, archbishop, 690.

Festival of Creation in Christ; retrospective As reported in earlier issues the form of Mass used last Sunday was based on the material approved by General Synod in July this year. The Eucharistic Prayer included an extended preface for the festival, but was otherwise the standard text of Common Worship Eucharistic Prayer B. Whilst looking at some of the material produced by other denominations for the festival, I noticed this Eucharistic Prayer from the Anglican Church of Canada, authorised for experimental use and feedback. The prayer was created for the "Salal + Cedar Watershed Discipleship Community and is authorized for use in the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster on Coast Salish Territory (in the Pacific Northwest of North America). It includes [in the preface] references to the First Nations, species, waterways and human activities of our region -these can be adapted for different locations." The full prayer can be found in the publication

<https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/trial-use-feast-of-the-creator-june-2026.pdf>

This is an extract from the prayer following the Sanctus which incorporates creation and creator references.

We give thanks to you for Jesus,
whose first bed was a feed trough.
He was baptized into the Jordan,
tested in the wilderness,
he travelled in fishing boats
and told parables of farmers and seeds,
labour and wages, yeast and bread.

On the night before he died,
Jesus took bread,
food of the poor, the work of field and hearth,
he gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his friends saying:
Take and eat, this is my body, given for you,
do this to remember me.

Again after supper
he took the cup of wine, fruit of the land,
gave thanks and gave it to his friends saying:
This is my blood, which is shed for you.
When you do this, do it in memory of me.
Remembering Jesus' life, death and resurrection
and awaiting his coming kingdom,
we offer you this bread and this cup.

Creator, send your Spirit on these gifts
so that we know Jesus in them
and are gathered together with everyone
who shares this sacred meal of justice and community.

Fill us with the courage and love of Jesus,
that we may strive for justice and peace,
respect the dignity of every human being,
and safeguard the integrity of creation.

Bring us with
(*name patron saint of your community or saints you celebrate today*)
and all your saints
to your commonwealth of sparrow and lily,
child and beggar which is both now and yet to come ...

Creationtide The diocese of Oxford has produced a prayer calendar for the Season of Creation with prayer topics for each day from 1 September to 3 October. It is available online at
<https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/61f2fd86f0ee5/content/pages/documents/2026creationtideprayercalendar.pdf>

For Sunday 13 September we are invited to “Join with our Link Diocese of Växjö praying for global climate justice; that the Holy Spirit may help us to make the world sustainable, fair and equal.

I will pick one area of sustainability from the field I know a bit about – computing. An opinion piece article was published last week in one of the leading professional computing magazines entitled: *Balancing Sustainable Computing and Computing for Sustainability*. (There is a link to the article on our Prayer and Worship resources page.) *Sustainable computing* is about minimising the environmental impact of computing infrastructure. *Computing for sustainability* is applying computational tools to addressing sustainability challenges, be that climate change challenges or other environmental challenges. There is an argument that runs something like this: to understand climate change and develop mitigation strategies we need better and better computer models and the ‘better’ the models the more supercomputing power is needed to run them. But more supercomputer power generates more environmental impact which exacerbates the problem at hand. Hence the need for balance.

Two topics that frequently hit the news are the environmental impact of data centres and the environmental impact of Artificial Intelligence and Large Language Models (such as ChatGPT). Another recent article looked at the environmental implications of the world’s largest data centre being built in Louisiana, USA. It is said that it will occupy an area of over 370,000 square meters of floor space, though not in one building and the chosen site has room for expansion. It is said that power consumption will be over 5 gigawatts, enough to power around 4.2 million homes in the USA, construction will need over 1 million tonnes of cement. In terms of computing it will eventually need more than 3 million computer chips (GPUs). The numbers are eye-watering and hard to comprehend, and that is just one large data centre. An even-more mind-blowing suggestion that has appeared recently is the idea of putting data centres into space, though I don’t think it is unfair to say that that idea has been met with derision in many quarters. Leaving aside issues of filling up space with objects that are a serious danger to other objects in space it raises deep questions about who has the right to do what in space.

Artificial Intelligence or more specifically large language models, use vast computing resources to train the models from data scraped from across the internet and there are pertinent questions about the rights to use such data for these purposes without creators’ consent and this in turn is a challenge to fairness and justice, amongst many other questions. There are examples of companies trying to buy up nuclear power stations (which has implications for the cost of power to other consumers) to meet their requirements though the more equality-minded companies are at least working with power-generation companies to scale back computations when power-generation companies are struggling to satisfy the needs of other customers. Some authors question the desirability and direction of Large Language Models and Artificial Intelligence in general, but one could say that once the genie is out of the bottle ...

Another recent article noted issues around computer memory chips. Data centres use very specialised memory chips which take much more resource to make than the kind found in domestic or general-purpose computers. The side effect of this is that memory producers can charge a premium price for high-end chips, but making them takes resource away from normal chip production which is driving up the availability and price of regular memory chips.

Then there is the problem of what to do with broken or obsolete equipment – who has not had a perfectly good piece of equipment, mobile phone, home computer, ... rendered obsolete by a software upgrade in the interests of ‘improving the user-experience’ or whatever; or a device that has broken and is deemed irreparable? There is emerging legislation in some countries about reparability of devices and some manufacturers are offering factory-refurbished products, but the problem of e-waste remains and exporting the problem to other countries far from satisfies criteria of fairness, equality and justice.

To return to the start of this piece, the article *Balancing Sustainable Computing and Computing for Sustainability* concludes with a roadmap for action – not a set of solutions. Two of the items are:

- How can we make sustainability a first-class concern in the design, implementation, and deployment of the emerging High-Performance Computing (HPC) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) codes?
- Can we define a unified, globally scalable strategy to balance knowledge creation through AI, its associated computational loads on HPC systems, and the urgent need for sustainability?

The authors end on an optimistic note that whilst the issues are extremely challenging there are some signs that success is plausible. So we pray for ...

Edward Bouverie Pusey, priest, died on 16 September 1882. Born in Oxford in 1800, he was elected a Fellow of Oriel College in 1823, became a biblical scholar and was appointed Regius Professor of Hebrew in Oxford in 1828. He became one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement and made significant contributions to encouraging Religious Life within the Church of England. Pusey House and Library in St Giles in Oxford were founded by his contemporaries in 1884 his memory. This story on the Pusey House web site (<https://www.puseyhouse.org.uk/info/house>) caught my eye.

“Ein centrum von Catholic life

Stumbled the late Canon Freddy Hood, Principal from 1934 – 1951, when challenged by a visiting German delegation who were asking just this question. The exchange was overheard by an undergraduate who went on to become Archbishop of Canterbury. "Not a bad definition of Pusey House", thought the young Lord Runcie; and not a bad definition it remains."

In a sermon Pusey wrote:

"The mistake of mistakes is to think that holiness consists in great or extraordinary things beyond the reach of ordinary people. It has been well said, 'Holiness does not consist in doing uncommon things, but in doing common things uncommonly well.

"It is not by great things, but by great diligence in little everyday things that thou canst show great love for God, and become greatly holy, and a saint of God. Few ever do great things, and the few who can do them can each do but few. But every one can study the will of God and can give great diligence to know it and to do what he knows. Everyone can, by the grace of God, be faithful to what he knows. Your daily round of duty is your daily path to come nearer unto God."

The Middle East This prayer for Iran appeared in diocesan e-News, and on the Church of England web site. It has also been reproduced in the March issue of A Candle in the Window. The prayer was written by the Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford. Bishop Guli was born in Iran. Her family left the country in the wake of the Iranian Revolution in 1980, when she was 13 years old, and to date she has been unable to return.

Ever-loving God,
who hears us in our anguish and distress,
and longs for us to be free.
We pray for the people of Iran and the wider Middle East,
at this time of fear and uncertainty.
Be near to those who are anxious;
bring comfort to all who are suffering.
Guide those with the power to make decisions,
and lead them in the ways of wisdom, compassion and moderation:
that people of goodwill would seek harmony and reconciliation.
Join us with our Christian brothers and sisters in all places,
in praying for peace with justice,
through him who is the prince of peace, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayers for the Peace of the World

A prayer from the Church of England:

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:
kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace
and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth
that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward,
till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, ...

During another Season of Vacancies

The prayer below has been derived from a prayer composed by Fr Paul when the Revd Dr Jennifer Brown was appointed Team Rector.

Almighty God,
By the outpouring of your Holy Spirit,
You call each of us to walk in the way of Christ and to serve him, with diverse gifts, in the church and the world.
We praise you for calling Revd Naomi to be Team Vicar in our parish,
and ask you to bless her, Matthew and their family, in all their preparations over the coming months.
Grant her the needful gifts of grace to minister and serve among us,
and that as the whole people of God in this parish, we may work together for the coming of your kingdom,
to the glory of your Holy Name, Amen.

This prayer for the Diocese of Oxford during the Vacancy in See is taken from the Summer 2026 edition of the diocesan magazine, *Pathways*.

God of gentleness and love
Draw near to us as we draw near to you.
Dwell in every heart and conversation.
Fashion in us the likeness of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Help us to discern together all that you are calling us to be
and all that you are calling us to do.

Assist us, by your Spirit, to become a more contemplative,
more compassionate and more courageous church,
for the building of your kingdom and the glory of your Son.

Please pray for:

- Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury and Stephen, Archbishop of York;
- Bishop Gavin, Acting Bishop of Oxford, the Crown Nominations Commission, and the Archdeaconry of Dorchester team: David Tyler, Jane Haslam and Rob Glenny;
- His Majesty King Charles, Her Majesty Queen Camilla, and all the royal family;
- victims of the flooding in Nepal and Tibet, and those working to bring relief;
- pilgrims and for those just discovering faith;
- the places that make up the Holy Land, especially that peace may be restored and the people of all the Holy Land's faiths may live together peacefully;
- peacemakers and all who care for those in need and those on the margins;
- all who are in need of Christ's love and peace;
- the congregation of St Helen's Church keeping their patronal festival this Sunday;
- the suffering, especially those who are known to us and who are on our prayer list;
- those recently departed and those whose year's mind falls at this time;
- people living in Denton Close, Dodson Court, Draymans Walk and Drayton Road.

Eucharistic Lectionary

Sunday 13 September Holy Cross Day	Numbers 21.4-9	Ps 22.23-28	Philippians 2.6-11	John 3.13-17
Monday	1 Corinthians 11.17-26, 33	Ps 40.7-11		Luke 7.1-10
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 12.12-14, 27-end	Ps 100		Luke 7.11-17
Wednesday	1 Corinthians 12.31b – end of 13	Ps 33.1-12		Luke 7.31-35
Thursday	1 Corinthians 15.1-11	Ps 118.1-2, 17-20		Luke 7.36-end
Friday	1 Corinthians 15.12-20	Ps 17.1-8		Luke 8.1-3
Saturday	1 Corinthians 15.35-37, 42-49	Ps 30.1-5		Luke 8.4-15

Collect (Holy Cross Day)

Almighty God, who in the passion of your blessed Son made an instrument of painful death to be for us the means of life and peace: grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer for his sake; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Prayer after Communion (Holy Cross Day)

Faithful God, whose Son bore our sins in his body on the tree and gave us this sacrament to show forth his death until he comes: give us grace to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life and our hope, who reigns as Lord, now and for ever

Collect (15th Sunday after Trinity)

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; 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-LbZJAPGtie0gQbbg>.

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/>