



St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

4 October 2026 –Harvest Thanksgiving / 18th 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)
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>

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 the Revd Rob Glenny (Assistant Archdeacon) to preside and preach at Mass today

Celebrating All Creation

Today is the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. Because of St Francis' association with care for the natural world and kindness to animals, today is Animal Welfare Sunday and also marks the end of the season that the Church of England now observes as Creationtide. It is also Harvest Thanksgiving at St Michael's. There's a lot going on there! But it is all related.

St Francis was a reformer and an innovator. He is reputed to have created the first nativity scene to help people engage with the story of Jesus' birth in a very physical, immediate way. And if people have heard only one thing about Francis, it is probably the story of him preaching to the birds. He took seriously the idea that all creation is loved by God and all creation worships God. He also took seriously the fact that Christian love should be for all creation. He is reputed to have set free animals that were caught and brought live to him by well-meaning people who thought Francis could kill them and use them for food. Refusing to kill an animal that is there, looking us in the eye, is something to which most of us can probably relate. But Francis also did something that many of us would probably find incredibly difficult – he embraced a life of poverty. That matters. Embracing poverty was an act of solidarity with those who were poor by circumstance, not by choice. It was a way of demonstrating his dependence on and trust in God to provide. And it was a way of living gently on the earth, making do with enough. That is something we can strive to emulate.

Celebrating creation goes hand-in-hand with having a theology and an attitude that embrace 'enough' – not always striving to have more than we need. In our society, that's not easy. There is always something else to tempt us, more advertising to convince us that there is more that we need. But being satisfied with enough will reduce the exploitation of the earth and depletion of the earth's resources. It reduces exploitation of the poor. It allows space for other creatures to thrive alongside us. God gives abundantly. God always provides enough. We can follow the example of St Francis and trust in God's provision, and with that, grow in love for God, our fellow human beings, non-human animals, and the earth itself.

Jennifer Brown

Team Rector

Abingdon Michaelmas Fair will take place this year from **Sunday 4 – Wednesday 7 October**. The Fair Blessing will be in the Market Place this afternoon, **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>. The Clerk to the Governors of Christ's Hospital has confirmed that 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 road access will be via the normally-closed gate in Faringdon Road.**

Harvest Thanksgiving We are again be supporting *The Porch* in Oxford which provides a stepping-stone for those who are homeless or vulnerably housed. They provide hot meals and washing and laundry facilities at the Centre for homeless people. In addition, they run programmes in Mental Health and Well-being, Pathways to Stability and Independence, Community and Social Inclusion, and Addressing Root Causes. By providing targeted support and intervention, The Porch helps reduce the burden on emergency services, healthcare providers and shelters. Early intervention prevents crises that would otherwise need costly public interventions.

There will be basket at the back of the church for you to place your donations by cash or cheque. Please place cheque donations in an envelope labelled "Harvest Thanksgiving" and make cheques payable to "Abingdon Parochial Church Council St Michael's Church". It is also possible to donate by credit card. The church is now able to claim Gift Aid on these donations to pass on to *The Porch*. Donations over £30 require a Gift Aid donation form to be completed which for donations by card can be done on the credit card machine.

Contributions can also be made by bank transfer to NatWest Bank, Account no: 61580376 Sort code: 60-01-01, account name Abingdon Parochial Church Council St Michael's Church; please use the reference HARVEST 2026.

Another option is to donate directly to *The Porch* online. In which case, if you feel comfortable doing so, please put an anonymous note of your donation (in an envelope) in the basket so these can be included in the total raised. There are DONATE NOW links on *The Porch* web site <https://theporch.org.uk/> and this also includes a gift aid option. Readers should be aware that the Crowdfunder platform suggests that users leave a "tip". The minimum setting on the slider is 10%, but a specific amount (which could be £0) can be added by clicking on "Enter custom amount".

Please speak to Louise if you are unsure about any of this.

For more information about *The Porch* see their web site. When I contacted *The Porch* to confirm banking details etc. I received this reply: "We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of the church, and it is wonderful to know that you will be collecting donations again at this year's Festival."

Animal Blessing Service There will be an animal blessing service at **St Michael's on Sunday 4 October at 2 pm** to celebrate St Francis' Day/Animal Welfare Sunday. All well-behaved animals (on leads or in appropriate carriers) are welcome to attend. If you have an animal that would not be comfortable attending, we can still offer a blessing, just bring a photo of the animal. We will also have a garden of pet remembrance for those who wish to remember animal companions who have died.

Jill Gant It was with shock and deep sadness that we learned recently of Jill Gant's death. We continue to give thanks for Jill's life and to pray for her and for her family and friends and all who mourn her. Given the circumstances of Jill's death, it is not yet clear when a funeral will be possible. **St Helen's Church** is open daily, and people may wish to remember Jill by visiting the church to light a candle and by signing the Book of Condolence set up in the South Aisle. It will be given to Jill's daughter in due course.

Jennifer Brown, Team Rector

Faith Forum The autumn Faith Forum series began on Sunday 27 September. This series focuses on eco-theology, and the speaker on the first Sunday was our own Margaret Adam, who spoke on *The Goodness of Creation*. Video and audio recordings are available on the Parish web site: https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_faith_forum.html

The second and third talks in the series are

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

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

Prayers & Bears: A new service suitable for young children (including babies/toddlers) will be starting at **St Michael's on Tuesday 6 October at 11 am**. We aim to meet on the first Tuesday of each month and includes social time with refreshments.

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 is no evening service at St Helen's Church on 4 October. The next **Taizé service** will be at St Helen's Church next Sunday, **Sunday 11 October at 5.30 pm**.

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

Stewardship Renewal and Budget Presentation Our annual renewal of stewardship offerings takes place at Mass on the Feast of Christ the King, Sunday 22 November. **Our treasurer will present the budget to the congregation immediately after Mass on Sunday 1 November**. Further details will be announced in due course.

Cream Tea Very many thanks to all who helped with last week's cream tea. We made around £440. The afternoon was very enjoyable, made even more so by Glynne's piano music. And we are so grateful to all of you who helped throughout the season, in whatever capacity, whether helping with distribution of publicity, cake baking, serving, setting up, washing up and tidying up. Especial thanks must go to Helen Owen who helps behind the scenes with sourcing raffle prizes and sponsorship. Overall we will have made well over £2,000 and welcomed many in the community to our church.

Christmas Fair: Please join us for our annual Christmas Fair on **Saturday 14 November from 10.00 am - 2.00 pm**. There will be an exciting range of craft and gift stalls plus a raffle with generous prizes and fun activities for children. Home-made cakes, bottles, books, plants, and bric-a-brac will be on sale. A chance to buy your Christmas gifts and to enjoy some delicious refreshments – including our famed bacon rolls. Proceeds to church funds and Sobell House Hospice. **Please let Louise know if you are able to help on the day**.

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, nappies, 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/>

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 pray 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.

The First Annual Community of the Resurrection Lecture on the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ Some readers might be interested to know that The Community of the Resurrection (Mirfield) has announced that this lecture in this new series will be given by Bishop Rowan Williams on **Saturday 10 October at 4.30 pm**. The lecture will be live-streamed. See the Community's YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@StreamingAtMirfield> and live streaming page <https://mirfield.org.uk/live-streaming/> At the present time there seem to be some technical issues preventing the live-stream from appearing on the live streaming page but the YouTube page is working.

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

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.

Music at St Michaels: A Musical Tour of Europe - and Bach again! The flautist, Christopher Britton, accompanied by Malcolm Pearce, pianist, will entertain us with a variety of European music on **Sunday 18 October at 3 pm**. Tickets £15, refreshments available. Please do join us and bring your friends and neighbours. Help with distribution of flyers and posters would be greatly appreciated so if you feel able please do collect a few from the table in the south aisle. Even one or two is helpful. Thank you.

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, and earlier issues are available to download from https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_window.php.

Worship

October The celebrants and preachers for October are: 4 October The Revd Rob Glenny (Assistant Archdeacon and Rector of the RSK Benefice); 11 October The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown/ Mrs Beryl Clements; 18 October The Revd Rosalind Rutherford; 25 October Canon Richard Pyke.

We are keeping our Harvest Thanksgiving festival this Sunday. Commemorations this week include: Tuesday: William Tyndale, translator, martyr, 1536; Friday: Denys, bishop, and companions, martyrs, c. 250; Saturday: Paulinus, bishop, missionary, 644 and Thomas Traherne, poet, spiritual writer, 1674.

The 33rd Annual General Meeting of The Abingdon Bridge (TAB) was held on Monday 28 September. 'Inspiring' is not a word that is frequently associated with an AGM but it is a word I would definitely associate with this AGM.

The meeting opened with the necessary formal business, annual report, statement of accounts, election of officers, election of chair, and appointment of independent examiners to review the accounts. In the last financial year income was £548K and expenditure £545K so a small surplus. Current reserves cover about 6 months running costs which is considered healthy. The major portion of expenditure is in payroll. The Big Lottery Fund, Christ's Hospital and a number of private trusts contribute a considerable proportion of the income. Children in Need funding has now expired but TAB should be able to apply again to this source after a respite period. Funding from the Henry Smith charity and Step Change also ends this year. The CEO, Gary Hibbins devotes considerable time and energy to securing funding sources.

The new chair of the charity is Mark Wilkinson and he took over chairing the meeting from the out-going chair Luke Mattam who will continue as a trustee of the charity. Luke said what an honour it had been to be chair of TAB and Mark paid a warm tribute to him.

The next item of business was the Impact Report which was inspiring to say the least. Gary Hibbins introduced this section with what I would term 'infectious enthusiasm' and introduced two of the team leaders in Counselling and Youth and Community Outreach. The mission of TAB is to give young people the confidence needed to become young leaders, future trustees and town leaders in the future from very difficult starting points. TAB now run multiple programs in counselling and mental health. Over the years a preventative approach has come to the fore based on an ABC model – Act, Belong, Commit. Around 200 people per week are supported and waiting times have been reduced. A focus on staff well-being has also been developed with well-being days built into staff schedules. Teams have expanded.

But the most exciting part came when a number of young people spoke about their experiences of TAB, having started as clients, some from ages 11 to 14, and now working as trained Senior and Junior Youth Works and Youth Ambassadors. They were living proof of the success of the confidence building, developing leadership skills agenda. From complex starting points they now speak passionately about the role TAB has played in their lives and how they are now giving back to the charity and the next generation of young people. As one speaker put it, "TAB gave me somewhere to belong to when I needed it most."

One of the projects mentioned was a project over the summer with a local care home constructing a memorial space for residents to remember friends, loved-ones and past residents.

Readers may have heard about the report by Professor Peter Fonagy into mental health, ADHD and Autism – the BBC News carried the headline "Accusations that the young are a snowflake generation are wrong, the head of an independent review into mental health, ADHD and autism has told the BBC." Gary gave a few statistics from TAB clients – 1 in 5 were self-harming, domestic abuse and bullying were often experienced on a daily basis, 4 in 5 experienced anxiety or stress and 1 in 3 had attempted suicide. TAB have invested in 5 new Youth Ambassadors and 6 new Youth Workers during the year.

One important new project is Bridge 18-25, addressing issues that young people in that age range face as they leave home, enter work or cannot find work, cannot find anywhere to live and are very vulnerable to many wrong turnings in the direction of their lives. The project provides 1-1 support, gym sessions, connect groups, football sessions and sign-posting to positive pathways.

Another major project was the Youth Summit in June "Our town – our future" in which 140 people engaged. This was a highly successful event and planning is in progress to take the results forward. More funding will be needed for this and a fund-raising group is active. But money is just a necessary enabler to what really matters – taking forward the vision of the young people.

The Abingdon Against Domestic Abuse project was also highlighted. TAB are partnering with the Town Council in areas such as rolling out an educational programme across all secondary schools and the College in Abingdon, community workshops for adults, and eventual aims of establishing counselling services for adults and a network of peer support groups.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of all that is going on in TAB and the presentations at the AGM.

The final item of business was "Collaborative working agreement with ADYP". ADYP is the Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project. DAMASCUS is embedded in the villages of Drayton, Appleford, Milton, Sutton Courteney and Steventon and also works in South Abingdon. It is a separate charity to support young people in the 10-25 age range in the villages south of Abingdon. On the day of the AGM a contract had been signed between the two charities, TAB and ADYP, in which each will retain its independence with an agreement about how to work together. This is for an initial period of one-year to gain experience of working together to bring services in a more uniform way to children across the town and villages. The chair of ADYP, Chris Bryan and Gary Hibbins spoke movingly of the opportunity opened up.

Finally under AOB the Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Felicity Dick, and Councillor Neil Fawcett (South Abingdon) spoke warmly of the excitement felt by all at the meeting, congratulated TAB on their work, and expressed their support for this vital work with young people. In all, it really was an inspiring AGM.

Let us pray and give thanks for the work of TAB, ADYP, the young people they support, the young people who need their support and for the future of this work in our town and surrounding district.

Animal Blessing Service I came across an article by the late Metropolitan Kallistos Ware (d. August 2022), "Compassion for Animals in the Orthodox Church", published in 2019. (There is a link to the article in the Prayer and Worship resources page on the web site.) One of the questions he asks is "what is the place of animals in the liturgical and theological world of the Orthodox Church?" The evening service of Vespers (which marks the start of a day, not the end) always starts with Psalm 104.

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills,
They give drink to every beast of the field;
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
Beside them the birds of the air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches (v 10 – 12)

...

O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom have you made them all
the earth is full of your creatures. (v 24)

In the Orthodox book of blessings “there are prayers for the good health of sheep, goats and cattle, of horses, donkeys and mules, and even of bees and silkworms; and also, on the negative side, there are prayers for protection from poisonous snakes and noxious insects.”

Metropolitan Kallistos quotes a prayer for the blessing of bees:

“In ancient times you granted to the Israelites a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod. 3.8), and you were well-pleased to nourish your Baptist John with wild honey in the wilderness (Matt. 3.4). Now also, providing in your good pleasure for our sustenance, do you bless the beehives in this apiary. Greatly increase the multiplication of the bees within them, preserving them by your grace and granting us an abundance of rich honey.”

He goes on to write:

“We humans are not saved from the world but with the world; and that means, with the animals. Moreover, this cosmic covenant is not something that we humans have devised, but it has its source in the divine realm. It is conferred upon us as a gift by God. A striking illustration of this covenant bond is to be seen in the custom that once prevailed in the Russian countryside; perhaps it still continues today. Returning from the Easter midnight service with their newly-kindled Holy Fire, the farmers used to go into the stables with the lighted candle or lantern, and they greeted the horses and cattle with the Paschal salutation 'Christ is Risen!' The victory of the risen Saviour over the forces of death and darkness has meaning not for us humans alone but for the animals as well. For them also Christ has died and risen again. 'Now all things are filled with light' (hymn at the Easter matins).”

He tells this story from the centre of Orthodox monasticism, Mount Athos.

“The monks in a small hermitage, as they prayed in the early morning, were much disturbed by the croaking of frogs in the cistern outside their chapel. The spiritual father of the community went out and addressed them: 'Frogs! We've just finished the Midnight Office and are about to start Matins. Would you mind keeping quiet until we've finished!' To which the frogs replied, 'We've just finished Matins and are about to begin the First Hour. Would you mind keeping quiet until we've finished!'”

‘Let all creation praise you, O Lord’ (A summary of the theme of Psalm 148.)

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew As noted in an earlier pew leaflet, the Patriarch visited Oxford last month and gave lectures in the Oxford Law School, “Orthodoxy and Human Rights” and later in the day in the University Church “Religious Liberty in Contested Ecosystems – Law, Religion and Foreign Policy in a New International Order”. The full texts of both articles are available on-line as well as a video recording of the service and lecture in the University Church – there are links to these on the Prayer and Worship resources page on our web site.

I will not attempt to summarise either lecture, but I will just take a few points from the lecture in the University Church. The announcement for the lecture said it would be in a liturgical context but didn't give any more information. The service started in a traditional Anglican way, opening hymn and bidding prayers. The Patriarch then gave his lecture followed by an Orthodox liturgy, the Lesser Blessing of the Waters. The service concluded with St John Newman's hymn, “Praise to the Holiest”.

The Patriarch explained the custom of the Orthodox Church to pray for the whole of creation on 1 September, the first day of the Orthodox church year, a custom which as readers will know has led to the Season of Creation and the new Festival of Creation in Christ. There are two Orthodox liturgies for blessing of water. The Lesser liturgy is used on 1 September and may be used at other points throughout the year, the Greater liturgy is used on the festival of the Epiphany. After the blessing of water the celebrant sprinkles the congregation with the holy water. One writer commenting on this liturgy explains its significance in these words:

“When you receive the spray of divine presence that comes from the River Jordan upon you through the Holy Water, you declare your intention to live no longer as a citizen of this world, according to its customs and habits, according to the laws of survival and self-advancement and pride. You declare your desire to live as a citizen of the New World, according to the rule of love, of mercy and justice and humility before God and man.”

The Patriarch explained this choice of liturgy at the start of his lecture: “That this University should choose to mark the opening of its own academic year with a blessing of water in this church, at the meeting point of the ecclesiastical and the academic calendars, seemed to us too fitting an occasion to decline, for what is a university, at its best, if not a community that gathers each autumn to bless the beginning of new labour, and to ask that its search for truth be kept humble before the source of all truth?”.

He went on to speak about human freedom and religious rights.

Why does compliance with environmental law seem so elusive? The Patriarch gave this answer:

“... the earth, like our neighbour, is not our possession to exhaust, but a gift entrusted to our stewardship, and because the poor and the powerless, always, suffer first and worst from its degradation. International

environmental law, painstakingly built ..., through the long procession of conferences whose acronyms now outnumber the glaciers they were convened to save, is indispensable, and we deeply honour those who labour within it. *But law alone, severed from repentance, from what the Eastern Orthodox tradition calls “metanoia,” a change of the mind and heart, will keep producing fine agreements with poor compliance, because it will keep asking humanity to limit its appetite by calculation, when only love, and the humility love requires, has ever been strong enough to do so.”* [Ed. My emphasis]

In conclusion the Patriarch said:

“The waters we are now going to bless, in this University’s calendar as in our own, are a sign of ... matter taken up and made a vehicle of grace, in the same movement by which, at the wedding in Cana, water was not abolished but transfigured. We do not ask this University, in a new academic year that opens amid wars, displacements, and a warming planet, to solve every contested ecosystem it will study. We ask only, and it is no small thing, that it study them as Cana’s water was treated: not as a problem to be managed at the least cost, but as a gift capable, still, of transfiguration, if only the will can be found.”

The Prayer and Worship resources page has a link to the text of the Lesser Liturgy as used in the Greek Orthodox Diocese of America, which has a similar structure but not identical content to the form used by the Patriarch. It lists the items needed: *a small table, upon which the Priest places the Gospel; a wooden, silver-bound Cross; a censer; a bowl of water; two candlesticks with their candles; a few branches of basil and a clean white towel. The Priest wears his cassock and stole.* The setup in the University Church also included two icons visible in some of the official photographs of the event – see the Prayer and Worship resources page for a link.

The liturgy is a combination of psalms (143, 51), responsaries, short hymns, including the angels’ hymn – Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us and prayers (in English and Greek), sung to the deeply-moving traditional Byzantine chants of the Orthodox Church.

There was a reading from the Epistle to the Hebrews and a reading from John’s gospel [5.1-4, the Pool of Bethesda] (sung in Greek by the Patriarch). After more prayers and short hymns the Patriarch took up the small Cross and dipped it into the water three times. He sprinkled the congregation with the Holy Water. He then kissed the Cross and blessed the people and more short hymns and a litany were sung, concluding the rite.

On the following day the Patriarch’s programme included a visit to the Orthodox cemetery in Oxford (Wolvercote), to the grave of Metropolitan Kallistos Ware where a memorial liturgy, the Trisagion, was offered. **General Synod** A new Synod starts later this year and elections to this are now in progress. Voting opened on 21 September and closes on 13 October. The results will be declared by 19 October. Lay members of Deanery Synods vote for lay members of General Synod for their diocese and all clergy in each diocese can vote for clergy members of General Synod from their diocese. There are separate processes for voting for Religious Communities and Armed Forces, Deans and members of the Universities and Theological Education Institutions and some of the results for these sectors have been declared already.

See <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/governance/general-synod/elections-synod#na> for more information.

The Middle East, Ukraine and Sudan

A prayer from the World Council of Churches:

For peace in your country
For the victims of violence everywhere
For those struggling for peace and justice
For churches in conflict situations
For a world without war and violence
Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth,
Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace,
Let peace fill our beings, our world and our universe.
Amen.

A collect for peace:

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 for her licensing on 6 January.
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;
- the earth, especially those places, habitats and ecosystems harmed by pollution, climate change, and overuse of natural resources;
- non-human animals, particularly those that are exploited, abused, or neglected by human beings;
- individuals and organisations that work to preserve natural places;
- the elections to the new General Synod, the candidates and electors;
- the new *Prayers & Bears* service on 6 October;
- the poor and starving, all who live without love;
- 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 Fairlawn Wharf, Faringdon Road, Farriers Mews and Ferry Walk.

Eucharistic Lectionary

Sunday 27 September Harvest Thanksgiving	Deuteronomy 8.7-18	Ps 65	2 Corinthians 9.6-end	Luke 12.16-30
Monday	Galatians 1.6-12	Ps 111.1-6		Luke 10.25-37
Tuesday	Galatians 1.13-end	Ps 139.1-9		Luke 10.38-end
Wednesday	Galatians 2.1-2, 7-14	Ps 117		Luke 11.1-4
Thursday	Galatians 3.1-5	Canticle <i>Benedictus</i>		Luke 11.5-13
Friday	Galatians 3.7-14	Ps 111.4-end		Luke 11.15-26
Saturday	Galatians 3.22-end	Ps 105.1-7		Luke 11.27-28

Collect (Harvest Thanksgiving)

Eternal God, you crown the year with your goodness and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season: grant that we may use them to your glory, for the relief of those in need and for our own well-being; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, ...

Post Communion (Harvest Thanksgiving)

Lord of the harvest, with joy we have offered thanksgiving for your love in creation and have shared in the bread and the wine of the kingdom: by your grace plant within us a reverence for all that you give us and make us generous and wise stewards of the good things we enjoy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect (18th Sunday after Trinity)

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, ...

Prayer after Communion (18th Sunday after Trinity)

We praise and thank you, O Christ, for this sacred feast: for here we receive you, here the memory of your passion is renewed, here our minds are filled with grace, and here a pledge of future glory is given, when we shall feast at that table where you reign with all your saints for ever.

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/>