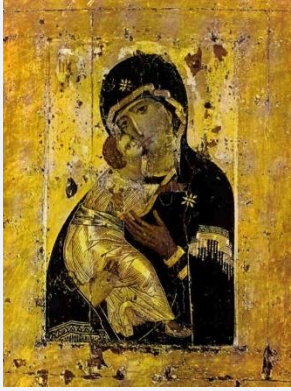


Issue 2:
March 2023



The Virgin of Kyiv
known by some as the
Virgin of Vladimir

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A candle in...

THE

WINDOW

News and Views from the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames

Springing green

The earth tilts,
sunshine strengthens and
winter loosens its grip.

There's a green haze on
hedge and tree,
early nesters are twittering
from the pyracantha, and
a blackbird is earnestly
prodding the lawn.

Celandines stud the verges,
almond blossoms flutter,
white against black bark and
breezy daffodils shout
that winter is over.

Yet seasons are fickle,
winter persists here and there:

bewildered birds fly into a
capricious shower of hail,
goblets of magnolia just opening
are drenched, and
optimistic gardeners lose
their early seedlings to
a late frost.

Spring, brimming with new life, is
both now and
still to come

Susan Gee



Susan's poem reminds us that seasonally and liturgically these are 'in-between' times. The crocus, from March 2020 in the snow of Albert Park, thanks to David Bevington. The Camellia, from February 2023, in the Oxford Arboretum thanks to Rob Rutherford.

Inside: A Jane Baun sermon, an article about Taizé, another about climate change denial, an update on our Carbon Footprint, a bit of social history and a quiz of course.

Transfiguration: why settle for less?

*Rev Jane Baun, Chaplain at Wadham College Oxford
Preached at St Helen's Church on February 19th 2023 Minor edits by RR*

I suspect that Lent is not a season most of us particularly look forward to. No flowers, no chocolate or alcohol, dreary hymns, long penitential litanies, gloomy thoughts about besetting sins, the Lent book begun but never finished We've all been there.

But of course we also know that it's good for us. Lent is like a good cleanse. It's good to get back to basics, to realise how we can lose the plot in our Christian life, to return to the classic practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It's good to make sacrifices that enable us to help alleviate suffering, to reflect on our responsibility to those who are in need, whether in Turkey, Syria, Ukraine, or closer to home. This Friday, tragically, is the one-year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine, and we will want to mark that with prayer and support. These are all good things, which bring their own rewards.

But -- there's more to Lent than these. Lent has an extra dimension beyond simply doing our duty—or, as the *Book of Common Prayer* puts it, 'our bounden duty and service.'

How would it be, if over and above thinking about our duty and our doing, we gave some thought to our hopes and our dreaming? What are your hopes and dreams for this Lent? How high are your expectations? Let me explain a bit what I mean.

In the Spring term last year, every morning I prayed as usual dutifully for 'guidance and grace'. One morning, though, God decided to put a word in edgeways. 'What about glory?' came a quiet voice in my mind. Just guidance and grace? Is that all, Jane? What about glory? Have you given up on that? I was stunned. Remember the glory.

The Christian life is not just all duty. It's also about glory! Even the Book of Common Prayer, that most dutiful and penitential of devotional books, hopes for glory – in that most wonderful of prayers, the General Thanksgiving, we bless 'God for our ... creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for [his] inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for *the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*'

'*the means of grace, and for the hope of glory*' That's why the Church has given us the Transfiguration as we head into Lent – to remind us, as we give thanks for grace, also to claim the promise of glory. Christ on the mountaintop, with the glory of God shining out from his transfigured body, is telling us to raise our eyes and raise our expectations for how we too can be transformed by God's grace, and go from glory to glory?

This past summer I spent a glorious week on retreat right on the mid-Wales coast, outside Barmouth, in a hillside coastal villa belonging to St Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre. Every seaward window of the house was full of sea -- the entire sweep of Ceredigion (Cardigan) Bay, in all its shifting moods and colours, could be seen from all the upper windows. We even had masses of gannets diving for fish, and on one day, dolphins. It was magnificent.

In the quiet, looking at that vast expanse of sea, God spoke in my heart -- Why settle for anything less? Why settle for a pond, when you can have *this*—when you can have *me*—the vast, flowing ocean of my love?

Why settle for anything less?

That's what the Transfiguration is all about. Why not have it all? Grace AND glory? The vast, flowing ocean of God's love?



The icon, written by Theophanes can be found [here](#):
 Tretyakov Gallery, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons
 By enlarging this document in your pdf reader you can see significant extra detail.

Here is the most famous medieval Russian icon of the Transfiguration, as written by Θεοφάνης the Greek, who lived around 1340-1410, and worked in Byzantium and in Rus'. I hope it will be an encouragement to you in your prayer.

Christ on top of Mount Tabor in the centre, dazzling white, emanating a mandorla of shimmering divinity. Two figures, on either side of Jesus – which do you think is Elijah; which, Moses? A clue: Moses is holding the tablets of the law, to Jesus' left, our right; Elijah is on Jesus' right, our left. Moses is traditionally portrayed as a younger man with dark, short, hair and beard, while Elijah is the classic prophet – old, wise, with long flowing grey hair and beard – and he indicates Christ with the prophetic gesture – this is the one I was talking about!

In the upper corners, those blobs of blue: breakthroughs into the heavenly, angelic realms. One of my favourite bits – in the middle, we see Christ leading Peter, James and John up the mountain at the beginning of the story, and then on the other side, we see them coming back down at the end of the story.

In the lower register, Peter, James and John – note the blue laser beams of divine glory zapping all three. Only Peter dares to look up – James and John are completely overwhelmed and cannot bear the radiance.

The upper half is serene, calm, and beautifully ordered. The bottom half is chaotic, scrunched up, and disordered. Like Peter, James and John, we most usually inhabit the lower half—messy, confused, a bit clueless. But the icon is pulling us up, insistently, into gazing on Christ, into fixing our gaze – and our hope – on that grace and glory.

In our prayer time sometime in the weeks ahead, we can try a Transfiguration immersion. Imagine yourself into the story. Imagine in your mind's eye going up the mountain with Jesus, Peter, James, and John, having no idea what was about to happen, then hanging around while not much happened and falling asleep. But then – wow – waking up with a start to see the glory of God shining out from Jesus. And Jesus gently coming and touching you and saying, 'Get up and do not be afraid.' What would that be like? Why settle for anything less?

Jane's sermon can be heard here: https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StH/StH_videos.html

Visit Taizé!

Rosalind Rutherford

Say “Taizé” to most people and their first thought is of dimmed lights, candles and quiet, reflective and repetitive singing. But for anyone who has had the joy of spending a week in Taizé, particularly as a teenager or young adult, and their response will almost certainly include sunshine, meeting other young people from every country in Europe and beyond, sharing conversations and questions about faith, politics, beliefs, music, ...everything; singing and dancing in the evening around Oyak (the source of drinks, snacks and ice cream) and sitting with thousands of others in the huge, simple church three times a day in the “Prayer” which frames each day and each week. The music is important for some, and is joyful as often as it is quiet or meditative, but what has the greatest impact on many of those who worship at Taizé is the ten minutes of silence at the centre of every time of worship.

As one young pilgrim said: “I love the simplicity of Taizé. The simple but adequate food; a pair of shorts and a T-shirt for clothes; being outside much of the time; the simple but beautiful prayer sung and shared with thousands of others; the easy conversations struck up with people from all over the world. There’s a lot of joy. Taizé is one of those ‘thin’ places where you can feel the presence of God.”

A week in Taizé is a mixture of structured activities and then freedom around the set times. Each day is planned around three times of worship in the church and three simple meals prepared and served to everyone. Small groups meet each morning, organised around common languages, there are usually other talks or groups in the afternoons, and the rest of the day is time for relaxing, chatting and having fun. It sounds very simple, but Taizé is a place where friendships are made, where profound sharing can take place and where there is space for fun or just to be.

Taizé, the ecumenical monastery in Burgundy which discovered a vocation of welcoming young people, has been important in different way to our family over fifty years now. Rob and I had experienced Taizé separately and taken part in a Taizé New Year meeting in London. One of our first holidays together was to cycle across France and end up at Taizé for a few days. When our daughters became old enough they were keen to join diocesan visits to Taizé which were significant for both of them, in developing their own faith, making new friends. Both of them also discovered Taizé groups meeting when they went to university, which helped them find friends. For a first visit, going for a week with a group is the best way to experience Taizé. There is always someone around to share the experience, both at Taizé and after returning.

After the interruption of Covid, several diocese are organising week trips to Taizé for 16-30 year olds, and Oxford Diocese is one of these. If you are in this age group, or know someone who is, think seriously about joining a group travelling to Taizé this summer – it will be a special week – though what will make it special no one will know until you are there! Details of the Oxford trip are here:

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/2023-pilgrimage-to-taize.php>

(For anyone over 30 - you can still visit Taizé but not during July and August when young people take precedence, though you could always hire a gîte in the local area and visit Taizé during the day)



Climate Change: Natural Cycle or Man-Made Disaster?

Elisabeth Simpson

Young people are deeply concerned about the signs they see around them.

I am not a climate scientist but I am becoming increasingly disturbed by the climate deniers.

In a Guardian article (12.1.23) it was reported that Exxon, the giant oil producer, 'made breathtakingly accurate climate predictions in the 1970s and 1980s', warning that global heating would rise to unbearable levels. '... only then to spend decades publicly rubbishing such science in order to protect its core business'. Do the big energy producers cover up scientific research in order to boost their profits? We need to know.

This is just one example of what is going on all the time. The book 'Silent Spring', by Rachel Carson, (1962), warned of the dangers of man's attempts to control nature and raise crop yields through the development of powerful chemical pesticides. Possibly, one outcome was that the chemical DDT was banned as a crop spray. Raising awareness is always the first step.

Now, our concern is the use of fossil fuels and the dangerous levels of CO₂ that are constantly being pumped into the atmosphere. Always it is the producers of the goods that depend on fossil fuels who will insist that the Earth has been experiencing changes for millions of years. We just happen to be in the early stages of another huge change. In the same vein, Julia Hartley-Brewer on BBC Question Time in October 2022, exasperated many by her refusal to accept that the floods in Pakistan and the extremely high temperatures all over Europe last summer, were caused by anything other than 'the weather'.

It is easy to deny global warming if you live in the temperate zone and the extreme weather conditions happen in other parts of the world. Not so unbelievable if your home and everything around you is swept away by storms and floods. Not only once but as it becomes a frequent occurrence.

So much has been written about climate change and it is important to listen to both sides of the debate; but consider this - no government is going to ruin its own economy by getting rid of all its means of making money, providing work and researching other ways of creating greener energy, unless it has acknowledged that all humanity is in a crisis that will not be averted except by drastic rethinking. All this is very costly and likely will alter radically our way of life, but must be recognised as a matter of great concern and urgent action.

The U N climate summit was convened at great expense, was deemed necessarily important, yet still there were those who argued it was a waste of money. Its remit 'restated the global commitment to tackling climate change in the face of the current energy crisis'. However we know that global emissions remain at dangerously high levels and the world is warming rapidly towards 1.8 °C above pre-Industrial Revolution days.

One of the Summit's resolutions is a pledge to support financially smaller countries that depend on the marketing of their natural resources to sustain their livelihoods.

This again annoys the deniers, but unless we all work together to stabilise greenhouse gases we are all going to suffer.

The Church in Abingdon's Eco- weekend held in October 2022, and reported in the December edition of Candle in the Window, shared a number of energy reducing initiatives at local level in Abingdon, Sint Niklaas and Argentan. Following this exercise it is incumbent on us all to keep up the pressure on our government and in personal discussion.

We are not all scientists. We have to have faith in the integrity of the professionals - the climate scientists. Global warming is a real threat and it is happening NOW!

The Parish Carbon Footprint

Rob Rutherford

To recap: our Nation is committed to being Net-Zero by 2050.

The Anglican Church has challenged us to be carbon neutral by 2030 or at the very latest 2035.

If we don't succeed, the science points to dangerous levels of global warming that threaten our very existence. The Candle in the Window has resolved to publish the carbon footprint of our churches every year. In the October 2020 edition we published the 2019 figures. In the September 2021 issue we published the 2020 figures. In the October 2022 issue, we published the data for 2021. Here is the data for 2022. It only includes the gas and electricity used by the church buildings so it does not include the hidden carbon dioxide generated as a consequence of the things we buy. Nor does it include petrol used in getting to church etc.

The calculation is based on this data:

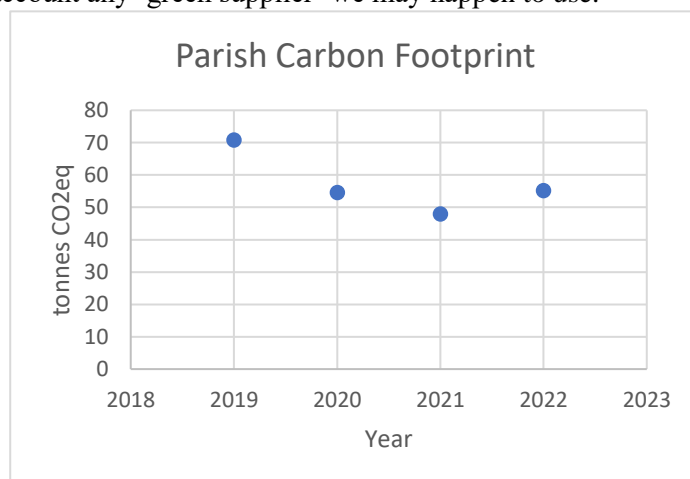
184g of Carbon Dioxide are released for each kWhr of gas energy used.

193g of Carbon Dioxide are released for each kWhr of electrical energy used.

This latter figure is that recommended by the government and represents the average for the grid rather than an area specific figure. It does not take into account any 'green supplier' we may happen to use.

Building	tonnes CO ₂
St Helen's Church	30.4
Parish Centre	4.8
St Michael's Church	14.4
St Nicolas' Church	5.6
total	55.2

The total for 2022 is therefore 55.2 tonnes. This compares with 48 tonnes in 2021, 54.6 tonnes in 2020 and 70.8 tonnes for 2019.



To be honest, we are 'treading water'. It isn't surprising that there is no consistent fall. Most of the energy we use is for heating and that is largely from burning gas. Every kWhr of gas releases 184g of carbon dioxide, just as it did in 2019 and our consumption has remained roughly constant.

When should we abandon gas? We need to think it through.

As the carbon intensity of the electricity grid reduces, the argument for electrical heating grows. In 2019 the figure was 289 gCO₂/kWhr. In 2022 193 gCO₂/kWhr. Energy from electricity will soon release less carbon dioxide than that from gas.

We need to prepare – if the gas boilers need replacing, what will we do?

A look back in time

Rob Rutherford

The year is 1913. You have a clock. How do you know it tells the right time?

In 1913 Marconi was still experimenting with radio transmission. Radio broadcasts by the BBC began in Marconi's London studio, 2LO, in the Strand, on November 14, 1922. The famous 'pips' weren't heard until February 1924. So, in 1913, how do you know your clock isn't having you on?

I wasn't thinking about this question at all when the surprising answer jumped out from a postcard.

My brother passed on a pile of family stuff for me to look at and in the collection were some postcards sent to the family of my aunt's cousin. My grandmother came from a large family who lived in the Blacksmith's forge on the banks of the river Tyne. The postcard, dated October 5th 1913 came from one of her sisters who was having a short break in London. You might like to see it:



On the back was this message: We are enjoying ourselves immensely here. We are going to Greenwich today to put the clocks right. We have had lovely weather. Hope you are all well. Love from Maggie.

So there is the answer – you pack your clock and head off to Greenwich and check it against the master clock. This wasn't just an eccentric idea of a great Aunt. The Greenwich website confirms that people did this: <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/greenwich-time-ball-one-time-all>

I don't know if Maggie went to see the famous dropping of the red ball on the top of Flamsteed House at 13.00 or whether she saw the famous Shepherd clock at the entrance to the observatory. Both probably. Nor do I know if she allowed her neighbours to come and synchronise their clocks against hers when she got home but I wouldn't be at all surprised!

March Events

Compiled by Louise Heffernan



ABINGDON MOTHERS' UNION

Tuesday 7th March, 2023
at 10:30 a.m.
in St Helen's Parish Centre



Children Heard and Seen

Supporting children and young people
impacted by parental imprisonment

Speaker: James Ottley



Spring Sale

Saturday 11th March
10 am - 12 noon
in St Nicolas Church
Abingdon Town Square

in aid of Local Dementia Support Club

Kennington Memory Club
Living well with dementia

Nearly New Clothes,
Books, Crafts, Produce,
Toys & Tombola

Teas & Coffees

Free entrance

Registered charity number: 1179830

HOG ROAST NIGHT

SATURDAY 11TH MARCH	DOORS OPEN @ 5:30PM
--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

THE BARN, CHRIST CHURCH,
NORTHCOURT RD, ABINGDON

TICKETS £15 IN ADVANCE OR £20 ON THE NIGHT
WWW.ABINGDONPASSIONPLAY.CO.UK

Come and enjoy a classic hog roast with all the trimmings along with a side and desert. Vegetarian? We have you covered! Whilst your taste buds are being delighted, your ears will be delivered a feast by our musical line up:

Abingdon Community Choir (ACCord)
Rule of Six
The JAM Band

Abingdon & District Musical Society

GRIEG – PELL GYNT SUITES 1 AND 2
GLAZUNOV – VIOLIN CONCERTO WITH ALDA DIZDARI
MUSSORGSKY – PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

SATURDAY 11TH MARCH 2023 7.30PM

ST HELEN'S CHURCH
ABINGDON
OX14 5BS

ALEXANDER WALKER – CONDUCTOR
KATE BAILEY – LEADER

Tickets £15 at the door / £13 buy early / £1 children from www.abingdon.org.uk
or Peter Smith 01235 521992 / 07979 834095 peter@abingdon.org.uk
www.abingdon.org.uk

PIANO RECITAL

St Michael's Church
welcomes
Guy-Bernard Davis

'A Celebration of Spring'

'Waldstein' Sonata by Beethoven, 6 pieces op. 118 by Brahms,
6 Moments Musicaux op. 16 by Rachmaninov

Saturday 25th March 2023, 7 pm

Tickets: adults £10/children free
Available from the Bookstore, Bury St, Abingdon or at the door

Free parking, refreshments available
Proceeds to church funds

St Michael and All Angels' Church, Park Road, Abingdon OX14 1DS
<https://stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk/>

Sponsored by




 Abingdon & District
Musical Society

SATURDAY 25th MARCH 2023 7.30PM

Vaughan Williams - Five Mystical Songs
Bob Chilcott - Little Jazz Mass
Karl Jenkins - The Armed Man Suite



ST HELEN'S CHURCH
ABINGDON
OX14 5BS

ALEXANDER WALKER - CONDUCTOR
ANDREW KNOWLES - ACCOMPANIST

Tickets £15 at the door / £13 buy early / £1 children from wegottickets.com
or Peter Smith (01235 521392 / 07979 894095) p.smith@btinternet.com
www.adms.org.uk



Abbey Chamber Concert

St Nicolas' Church

**Dvorak piano quartet. Mozart
clarinet quintet**

April 2 @ 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Save the date!

Flowers for a king

Let's celebrate the coronation of Charles III in flowers.

Anna Stevens, Chelsea Gold Medallist, will be creating themed flower arrangements on Saturday April 29th at 2pm in St Michael's Church

Come and Sing

Handel's Messiah parts 2 and 3

Saturday 20th May in St Michael's Church



An Upmarket March Quiz

Ernest

The answer to each clue is a word, like Upmarket, that has the letters MAR embedded in it. Perhaps at the beginning, perhaps in the middle or, who knows, at the end!

1. A kangaroo is one of these
2. Nemo was captain of one of these
3. Usually made with Seville oranges
4. This allows you to read emails on the train
5. Abingdon’s charter allowed for one of these
6. An instrument related to the Xylophone
7. A type of seafood – squid usually
8. One of the herbs
9. You may wake from this in a sweat
10. This tells you where a letter is from – approximately
11. Silver experts know about these
12. A seabird with stiff wings
13. One version of ‘blue’
14. A small monkey from South America
15. Grass
16. A yacht with two hulls
17. A big tent
18. Wonderful!
19. Town associated with Tracey Emin
20. A foreigner in a parable
21. Striking – worthy of attention
22. A technique for producing patterned paper
23. A mountain rodent – vaguely like a squirrel
24. A long race
25. It helps when you resume reading

Answers on page 11

What does ChatGPT think?

You may have read in the press about an ‘artificial intelligence’ program with the snappy name ChatGPT I thought I’d ask it several questions. Here is the first. I may subject you to more in future editions! Do email suggestions for questions to put to ChatGPT.

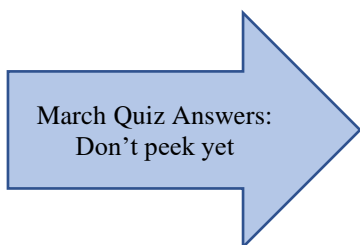
RR: Is the Universe designed for life?

ChatGPT:

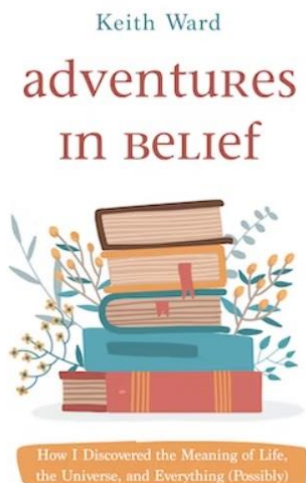
The question of whether the universe is designed for life is a topic of ongoing debate and inquiry in science and philosophy. There are arguments both for and against the idea that the universe is designed for life.

On one hand, some argue that the fundamental physical constants and laws of the universe are finely tuned to allow for the existence of life as we know it. For example, if the strength of gravity were slightly different, the universe might have either collapsed back in on itself or expanded too rapidly for galaxies to form. Similarly, if the nuclear force that holds atomic nuclei together were slightly stronger or weaker, it could result in either the immediate destruction of all elements heavier than hydrogen or the inability of stars to fuse light elements into heavier ones, both of which are necessary for the existence of life as we know it.

On the other hand, some argue that the universe is not designed for life and that we simply happen to exist in a universe that is compatible with our existence. They suggest that the universe is vast, mostly inhospitable to life, and filled with hazards such as supernovae, gamma-ray bursts, and cosmic radiation.



- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 25. Aquamarine | 12. Bookmark |
| 24. Fulmar | 11. Marathon |
| 23. Hallmarks | 10. Marmot |
| 22. Postmark | 9. Marbling |
| 21. Nighmare | 8. Remarkable |
| 20. Marjoram | 7. Samaritan |
| 19. Calamari | 6. Margate |
| 18. Marimba | 5. Marvellous |
| 17. Market | 4. Marquee |
| 16. Smartphone | 3. Catamaran |
| 15. Marmalade | 2. Marjunaana |
| 14. Submarine | 1. Tamarin |
| 13. Marsupial | |



Readers may be interested in Keith Ward’s latest book – an autobiography. We may be able to review it in a future edition of ‘A Candle in the Window’

Useful Weblinks:

Services: for the latest news see the Parish Website:

abingdonparish.org.uk

Page for Church of England links: services, daily readings etc

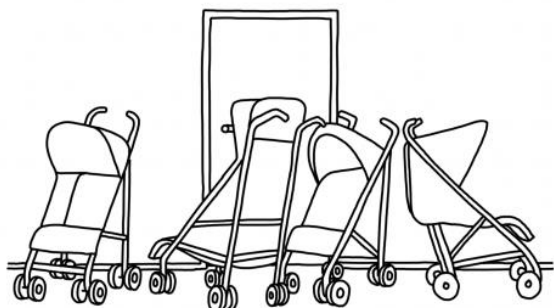
<https://www.churchofengland.org/>

FOOD BANK. The Abingdon Foodbank is still very busy and anxious to keep up the support. Northcourt Road (Christ Church) is open to receive donations on Tuesday and Friday mornings between 9.30 am and 1.00 pm. The foodbank also operates from Preston Road Community Centre. Donations are welcome there too between 12.00 and 2.30pm on Wednesdays. You can also donate money by sending a cheque made out to *North Abingdon PCC Christ Church*, clearly marked 'for Food Bank' or via the Foodbank website <https://abingdon.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/> or the Parish office has details if you want to donate via online banking.

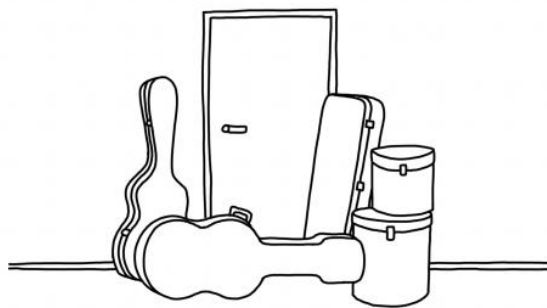
And finally, from Dave Walker of
Cartoon Church.

THE MEETING ROOM

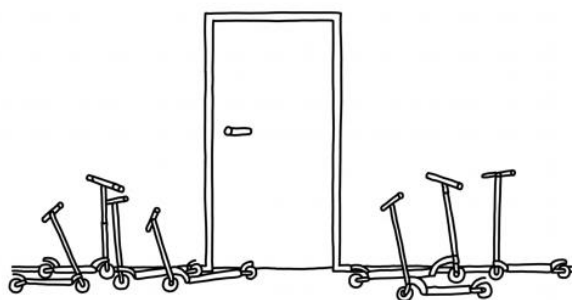
WHO IS IN THERE?



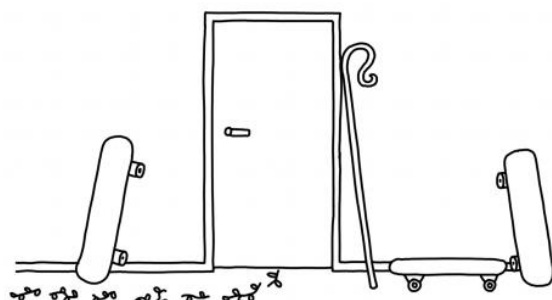
THE TODDLER GROUP



THE MUSIC TEAM



THE AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB



THE BISHOP, MEDIATING BETWEEN THE
FLOWER ARRANGERS AND THE YOUTH GROUP

CartoonChurch.com

Thanks to all contributors and to you, the readers.

The next issue will be published in April: ideas and contributions about Easter or 'new life' to

Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk