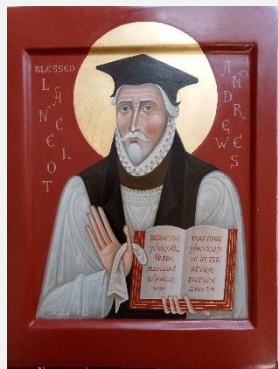


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For information about this icon – see Charles Miller’s article on page 20

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A candle in...

THE

WINDOW

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

Creationtide

Beryl Clements

Some 60+ years ago I read Rachel Carson’s prophetic book “Silent Spring”, and I well recall how horrified and indignant I was that we humans were causing such damage to other parts of creation, but it was only years later when I discovered Franciscan spirituality that I was able to place my thoughts in a spiritual context.

Popular images of St. Francis tend to show him surrounded by birds and animals, often feeding them or preaching to them, and there’s good evidence that he did indeed have a special relationship with them, but what makes his spirituality so attractive and relevant today is his underlying belief in the love of God and that all creation comes from that love. It follows that the whole created order, from the smallest being to the whole planet, is related to each other and interdependent. In acknowledging the uniqueness and value of every component of creation, rather than seeing them as existing solely to provide for us, we acknowledge their needs, their need for love and care, and our responsibility towards them.

Likewise the imperatives of justice and peace. The right relationship with all creation is a respectful, peaceful one, with no room for power or possessiveness, and the inequalities that causes. Reconciliation between humanity and the rest of creation is a cause for joy and thanksgiving, hallmarks of the Franciscan life, along with penitence and lament for our sins of greed and pride. Following Christ in the light of St. Francis governs how we relate to where we live, to each other and to God. All creation is seen as a reflection of God’s love, and so it all has significance for our continued life on this planet. St. Francis’ Canticle of the Creatures is a celebration of creation, on which our well-known hymn is based, “All creatures of our God and King”. It’s a real celebration of creation as it’s meant to be, full of thankfulness and praise and acknowledging the relationship that exists between God, humanity and the rest of creation:

“Most High, omnipotent, good Lord, to you be ceaseless praise outpoured,
And blessing without measure, from you alone all creatures came.....
...My Lord be praised by Brother Sun....by Sister Moon.....Sister Water....Brother Fire....Mother Earth....
...Let every creature thankful be and serve in great humility.”

In this issue:



A variety of articles on the theology of the environment., the urgency of repairing it and some of the practicalities of doing so.

Also an appreciation of the 8 o’clock communion service, reflections on the fragility of living, more about Mienneke Cox, a review of the ‘Festival of Prayer’ and celebration pictures from a variety of events. Don’t forget the quiz (about arthropods!) and look out for poems by Susan Gee and Eileen Duckett.

Reflections on Creation

Jen Brown

“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.” This opening line of Psalm 24 makes clear that the world on which we live does not belong to us – it belongs to God. And not just the planet, but everything in (or on) it. Yes, human beings were given dominion over the earth and the other life that exists with us (Genesis 1.26), but we are mistaken if we assume that the authority of dominion is the same as the authority of ownership. We exercise dominion over God’s creation on God’s behalf.

God’s dominion, or rule, is one of gentleness, care, and nurture, and it is on that dominion that humanity’s should be based. This becomes clearer when we look at the second creation narrative found in Genesis, specifically at Genesis 2.15, which tells us that God put the man, Adam, in the garden to tend it and to care for it. We can understand that to mean that humanity’s task is to care for the garden of the whole earth, to ensure its flourishing and the flourishing of its many, many creatures. We must not forget that non-human animals are also part of creation, and are to be included in the care we are called to show to the created world.

Although human beings are unique in bearing the image of God, we are wrong to think that this is so we can set ourselves above our fellow creatures and use them for our own ends, especially when this involves their mistreatment or exploitation. When we look to Jesus, the only one in whom the image of God is not distorted by sin, we see that being made in God’s image is not a status to be grasped or jealously guarded, but rather that we are to be like Christ, to relinquish any position of superiority we might hold and show God’s love for his creation in service to those God has placed in our care (Philippians 2.4–8), namely our world and the creatures with whom we share it, including one another.

The need for lament

John Maxwell Kerr

The most loved piece of classical music in the UK is Ralph Vaughan Williams’, “Lark Ascending”. Yet how many of you have ever heard a skylark? I find that a great many people have not. The skylark is on the RSPB’s rather long Red List of extremely endangered species. Nature is transient, species come and go. Does it matter that the rainforests are turning into ash and CO₂, or that skylarks, like Dodos, may soon become mere references in books? Or in the case of the lark ascending, transient moments of beauty on Radio 3? What might such an absence from nature mean for the prayers of the churches?

I believe that the churches’ prayers in the degradations of the Anthropocene era must include a *lament* for human sin: greed, willful blindness, and complicity. There are lots of sources for laments, the psalms for instance. A lament normally expresses grief and loss: our prayers now must incorporate another factor: *guilt*.

Grief and guilt liturgically, in a service of lamentation: grief and guilt for nature and the rapacious anthropocentric values that have brought us to the eve of destruction. And hope? Read Philip Larkin’s poem (1972): “Going, going”.

To hear and see Tasmin Little play the Lark Ascending at the 1995 Proms, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYREcK0gi4Y>

To read ‘Going, Going’ click here: <https://www.poeticous.com/philip-larkin/going-going>

and here is an interesting Clip of Simon Armitage discussing the poem with Ian Macmillan <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001b41c>

A Lament for the Earth

Weep, weep, for our wounded earth, for all that we have lost...

Sparkling streams, once alive with
leaping fish, flowing clear and deep
over a stony bed, are slow and dark now,
poisoned with chemicals.

Tranquil sky-reflecting pools, carpeted
with water lilies, white and gold,
havens of peace and dreaming,
lie stagnant, choked of life.

Shining, silvered lakes, serene and
calm, surrounded by green folds of
hills, fringed with overhanging willows,
now polluted with waste.

Beneath the mysterious oceans,
owned by creatures of the deep,
corals, once a riot of rainbow colours,
are bleached and dying.

Towering mountains of rock and ice
losing their mantle of white as the
snow line rises, and the rock-strewn
glaciers retreat further.

Majestic soaring forests, life-sustaining,
life-enhancing, acres of waving green
reduced to smoking, blackened stumps
amidst a wasteland of ash.

Fertile plains now dry and dusty desert,
their promise of harvest unfulfilled
as crops lie parched and shrivelled,
desiccated by heat-laden winds.

Weep, weep, for our wounded earth,
for our children and our children's
children, for those yet to be born,
for all that we have lost for them...

forever?



Photograph taken from [this website](#):
under a creative commons licence.

Susan Gee

Back to Earth

Helen Owen

What is taking place in our midst? What is the situation on Earth and our relationship with it? As we travel on our spiritual path, if we do not ask these questions we drift randomly and we have lost the opportunity to contribute to the destiny of the fabric of the Earth.....

I share my belief with that of the singer and sacred songwriter, David who declares in Psalm 24 vs 1 "The Earth is the Lord's, and all it contains. The world and those who dwell in it." God animates all of creation revealing to us His Splendour, Magnificence and Beauty that is the network of life on earth. A wonderful and precious network in which the world and man are sustained and interdependent as a Whole Living Being. We are on the way to losing the world that sustains us through our neglect and practices that damage the network of life, and we are moving further and further away from a sense of interconnectedness with our Earthly home and our shared responsibility for its care. Consequently, our relationship with the Earth is falling into decline leaving some of us to grieve that deep relationship and filling us with a longing to reestablish it.

A simple yet fundamental starting point to reconnect with the living Earth is found in the words of John O'Donohue

Let us thank the Earth
That offers ground for home
And holds our feet firm
To walk in space open
To infinite galaxies.

Let us ask forgiveness of the Earth
For all our sins against her:
For our violence and poisonings
Of her beauty.

Extracts from "In praise of the Earth."

As we struggle to find answers how best to deal with these immense problems of restoring the Earth, can we renew and uphold our spiritual values and live in accordance with them? Let us ask God for a deep awareness of a possible new way of being where mankind is integrated in a greater whole, and where we may make choices that focus on protecting, restoring and cooperating with our natural world. As part of God's magnificent Creation let us bring to life the senses which may have become deadened in our minds and ponder on these words:

May your senses enable you to
Celebrate the universe and the mystery
And possibilities in your presence here.
May the Eros of earth bless you.

A blessing for the senses. John O'Donohue.

Marine Heatwaves in the North Atlantic Ocean – why worry?

Patrick Holligan

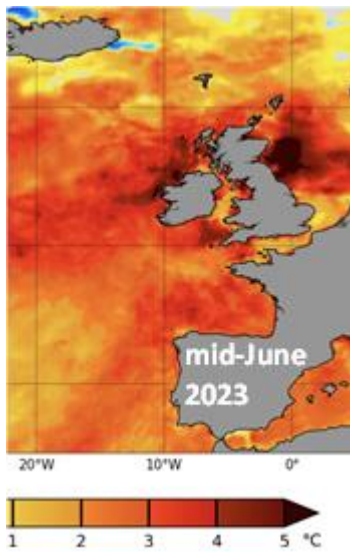


Image courtesy of NOAA

This image illustrates the anomalous warmth of seas around the UK during the early summer of 2023. Areas in red represent surface waters with above average temperature, yellow and white close to average and blue below average. The surface temperature in parts of the North Sea were as much as 5°C warmer than usual. During July marine heatwaves also developed off both eastern Canada and north Africa. By the time of maximum warmth in late August, the mean surface temperature of the whole North Atlantic between the equator and 60°N was 25.4°C, about 1.4° C above normal and the highest ever observed since records began in 1981 by a considerable margin.

Marine heatwaves are not common close to the UK especially so early in the summer. They are caused largely by a combination of relatively high sunshine and light wind and can persist for several weeks. Their impacts on marine ecology in the temperate N Atlantic are poorly understood compared, for example, to those on coral reef ecosystems in warmer waters. However, possible adverse effects on the health of bottom-living organisms in nearshore waters and on the feeding of sea birds offshore are of particular concern to biologists.

About 90% of the heat attributable to greenhouse gases produced by the burning of fossil fuels is absorbed by the oceans, leading to a general rise in ocean temperature as well as to more frequent marine heatwaves. As a result, significant changes are occurring in the biogeography of oceanic organisms, including fish, with warm-water species tending to replace cold-water ones. Of more immediate concern to humans, however, is the positive correlation between ocean warmth and the frequency and intensity of storms (including hurricanes) which threaten populated coastal areas.

A memory you might share

Rob Rutherford

I think it was in the 1960s that my family had its first car. It had taken time to afford it and time for Dad to have enough driving lessons to pass his test. An hour per year of your life was quoted. It opened up the possibility of picnics in the country and journeys further afield. Usually when we arrived or when we returned, the windscreen and the headlights were splattered with unfortunate insects. Does this happen now? Why not?

Space to reflect:

We can't fill every inch of this magazine. In this space stop! Think about your own life and what you can do to help the environment. Perhaps the next articles will help.

Creationtide

Jill Gant

As a passionate lover of nature and an eco-campaigner for many years standing, Creationtide has always been a significant season in the Church calendar for me. Traditionally it has been a time to celebrate the wonder of the Earth and the miracle of its 'web of life'; to express gratitude to its Creator and Sustainer; and increasingly over recent years, to commit to living responsibly within its resources.

However, Creationtide is now predominantly for me and for many I know, the cause of sorrow, deep sorrow and increasing concern. I do believe that we are now in an ecological emergency, not only in respect of the planet's physical systems, but in the destruction of biological diversity, which for me is the greatest tragedy. I worry increasingly about the world we are leaving behind for our children. So what can we do at this eleventh hour? First, we need to take seriously the Christian belief in hope, however hopeless things may seem. Hope is not just wishful thinking, **it is willed action in furtherance of the thing hoped for.** As I see it, Christians in particular, should see this as a priority responsibility to radically follow the First Commandment to love God with all our heart, souls and minds. We need also to accept that love (*agape*) is not just about a good feeling but '**a willing extension of oneself for the good of self and others, be they people or planet and its wildlife**'.

How do we go about it? I know from personal experience how really difficult it is to do as an individual. As a small Abingdon eco-group in the early nineties we tried monitoring our own use of electricity, gas, water, car use, long haul flight etc. We did reduce it quite a bit but it meant too much of a change of life-style which didn't conform with others in our social network. Basically, as well as what we do individually, we need to tackle the task collectively, and in society as a whole, strengthened with legislative imperatives.

This is why supporting eco-activities or campaigns is a crucial element in any personal plan to contribute to creating a sustainable world. Abingdon is a brilliant place to find varied and enjoyable ways to do this, involving varied amounts of your time.

We have two thriving voluntary organisations namely, *Abingdon Carbon Cutters*, which has been going since 2007 and *One Planet Abingdon Climate Emergency Centre (OPACEC)* which opened 18 months ago. The latter runs a community eco-hub in the Mousehole Cafe under the Museum which is open three days a week, offering coffee and cake, friendly advice and companionship and a variety of eco-activities. **Both are looking for volunteers to help. So please have a look.**

Contact details below:

Carbon Cutters:

Website: abingdoncarboncutters.org.uk

Email: carbon.cutters@gmail.com

One Planet Abingdon Climate Emergency Centre

Pop into the Mousehole Café under the museum during opening hours: Thursday, Friday, Saturday 10 am -4 pm.

Fill in a contact form on the website: oneplanetabingdon.org

Email: abingdoncec@gmail.com

Practical Steps

Martin and Catherine Kimber

What does it take to stop polluting the atmosphere with excess CO₂ from fossil fuel burning? Although this will need concerted action at government level, we do feel duty bound to do what we can as fortunate individuals in a wealthy country, to reduce our personal impact.

Cars are a major contributor to most household's energy usage, and driving in towns or cities directs emissions of avoidable pollutants where people live and work. The best course of action would be to live car-free, and sadly we did not feel able to do this without having a disproportionate impact on family life. However, in 2021 we were able to scrap our two very old petrol vehicles and make do with a single medium-sized car instead. Fortunately we were able to buy a second-hand Nissan Leaf (a reasonably cheap and 'normal' electric car) which, contrary to the constant electric car scare-stories in the press, has been smooth and inexpensive to run.

It is slightly more logistically complex to charge on long journeys but if you have access to a driveway at night, then charging at home will cover most normal motoring, and is both cheaper and easier than fossil fuels. We did find winter journeys used more electricity than the other seasons as heating is required both for the battery pack and the cabin, but we still managed to drive to and from the North East of England on some of the coldest days of 2022. This drop in fuel economy also exists in combustion cars, but it is less noticeable because so much of the energy from burning fuel in a combustion engine is simply lost as heat whatever the weather. Once you get used to driving a fully automatic electric vehicle, combustion vehicles seem complicated, expensive to maintain, slow to accelerate, noisy and smelly.

Another decision we made was to install solar panels on our roof. This is more of a commitment as the typical "pay-back period" can be ten years. We now have panels on the east and west facing roofs of our house which generate electricity via a "solar inverter" in our loft, and we chose to put a battery (rather smaller than our car's battery) in the loft as well. The tariffs for generating electricity are not very generous, so the battery means surplus electricity can be stored from the sunnier parts of the day, to use in the evening. Overall in one year our installation generated about 4 megawatt-hours, which is about 2/3 of our annual usage (including charging an electric car).

In the long run, both the change of car and the solar panels have required some adjustment but no real sacrifice, since the car cost was not significantly more than a combustion car (and it's better), and the solar panels will recoup their cost eventually. However, they still felt like slightly unusual and radical steps to take at the time. We will just need to keep challenging ourselves.

More space for reflection! What can I do?

‘Wilding’ by Isabella Tree

A review by Louise Heffernan

During and after the Second World War, farmers were encouraged to put all their land to the plough and to use intensive farming methods. Their aim was to feed the nation – a laudable aim, but one that led eventually to over-production and to the butter and grain mountains that you may remember. As production intensified with a corresponding drop in prices for the growers, it became more and more difficult for farmers to make a profit – something which is still a concern today.

Charlie Burrell, owner of the Knepp Estate in Sussex, tried all modern methods available, but was defeated finally by the clay soil of his land. In 2000 he sold all his cattle and farm machinery and began a process of reverting the land to its pre-industrial days – so not just rewilding, but also introducing large free-roaming grazing animals such as Old English Longhorn cattle, Exmoor ponies and Tamworth pigs, aiming to produce open wood pasture.

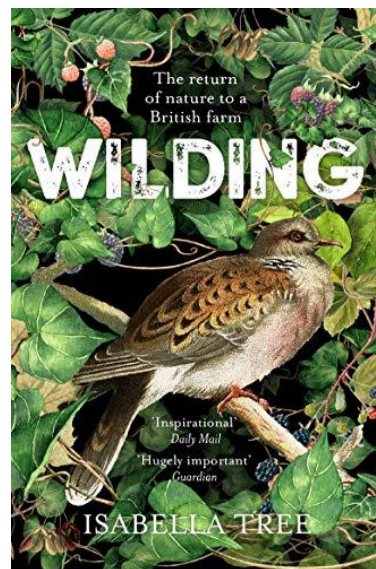
The results are outlined by Isabella Tree, Charlie Burrell’s wife, in this remarkable book. Leaving nature to its own devices has reversed land degradation, restored much biodiversity and provided insects for pollination. DEFRA has assessed Knepp land as now 51% improved in carbon storage resulting from ‘increased carbon storage capacity of neutral grassland and broadleaved woodland under rewilding.’ Exciting!

This is not a dry book; it is a lively account of the progress of 19 years of rewilding including events such as the unexpected return of the Painted Lady Butterflies who were attracted to the creeping thistle, which threatened to dominate the land and upset neighbouring farmers. And heartening too is the description of the ‘arias’ of returning nightingales and turr-turr of turtle doves, both species in decline in this country, but now visiting the oasis that Knepp provides.

There is a tension between the needs of farming and of nature, one which is explored in this book, but also on the BBC series ‘The Lakes’ presented by Simon Reeves*. We can’t afford to neglect the soil that supports us because the resulting wasteland will feed no one, but we need to continue to provide food for the nation. Isabella Tree’s book is inspirational, educative and hopeful – a must-read for all concerned about the plight of the planet and the inheritance we leave for our children.

Tree, I. (2018) ‘Wilding’, London, Picador.

*<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m0011p16/the-lakes-with-simon-reeve>



Chief Seattle's famous speech to President Franklin Pierce

Early concerns about the environment

Tony Richmond

In 1854 the United States Government offered to buy 2 million acres of land occupied by native people in the northwest. It was an aggressive offer, leaving the local Chief, Seattle, little option but to accept.

In 1978 the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG – now the United Society Partners in the Gospel) published a resource pack for supporters in this country, in which Chief Seattle's gracious reply to the president was hailed as a beautiful statement for protecting the ecology of the planet.

Chief Seattle said: "The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. He also sends words of friendship and good will. That is kind of him, since we know he has little need of our friendship in return. But we will consider your offer.

"How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?"

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and every humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people.

The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man. So when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us.

This we know: All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web he does to himself. "But we will consider your offer to go to the reservation you have for my people. We will live apart and in peace.

If we agree, it will be to secure the reservation you have promised. There, perhaps, we may live out our brief days as we wish. When the last red man has vanished from the earth and his memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, these shores and forests will still hold the spirits of my people. For they love this earth as the newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So, if we sell our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you take it. And preserve it for your children."

USPG continued to talk about the importance of ecology (before the word "environment" became popular.) In *Network* magazine in 1981 I reviewed a book "The Theft of the Countryside" in which Marion Shoard gave us 30 years in which to enjoy the landscapes depicted by Turner, Constable, Wordsworth and Elgar. Her villain was the farmer who was removing hedges, draining ditches, draining wetlands and transforming England into "a featureless food factory, producing at guaranteed EEC prices, food which is already in surplus." I commented then: "Perhaps the fact that she nowhere mentions the church as she scratches for champions, reflects a failure by the Church to appreciate the significance of what is being done to God's countryside.

"It is high time we produced a popular theology of conservation which, with facts and figures from Marion Shoard and others, might help to bring about more responsible public attitudes to man's stewardship of this planet."

That was written 42 years ago. I no longer see farmers as the chief villains, but the sentiments remain the same. And Chief Seattle's words remain as relevant as they were 170 years ago.



What Makes Your Heart Sing?

Eileen Duckett

My heart sings when my grandsons come bursting through the door, never quietly, shouting “We’re here Granny”.

My heart sings when my husband puts food on the bird table and a flock of sparrows arrive all trying to get some food. Those who can’t get on the table line up on the fence awaiting their turn.

My heart sings when I notice a flower come into bloom in my garden or the first ripe tomato.

My heart sings when my husband says “I love you”. He does that a lot.

My heart sings when my son gives me a hug. He seems to do that more often now I am getting older.

My heart sings when I am with my sisters. We laugh a lot.

My heart sings when I meet a friend I haven’t seen in ages and it only feels like yesterday that we last met.

My heart sings when I look around St. Michael’s on a Sunday morning at all my friends there and I feel loved and blest.

And what would really make my heart sing is if all the governments around the world would stop thinking about their own political aims and start seriously doing something about climate change before it’s too late.

What makes your heart sing?

The 8 o’ clockers

Caroline Cannon-Brookes

The first weekly Sunday service to take place in the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames is Holy Communion according to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. Held every Sunday at 8 am it alternates on a monthly basis between St Helen’s and St Nicolas. As we are fortunate to have locally a large pool of clergy, the service is taken by a variety of celebrants. Members of the congregation participate in opening the church and welcoming, and as servers and readers.

It is a ‘said’ service of quiet reflection and spirituality enhanced by a short address by the celebrant which appeals to a diversity of parishioners. Many, no doubt, grew up with the Book of Common Prayer before all the revisions which took place during the 20th century concluded with the compilation of the appointed liturgies published in 2000 as Common Worship.

One of the great beauties of this 1662 service is the strong sense of ‘continuity’ and it remains the definitive expression of Anglican identity today. Every first Sunday of the month in St Helen’s, after the service, refreshments are served giving congregants a friendly opportunity to catch up and chat.

The Book of Common Prayer is widely supported by the Prayer Book Society which has a very active Oxford branch.

Life is a Jigsaw

Susan Scott and the Reverend Michael Goode.

When dismantling a completed jig saw recently, I began to see the process as a metaphor for my life at that time, and then extrapolated the idea further.

Let us say that when we are born, we are given a metaphorical jigsaw of a variable size, complexity, and difficulty to complete before our lives end. The picture David and I have almost completed during our 60 years together is colourful, full of interest and reflects how fortunate we have been to do and have so much including our much-loved family – and extended family. So far so lucky! Then last October David started to be unwell and over the months this impacted on our lives more and more with worries about the future, variable experiences of help from the NHS, and having to adapt to a completely new way of living together Far from sailing into a calm harbour as our lives are drawing to their inevitable end, we have found ourselves in squalls, buffeted on all sides and even becalmed when no one seemed to be in control, and reaching a safe harbour seemed remote to say the least.

So, when I started dismantling the jigsaw it seemed like this was what was happening to our lives. A seemingly lovely picture being slowly destroyed leaving jagged edges and an incomplete and incomprehensible picture. However, I can report that things have improved health wise for David, and although we may not complete the picture of our jigsaw as we thought it was, we may be able to replace enough pieces to make a new and recognisable one, while giving heartfelt thanks for the good fortune we have enjoyed in the past.

After I had written this piece I was in touch with Michael (our previous Rector) and Jenny Goode who coincidentally were experiencing very similar health problems, so I sent it to Michael for comment. With his permission I have included his response below.

That is a lovely image, and one which resonates exactly with my (our) experience. I suppose that where the metaphor breaks down is that the jigsaw of our lives is not pre-arranged, but is always adapting, transforming, renewing. Often the pieces that at the time feel out of place and random, we discover are in fact the ones we have been looking for all the time! Or the bits that get lost!

Discovering the grace of God in the midst of chaos and disruption and the alteration in life that sickness and old age brings, is something that is not straightforward or easy I am finding. But I hold fast to the conviction that he is indeed there and draw comfort from St Paul's experience when he was told; "My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness," That is an amazing, counter intuitive insight.

Actually, the experience of growing older makes one realise that we are required to be open to change throughout our lives, and while our outer bodies decay, yet we can indeed be inwardly renewed. That's what I am trying to work on – though not very successfully as yet!

NB: I am extremely grateful for Michael's insights which have made me realise that I personally lost an opportunity to use the experience of the past year, as an opportunity for self-growth and spiritual development. So, one lesson I have taken is not to become so self-obsessed with one's own challenges and apparent misfortunes You forget you do not have to just rely on one's own strength to get you through...

11th Festival of Prayer 2023

Chris Jefferis

Under the auspices of the Bible Reading Fellowship, Ripon College in Cuddesdon organised the 11th Festival of Prayer on 22 July. It was attended by more than 160 people from churches as far away as Dorset, but also including Milton Keynes, Reading and Abingdon. I was privileged to be able to book a place for the conference. This was my first experience of the college, but the weather was inclement all day, so we were unable to enjoy the beautiful grounds and the prayer labyrinth usually set up for the occasion.

The conference's theme was "Prayer as a way of life". There was an opening keynote address, followed by three separate workshops to be selected by delegates. I chose sessions on "Prayer and resilience", "Praying the Jesus Prayer", and "Prayer and the English spiritual tradition". The first workshop explored 1 Samuel Ch 30, where King David found the town of Ziklag burned down, all were taken captive, but no-one killed. This passage was an example of David's resilience, his steadfastness and perseverance. The second workshop discussed the Jesus prayer, and how powerful it could be in a group setting. The third workshop offered a comprehensive study of a selection of prayers, psalms, hymns and poems and included Christianity in Art. A variety of picture cards were handed out, the speaker mentioning that many people liked to look at Christianity in art form. By coincidence, that being the feast day of Mary Magdalene, I received a card with Mary at the feet of Jesus and the words "Noli me tangere", which was explained to me by the speaker. The explanation linked below gives several intriguing meanings of these words in English:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noli_me_tangere#External_links.

The festival of prayer has become an annual event. Next year, more congregants from our church might like to attend. There is a fee, which can be reduced if at least five people go. More information about the event can be offered by myself or Warden David Pope.

A Candle for the Parish:



Placed at Walsingham on our behalf
by Sue Scott

Trinity Learning: An Appeal for Volunteers

Nicola Williams



Knitters and Crocheters: Our fabulous, and ever-expanding group of knitters and crocheters have created over 40 tiny bears and rabbits over the year. These are added to two of our packs, bears in the Bereavement packs which support adults working with bereaved children and rabbits in our Thinking Books packs. We would also soon like to add Chameleons to the range as we are developing a pack for adults working with children affected by family change such as divorce or separation. These small creatures, made with such care and love, are truly appreciated by the children who receive them.



We are now looking for **Thinking Books** volunteers for the 2023-24 school year. Thinking Books is TrinityLearning's mentoring scheme for primary schools. Our volunteer mentors go into schools regularly to meet children one-to-one or in small groups. They share reading of carefully selected books which start conversations about feelings and relationships. Thinking Books volunteers commit to weekly one hour sessions in a local primary school. TrinityLearning is committed to Safeguarding. We provide full training and support volunteers through the application process and DBS checks.

Forest School Volunteer - Carswell School is looking for a volunteer to help out with their Forest School on Wednesday mornings from mid September to mid March. The volunteer needs to be comfortable with taking part in outdoor activities in all weathers! Forest School runs weekly in term time.

Licensed Lay Ministry Training

Linda Hobbs

As a member of the Pastoral Care team and Warden of St. Helens, I have been privileged to be involved in many aspects of Church life; involvement has deepened and confirmed my feeling of being called to support the life of the people within our Parish.

With the support of the Rector, I applied to be considered for LLM training. I am privileged to have now been selected for training, with the course beginning September 2023.



Training takes 3 years with licensing following the completion of year 2. The course involves weekly tutorials, mostly by Zoom, a number of Saturday Study Days at Church House. There is also opportunity to participate in Quiet days, LLM conference and Retreats. The first year requires 6 assessed assignments of 2,500 words, first year topics cover Mission and Evangelism, Opening up the Bible and Everyday Discipleship.

In many ways I anticipate the next three years will be challenging, but look forward to learning, deepening my faith and further exploration of the Christian faith.

Please keep me in your prayers as I move forward and begin training.

Celebration Photos



Pictures of the presentation to Charles Masheder at his final service and of the celebration cake for Alan and Margaret Hoskins courtesy of Norman Dawson. The picture of Jen Brown's PhD graduation courtesy of Chris Brown. Jen adds that for anyone who would be interested, the title of her thesis is, "Religion and Morality: An investigation of the influence of participation in public worship on the moral thinking and attitudes of churchgoers".

Alan adds that: "We know that there are others celebrating their anniversaries around now – and that there are those who, for one reason or another, were not able to celebrate their anniversaries - maybe because of Covid. We would be happy if all those people would consider this a celebration of their anniversaries alongside ours.

50 Years! A holiday romance, they said. It wouldn't last, they said!

We met on a wonderful, warm holiday on the shores of romantic Lake Como. However, Margaret says that she first clapped eyes on me in the rather less romantic setting of the departure lounge at Gatwick airport!"

Mieneke Cox 1929 – 2009

Silvia Joinson

In the July issue we featured the installation of metal sculptures by the Sustrans track in the Abbey meadow celebrating local heroes. Mieneke Cox was one of these. In 1974 she thanked the people of Abingdon for “accepting a Dutchwoman as your local historian”.

Mieneke grew up in Holland, including four years of Nazi occupation. Her love of history was first kindled by a kind old great uncle and she went on to study at Utrecht University. On holiday in the lakes she met George Cox, a Harwell scientist. They married in 1954 and in 1958 moved into 103 Bath Street on the Fitzharris estate, built for Harwell employees, where she lived for the rest of her life.

Right from the start the family (by 1961 they had three children) worshipped at St Helen’s and Mieneke credits the then vicar Canon John Dixon for turning her back into a historian. She made use of all available local sources researching the archives of St Helen’s, the borough and Christ’s Hospital. Nothing was yet ‘on line’ and access was not always easy. She thanked the verger at St Helen’s for manipulating ‘the incredibly stubborn keys’ needed to unlock the record chests.

As she researched and began to delve into Abingdon’s history she started to give WEA lectures. Her enthusiasm was infectious and she enjoyed her students’ comments. Finding no modern History of Abingdon available she decided to write her own. The ‘Story of Abingdon’ in four parts from prehistoric times to the eighteenth century was published between 1987 and 1999.

Advances in technology helped. By part two she had an Amstrad. By part four she was visiting the Westgate Library in Oxford for local newspapers, helped in transcription by Anne Smithson and Elizabeth Aldworth. Besides these volumes she also wrote guides to the church and the Abbey and her first book ‘Abingdon Abbey to Borough’. This is my favourite; I taught this period for ‘O’level/GCSE and found it an invaluable source of local detail. What happened to Abingdon’s monks? How did St Helen’s cope with all the changes of sixteenth century?

Mieneke liked a good story and she produced pageants, one for the borough and three for St Helen’s. In December 1964 there was a nativity play in the Market Place, complete with donkey and we returned to Bath Street after for hot soup! When we moved onto the estate she welcomed us and sometimes babysat – part of a very useful estate club.

For a decade, 1970 -1980, Mieneke was curator of Abingdon Museum. This was a time of administrative change. In 1974 the borough ceased to exist and Abingdon became part of Oxfordshire and the museum was under new management. So Mieneke a local who knew the town and its history was replaced by a professional curator. This was not an easy transition.

In 2011, the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society, of which she was a founder member organised a day of lectures to celebrate her work.

How the town has changed!



Arthropods Quiz

Images supplied by Graham Hartland: a Facebook friend of RR, a clergy spouse, a teacher and wildlife enthusiast.

We publish this quiz in celebration of nature's diversity. The idea is to see if you can identify each species.

1



5



2



6



3



7



4



8



9



13



10



14



11



15



12



16



Forthcoming Events

Compiled by Eluned Hallas

**Abingdon Heritage Weekend
16th & 17th September**



**St H & St N open
Display on the
Abingdon Missal
written & illustrated at
Abingdon Abbey
Full programme of events**

<https://www.abingdonheritage.org.uk>

**Abingdon Heritage Weekend
16th & 17th September 2023**

**St. Helen's Church,
Abingdon**

Sat 16th: Open 10 to 5.
Short, free tours at 10.30, 11,
11.30, 12.

Refreshments 10.30 to 12.30
(raising funds for the church)

**3pm illustrated talk about the
organ and its music** by Director of
Music, Peter Foster.

Sun 17th: service at 10.30 (open
to all)
Visits from 12.30-5.

5.30 a special festive evensong
featuring the choir
and organ.



<https://www.abingdonheritage.org.uk/>



**Actors & Singers needed for
Abingdon Passion Play 2014**


**Auditions
Saturday 23 September, 2:30pm
Peachcroft Christian Centre**

To book:
<https://www.abingdonpassionplay.co.uk>

**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

Coffee Morning

**Friday 29 September
10:30-1pm
Parish Centre**



All Welcome


Saturday 30th September

St Helen's is hosting the annual RSCM Thames Valley Choirs' Festival culminating in **choral evensong at 5.00.**

Conductor Mark Williams, Magdalen College Oxford;
Preacher John Paul Hoskins, Precentor of Worcester Cathedral
Singers may book [online](#) or contact Peter Foster at St Helens
(DirectorOfMusic@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk)
Congregation members warmly invited to Evensong

Sunday 1 October
Faith Forum:
Anglicans in Exile – Life on the Left Bank
 Continuing the Rector’s exploration of his Sabbatical
 Parish Centre 9:15am; breakfast from 9 o’clock
 The presentation will also be zoomed, and available later from the Parish website

Sunday 1 October at 3pm
The Art of Prayer and Painting:
The Harvest of a Sabbatical



St Michael’s Church.
 Fr Paul reflects on his sabbatical.
 Tea and cakes to follow.
 Retiring collection for PACE
[\(https://thepacecentre.org/\)](https://thepacecentre.org/).

Mothers’ UNION
 Christian care for families

¶
ABINGDON MOTHERS’ UNION ¶
 Tuesday 3rd October, 2023 ¶
 at 10:30 a.m. ¶
 in St Helen’s Parish Centre ¶

¶
 **MU Matters:** ¶
 Discussion, ¶
 Coffee and Cake ¶

¶
 All welcome ¶

Mothers’ UNION
 Christian care for families

Autumn Delights Concert

Sat 7th October @ 7:30PM
 St Michael and All Angels Church,
 Park Road, Abingdon, OX14 1DS
Tickets: £12 (U16’s Free)

1st Half: Classical Chamber Music
 2nd Half: Swahili Songs by local composer, David Preston,
 sung by the Abingdon Swahili Choir conducted by Sally Mears

Tickets available:
 Abingdon Bookstore, St Michael’s and
www.abingdonpassionplay.co.uk

Proceeds to go to Abingdon Passion Play
 and St Michael and All Angels Church



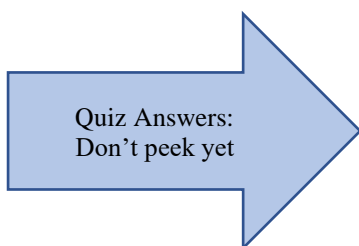
The Front Cover

Charles Miller

The icon of Lancelot Andrews on this month's cover was painted in 2015 by Olga Shalamova of the Sacred Murals Studio in St Petersburg. Olga and her husband, Philip Davydoff were part of the parish's 'The Hope within Us' week-long celebration of faith in 2016 when Philip led an icon writing course for beginners in our Parish Centre. Olga painted a fine set of four icons of early English saints, including St Ethelwold of Abingdon which adorns St Helen's altar platform on special occasions. Their Studio is now based in Tblisi, Georgia.

Lancelot Andrewes (1555 – 1626) was one of the preeminent churchmen and theologians of the late Elizabeth and Jacobean periods. Ending his distinguished career in the Church as Bishop of Winchester, he was a friend and contemporary of theologian Richard Hooker, an able controversialist in defending the settlement of the Church of England, and a remarkable preacher. Learned in seven languages, steeped in the theology of Christian East and West, he wove into his prayers, sermons and liturgical texts a refreshing richness of spiritual and theological themes, always biblical in their basis yet adorned and enlivened with the insights of tradition.

In Olga's icon the bishop holds a devotional book (Andrewes 'Private Prayers' became widely known and used after his death) on which is written an important theological theme from the Second Epistle General of St Peter, promoted in the eastern Christian tradition yet largely forgotten in the Latin and reformed churches of the sixteenth century: '...that we may become participants in the divine nature' (2 Peter 1.4) on which an understanding of salvation as deification by grace is based.



| | |
|----|----------------------------|
| 1 | Male banded demoiselle |
| 2 | Speckled wood butterfly |
| 3 | Meadow brown butterflies |
| 4 | Ringlet butterfly |
| 5 | Common blue butterfly |
| 6 | Four spot chaser |
| 7 | Male emperor dragonfly |
| 8 | Cinnabar moth |
| 9 | Crab spider |
| 10 | Red admiral |
| 11 | Early thorn moth |
| 12 | Painted lady |
| 13 | Gatekeeper |
| 14 | Holly blue |
| 15 | Peacock butterfly |
| 16 | Brown argus butterfly male |

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, This CartoonChurch.com cartoon by Dave Walker which originally appeared in the Church Times.



CartoonChurch.com

Thanks to all contributors and to you, the readers.

The next issue will be published on October 8th - ideas and contributions to

Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk