

Issue 2:
March 2024



St Alban

A candle in...

THE

WINDOW

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

O Taste and See

Yet again we come with hands outstretched,
to take the bread, to taste the wine.
We come in our brokenness, in our falling short,
seeking forgiveness, wholeness and peace.
Bread for our bodies, wine for our souls,
transform our bodies with your body,
renew our souls with your life-giving blood.
Do this to remember me.

Time and space contract,
we are there with you in the upper room,
in the fading heat and light of the day,
relaxing in the well-known pattern of
our Passover meal, the same throughout
the ages, though now transformed and
reinterpreted by Jesus.

Do this to remember me.

And so, like the first disciples, we struggle,
failing to grasp the meaning of the mystery,
a mystery too deep to be fathomed,
which can never be understood by our
finite minds, but can only be trusted.
Christ's body given for us,
his blood shed for us.

Do this to remember me.

So still we come, in wonder and humility,
in hope and expectation,
trusting the promises Jesus made,
obeying his command, drawing ever closer
to him and to the mystery of the Godhead,
as we open our lives afresh to his
presence with us.

Do this to remember me.

Susan Gee

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Appreciating Judaism: Anglican Thoughts

John Barton

The hungry dog that is anti-Semitism sometimes sleeps, fitfully, but it can be woken all too easily. We are seeing that at the moment. As war rages in what Christians call the 'Holy Land', it is more important than ever for Christians to try to understand more about Judaism. This article is not about the current war, with its appalling loss of life, or the consequent political instability, but about Judaism as we are likely to encounter it in the UK. And it comes with a reminder that I have only the knowledge of an outsider: while greatly admiring much in Judaism and wishing more Christians also did, I don't know it from within.

One thing I am sure of is that no one can say that anything is believed, said, or done by 'the Jews', as though they were all the same. That is true today, it was true in New Testament times, and it's been true through all the years in between. Like Christians, Jews belong to what we would probably call different 'denominations'. Orthodox and Reform Judaism are two of the larger traditions here, respectively rather 'conservative' and rather 'liberal' in character, if we can use terms applied to various brands of Christianity to give a rough impression. (The 'chief rabbi', Ephraim Mirvis, is chief rabbi of *Orthodox congregations*, not of other branches of Judaism—just as Justin Welby isn't the archbishop of Methodists!) Jewish identity has always been puzzling to many Christians because of its complex mix of religion and ethnicity. Jews who are agnostics or even atheists are still Jews, in their own eyes and in other people's. You can cease to be 'religious', yet remain intensely conscious of being Jewish, whereas Christians who 'lose their faith' wouldn't usually say they were still Christians, but at most 'ex-Christians' or 'lapsed Catholics'.

If you want to find out what makes Judaism tick, it's no good asking essentially Christian questions. Each faith has its own questions, and that soon emerges when there's real dialogue. Some Christians want to begin, for example, by asking whether Jews can accept that Jesus is the Messiah. We all surely know that the answer will be no, which makes it a bad place to start; but we should also remember that giving that answer has in the past been the basis for Christian persecution of Jews. Here, as in dialogue between the two faiths generally, Christians need to remember the historic imbalance of power between them. But in any case, for dialogue to be genuine it's important to realize that most Jews don't devote a lot of time to even thinking about the question of whether Jesus is the Messiah. In most strands of Jewish thought it just doesn't arise: Judaism doesn't revolve around the belief that Jesus is *not* the Messiah. Frankly, Jesus isn't of much interest anyway. Judaism is concerned with a completely different set of questions, of which many Christians have no inkling.

Jews and Christians do believe many different things, as well as having many things in common, especially where morality is concerned. But to make the question 'What do you *believe*?' central is typical of Christians, and not at all of Jews. The traditional practices of Judaism do logically *imply* certain beliefs: for example, that God exists. But if you ask many Jews what they believe, though they will naturally be able to give some answers, they will probably add 'But believing isn't something we do very much'. Christians misunderstand the beating heart of Judaism if they concentrate on belief-questions, as if Judaism were just like Christianity but with some adjustments. In reality it's a complete system that runs along different lines altogether, and what is believed—so important to many Christians—is a very minor concern.

What defines Judaism, in its religious aspect, is the Torah. This means a coherent set of rules and precepts by which to live a moral, and also distinctively Jewish, life. It can be found in two bodies of instruction. First there is the 'written Torah', that is the five 'books of Moses' (Genesis—Deuteronomy) in the Bible, accompanied by the other biblical books, thought of as a sort of commentary on them, but then with further commentary continuing well into the Common Era (= AD). Secondly there is the 'oral Torah', found in teachings of early rabbis. These teachings were codified, long after the Bible was complete, in the Mishnah and the Talmuds. The Torah is a guide to a way of life and worship. We can see from the New Testament that it already existed embryonically

in the time of Jesus, but it went on developing for centuries.

Observed strictly, the Torah can be demanding—think of the rules about kosher food. But in principle it's seen as a source of delight, a way of living well and pleasing God, not the intolerable burden implied by some of St Paul's comments, read out of context, on 'the law'—a mistranslation of the word that narrows it down quite misleadingly. It's celebrated in Psalm 19, where it's compared with the sun and with honey, both bringing delight.

Like Christians, Jews revere the Hebrew Bible—what we call the Old Testament. But also like Christians, they apply its rules with discretion. For example, merciful rabbis contributing to the oral Torah often qualified, or made impossibly precise, laws that prescribed the death penalty, till it was almost impossible that anyone would ever be convicted. Blasphemy is a capital offence according to the Bible; but they defined it as happening only if you pronounced the holy name of God (YHWH), which long since no one had known how to pronounce anyway. So in practice it was almost impossible to commit blasphemy. Or again, 'an eye for an eye' (e.g. Exodus 21:23) is universally interpreted in rabbinic Judaism to mean that compensation (normally monetary) for injury must be proportionate. The 'eye' is seen as a kind of metaphor for any physical or reputational damage, and punishment, or damages, must not be *more* than is fair; according to rabbinic interpretation the law is meant to limit reprisals, not to mandate them. The emphasis is 'an *eye* for an eye, not the whole body for an eye'. Thus traditional Judaism is not the religion of vengeance we find in some strands of the Old Testament, read very literally. Instead, like *some* kinds of Christianity, it reads the Old Testament through a merciful lens.

Both faiths claim the Bible as integral to their religious teaching, but in the form we now know them both are later than the Bible. The Old Testament represents the religious ideas in Israel before about the second century BC, and what we know now as Judaism is a later development of that. Reading the Old Testament won't tell you what Judaism is like now, or even what it was like in the time of Jesus. The same, after all, is true of Christianity. The New Testament may be our foundation, but modern Christian faith is a development from it. Reading the New Testament wouldn't give you a very exact picture of the modern Church of England!

Judaism and Christianity have common roots. Jesus was a Jew, and did not found a brand new religion, but regarded the God of Israel as his Father. Obviously, however, the two faiths developed into distinct religions fairly soon, with Christianity being accepted overwhelmingly by gentiles. Yet as you go further in dialogue, you find that there are also strange and unexpected resemblances that over time have come to cross the boundaries between our faiths. Many years ago I attended a conference for Jews and Anglicans, chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the chief rabbi at the time—Robert Runcie and Jonathan Sacks. Our differences over many important issues were of course great, yet we kept noticing strange convergences, too. For example, Jews like Anglicans have no central authority, no Pope or Vatican, to give definitive rulings on questions of faith or practice. And they are often uninterested in questions of theology, seeing these as theoretical rather than practical, just as are many Anglicans, for whom similarly 'theology' doesn't sound appealing, and is often seen as asking purely 'academic' questions. (If I had a pound for every time I've confessed to another Anglican that I'm a theologian, and have been met with an embarrassed laugh ...!) To be candid, many Anglicans also don't place all that much emphasis on *believing*: as our late Queen put it, we are mostly a practical people.

So despite the many differences between us, we also noticed deep shared similarities of style in thinking about religion. This is a valuable antidote to more hard-edged and dogmatic ways of contrasting our respective approaches. It reminds us of the common humanity beneath our differences. Sometimes it actually allows us to laugh, in a good way, at ourselves; and even, gently and after reaching some real mutual understanding and respect, at each other.

The rabbis said that even though on Mount Sinai the Torah was revealed exclusively to the Israelites, the gentiles too had, by God's mercy, been given a simpler, basic code about how to live, and they could please God if they obeyed it. This code, they believed, was an earlier revelation to Noah—from whom, after all, the whole human race was descended. Including, therefore, *even* Christians! If we can feel their surprise and amazement—yet also pleasure—that that could be so, instead of taking for granted that it's Christians who are (of course) God's main concern, then I think we may have begun to take a first step to understanding a little about Judaism.



St Helen's Churchyard in February: David Bevington

Why we walk the Stations of the Cross in Lent

Sue Sheppy

Lent is a time of stripping bare, cutting back, letting go, a desert time of travelling light and going on pilgrimage. It has been said that we do not need to go into the desert to find God, but we need the God of the desert to find us. Walking the Stations of the Cross during Lent is a good place to reflect on the suffering of Jesus, the depth of the love he has for us, and to make our response of adoration and praise for all that his death and resurrection means for us.



From very early days, pilgrims came to see Jerusalem to literally follow in Jesus' footsteps on the way to the cross, known as the Via Dolorosa. The stations, as we know them today, came about when it was no longer easy or even possible to visit the holy sites. The crusader wars raged and Jerusalem was often in Muslim hands. In the 1500's, villages all over Europe started creating small shrines commemorating the places along the way of the cross. Eventually, these shrines became the set of the 14 stations we now know and of which we have our own beautiful version in St Michael's. This year we are walking these Stations for the last time on Tuesday 12 March at 7.30 pm (for about 40 minutes). All are welcome - do come and experience the journey for yourself. There is still time to join us for the last Tuesday, if you have not been before.



As we begin our pilgrimage together, we open our hearts and minds to God, holy and immortal, holy and strong. We ask God to speak the words we need to hear in that present moment.

One of the sets of reflections we use are the sonnets written by Malcolm Guite for the Stations of the Cross. For the fourteenth station illustrating when Jesus is placed in the tomb, he wrote:

Here at the centre everything is still
 Before the stir and movement of our grief
 Which bears its pain with rhythm, ritual,
 Beautiful useless gestures of relief.
 So they anoint the skin that cannot feel
 Soothing his ruined flesh with tender care,
 Kissing the wounds they know they cannot heal,
 With incense scenting only empty air.
 He blesses every love that weeps and grieves
 And makes our grief the pangs of a new birth.
 The love that's poured in silence at old graves
 Renewing flowers, tending the bare earth,
 Is never lost. In him all love is found
 And sown with him, a seed in the rich ground.

Malcolm Guite's poem is taken from: *Sounding the Seasons: Seventy Sonnets for the Christian Year* (2012) Canterbury Press, Norwich.

Do you have to believe everything in the Bible to be a Christian?

Agnostics Anonymous: third session

Our February meeting found Professor John Barton addressing the question, supported by Keith Ward and John Kerr. The meeting was again packed – probably on this occasion with people “expecting the answer no.”

Where do you start to unpack the assumptions that underlie such a question? John had a three-stage approach. First, he considered two opposing groups who think that Christians must believe everything in the Bible – extreme conservatives (believers) and New Atheists. The latter use biblical inconsistency and (let's face it) offensiveness to support their case that Christianity is nonsense. The Bible contains rubbish; Christians believe it all; therefore Christianity is rubbish. Claims that we don't believe it all meet with flat denials. We have to believe it all, to make their case.

This leads to John's second major point: that the idea of the Bible being absolutely true and perfect is a theoretical belief. In practice, in our *experience*, there are many ways in which the Bible seems very imperfect. We are familiar with the Highway Code, which is directive, very clear, carefully edited, internally consistent and says the same kind of things throughout. If God wants us to have a similar manual for belief and life, why did God give us such a “fuzzy” book – in which many texts are poetry or stories, so not factually true or false at all, and of which every passage needs careful interpretation? Either we maintain that the flaws and fuzziness are not real, or we come to terms with what the Bible actually is.

Thirdly, John wanted to offer us two Anglican contributions from the sixteenth century. The Sixth of the Thirty-Nine Articles affirms that “Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation.” As John pointed out, this is a minimal, quite negative statement. It doesn't claim that everything contained in Scripture must be believed, simply that what is needed is to be found there. Originally a polemical point rejecting papal additions to scripture, it helpfully requires not too much swallowing-whole of unnecessary things.

Then there is Richard Hooker, whose writing is beautiful but Elizabethan, whose meaning grows large as we enjoy the cadences of his prose.

This is from *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, 1594, ii.8:

As incredible praises given unto men do often abate and impair the credit of their deserved commendation, so we must likewise take great heed, lest, in attributing to Scripture more than it can have, the incredibility of that do cause even those things which indeed it hath most abundantly, to be less reverently esteemed.

If conservative Christians studied Hooker, perhaps they would be less likely to play into the hands of New Atheists?

John's presentation gave rise to a lively Q&A session. I found this exciting and important, but I struggle to be coherent about it. Below is the best I can do.

How do we read the Bible? How can we defend those things which indeed it hath most abundantly without straying into attributing to it things incredible? How do new Christians start to read it? John suggests that it might not be a bad thing to start with the earliest Christian writings – Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, and his letter to the Galatians.

Keith: If you want to take Paul literally, bear in mind that he says the letter kills...

Keith: we can't rest too much on one saying or (especially) word of Jesus, remembering we don't have the words he spoke but only a Greek translation. We can, however, be confident that we have in the gospels a good overall idea of the teaching of Jesus. (John recommends the writing of Richard Burridge on the gospels.)

Later, asked how Joe Public can be helped to a truer understanding of the way Christians experience the Bible, John reflected on the way the *teaching* of Jesus doesn't feature in (say) carol services – or the Creeds. Can we get Matthew 5 into the Candlelit Service of Lessons and Carols??

If parts of the Bible are actually offensive, or just irrelevant, should the Bible be edited? The Bible is what it is – a record of how a people experienced God through their history. It can't be edited, though we all edit our own beliefs. All the books of the Bible have theological weight. None is trivial – though even the most conservative Christian would be hard put to argue that (say) the book of Nahum has the same degree of importance as the gospel of John.

Perhaps the most important question addresses not just the Bible's inconsistencies but the way it appears to sanction grossly immoral acts. John had spoken of a vicar who sought a “biblical mandate” for a church building extension. (Fortunately, he found one in the account of Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.) On that basis, we have mandates for polygamy, genocide and slavery. (It's very uncomfortable to read the books of Joshua and Judges alongside listening to current news from the middle east.) John told us that rabbinic Judaism is much subtler than some forms of Christianity. The rabbis inserted a “not” into the commands to the people of Israel to take the land and exterminate its existing inhabitants; they made these passages examples of behaviour to be avoided.

Which I guess brings us back to the fact that we don't have a Highway Code. Unlike an HMRC form, the Bible doesn't come with “Notes for Guidance”. There is no unambivalent direction on what to take literally or metaphorically, positively or negatively, normatively or as a point of arcane historical interest.

Why do so many Christians prefer not to be nuanced in reading the scriptures, not to recognise the subtleties they cry out for? Why do people prefer to use the Bible as ammunition for defending positions already taken, rather than do the work of trying to make true sense of it? My own view (not directly articulated in the meeting) is that the Bible informs our moral and spiritual understanding, which in turn help us to understand the Bible, and in a right way to evaluate it. We sit under the authority of scripture and tradition – and we find that scripture directs us to discriminate within scripture, that a feature of our tradition is permission to criticise tradition. Yes, it's all circular, provisional, relative and depends on an interplay of Spirit and Word.

Which brings me to a crucial point made by John Kerr, whom I haven't previously quoted. It is that the Bible is not primarily for Christians a text, or collection of texts, about which to hold certain theories. Christians have always used scripture devotionally, and can still do so. “Lectio Divina” is one way – the savouring of words somehow inspired, the taking in of the power behind words of scripture as by slow infusion. Perhaps our session will do its best work if it sends us to our Bibles to digest it inwardly in just this way.

GB

Gwen Bevington is a LLM with permission to officiate in the parish of Abingdon-on-Thames. Compared to many in our congregations, she is educated to about key stage 1 level. She has had, however, an intense, lifelong, love-hate relationship with the Bible. She is also a John Barton fan.

A Holy Week experience

Tony Richmond

Looking back some years to the 1970s, where I was Editor of a Cape Town newspaper aimed mainly at Coloured people – meaning people of mixed race. I had formed close friendships with several Coloured people. One particular friend was the Revd Clive McBride.

I had met him some years earlier when I sang in the choir at a rather posh church in the Northern Suburbs of Johannesburg. Clive and his wife appeared at evensong one Sunday. It was unusual to see Black faces in the congregation there, so I made a point of chatting to them after the service, and invited them home to my house for coffee.

I was very glad that I did, because it turned out that the Revd Clive had been putting us all to the test. He wanted to see how a Coloured couple were likely to be received at a snooty White church.

Over the years we became firm friends. During the time of civil unrest in Cape Town in the early 1970s, Clive was Rector of a deprived parish in a Coloured township. Tensions were running high. One young chap from the parish had been arrested and allegedly tortured by the police, and was now being held without charge. The people were angry. Anti-White feeling was at boiling point.

It was Holy Week.

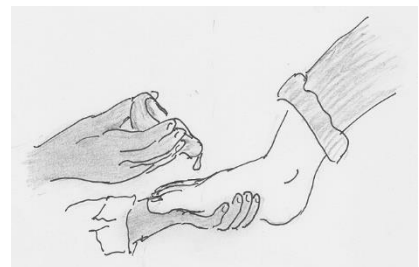
Clive McBride asked if he could wash my feet at the Last Supper service on Maundy Thursday. Now, pacè those who find the foot-washing a particularly moving ceremony. I have never gone in for it. I cannot bear anyone to touch my feet.

And besides, I was terrified at the thought of going in to that dangerous, volatile township. But Clive pleaded with me. He said it was vital to preach the message of love and humility, and to show the people that they must not hate all Whites because of what the police were doing. He wanted to set the example himself by showing he was not too proud or too bitter to wash the feet of a White man.

I squirmed and dithered and prayed, but could not escape the conclusion that this was what was being required of me that Holy Week. However costly it was to me, it demanded much more courage from Clive himself. He would be accused of grovelling, by washing White feet.

But what a powerful witness it would be. I couldn't let him down. So I went along.

Well, there's no dramatic end to the story. I was the only White person there. Clive didn't just pour water from a jug and pat the insole dry with the towel. He carefully rubbed each foot with both hands, between the toes and all, and while he did it he was looking into my eyes and smiling beatifically and saying "God bless you, Tony. God bless you, brother."



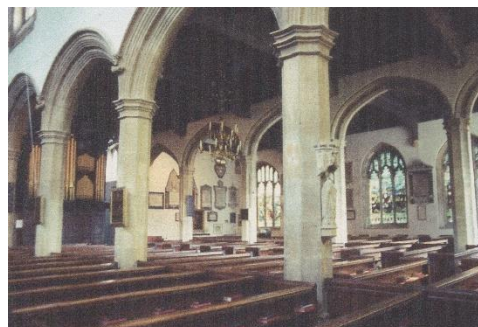
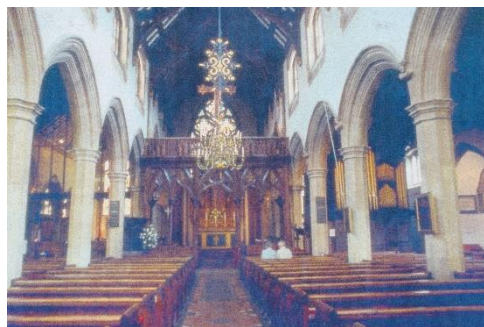
I didn't know whether I was more humbled by his sincerity or horrified to be sitting there without my shoes, vulnerable, and having this person fiddle with my feet

I was just grateful that, at the end of the service, by tradition the altar is stripped and the congregation hurry away in silence, recalling how the disciples deserted Jesus after his arrest. So I could leave quickly and drive home without having to talk to anyone.

All the same, I was very churned up and that was one of the most intense Holy Week experiences I have ever had.

The Re-ordering of St Helen's Church

Silvia Joinson



Photographs from before the re-ordering from David Mazey. Note the number of pews.

On Palm Sunday 2004 (April 4th) St Helen's congregation returned to a re-ordered church. No services had taken place in the building since September 14th the Patronal festival. During the winter of 2003 -2004 the main morning service had been held in Abingdon School chapel. Like many college chapels and cathedrals, it is arranged with the pews facing each other. It was a tight fit and, in some ways, less formal as contributions were made during the notices. It was a challenge for some as the chapel is on the first floor. However, an 8.00 was held at St Nic's and an evening service at St Michael's.

The day of the return to St Helen's was fine as we gathered in the Long Alley garden with Tim Hewes and Michael Goode taking the service and we processed round the church along the wharf led by Michael Faulkner carrying the cross as we came in to see our new Church!!

Over the centuries the interior of St Helen's has been reorganised several times reflecting the views of the different generations. In the eighteenth century the pulpit (present one but taller with a sounding board) was in a dominant position in the centre of the nave. There were galleries facing it and box pews with locks. In 1873 the church was closed from April to December when extensive work was carried out. Besides a new heating system the nave ceiling was raised and a chancel created with the gift of the screen by the vicar Archdeacon Pott (1868-74) His wife was a member of the wealthy Gibbs family of Tynesfield. What is extraordinary is that all this money was spent on the interior when the tower and spire had caused concern since the 1850s! This was finally sorted in 1886 after 13 years with no bells because it was not safe to ring them. The tower had to be underpinned and the spire rebuilt.

By the 20th century ideas had changed again and there were plans to remove the screen to open up the chancel. Several attempts were made to obtain a faculty but opposition from one non-church family led to the Consistory Court in 1986 which vetoed the removal. The next plan was for a nave altar on a platform in front of the screen. Visits were made to other churches where this had been done. There was discussion and some disagreement notably about the size and structure of the platform; wooden or a more permanent one in stone. The aim was to have the congregation worshipping together round one altar (previously it had been three; lady chapel, chancel with a third altar in the south aisle.) The new arrangement would make the building a more versatile space for a variety of activities and serve the local community. The failure of the heating system and two cold winters with nothing but a noisy blower to take the chill off the church added urgency. During the winter of 2003-4 when the work began we had monthly updates on progress in "The Window" from Malcolm Harvey (church warden). The church was completely emptied to enable the installation of under floor heating. Some of the Victorian tiles were used on the platform and in the south aisle. Pews were sorted, restored or sold off. Fortunately no archaeology was found to hold things up and the work was finished on time. Since 2004 further work has been carried out. The organ was restored, toilets and an archive room created in the north porch and a kitchen in the south porch. Next on the list is lighting!

The Parish Carbon Footprint

Rob Rutherford

I'm sure that you know this:

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 the world does not succeed in limiting global warming, our very existence is threatened. It is what is called an existential threat. The Candle in the Window has published 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 and in March 2023 we published the data for 2022. Here is the data for 2023. 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.

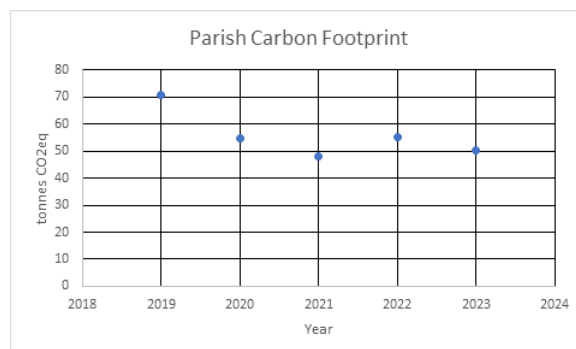
The calculation is based on this data:

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

207g of Carbon Dioxide are released for each kWh of electrical energy used.

This latter figure is that recommended by the government for businesses to use in their reporting. It 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. It was calculated mid-year and other sources suggest that a more reliable value might be 162g.

Building	kWh gas	kWh elec	tonnes CO ₂
St Helen's Church	110300	15300	23.5
Parish Centre	13500	4510	3.4
St Michael's Church	75013	15656	17.0
St Nicolas' Church	30103	4108	6.4
total	228916	39574	50.3



The graph shows progress or the lack of it.

To be honest, we are still '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 kWh 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. And do some planning. The conservative government promises a 'decarbonised grid' by 2035. If Labour gets into power, they will push for 2030. As the carbon intensity of the electricity grid reduces, the argument for electrical heating grows. In 2019 the figure was 289 gCO₂/kWhr. What we don't want is to go over to electricity too early when the consequence will be that Didcot power station burns more gas – not exactly the aim!

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

The Diocese has announced a 'Net zero preparation fund' to support a small cohort of churches to prepare for net zero. Watch their [webinar](#) for more information, visit the [website](#) for the application form and project guidance, or contact the Environment Team if you have any questions. The deadline to apply is 5 April. This 'seed' funding is not for technology but to enable feasibility studies to be carried out.



Holy Week & Easter in the Parish

Sunday 24 March – Palm Sunday

8:00 am	St N	Holy Communion (BCP) with Palm Blessing
9:30 am	St M	Palm Liturgy & Sung Mass
10:30 am	St H	Palm Liturgy, Procession & Sung Eucharist
11:15 am	St N	Palm Liturgy & Holy Communion

Holy Week – Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday

7:00pm	St M	Said Mass & address
8:00 pm	St H	Compline with address

Thursday 28 March – Maundy Thursday

7:30 pm	St N	Holy Communion
8:00 pm	St H	Sung Eucharist, Stripping of Altar and Vigil
8:00 pm	St M	Liturgy & Watch of the Passion

Friday 29 March – Good Friday

10:00 am	St M	Children's Liturgy
10:00 am	St N	Good Friday Liturgy
11:45 am	Church in Abingdon Walk of Witness meet at the Library	
12 noon	CiA United Service in the Market Place	
2:00 pm	St M	Liturgy of the Passion
8:00 pm	St H	Liturgy of Good Friday followed by
9.00 pm		CiA Candle-lit stations of the cross (see p13)

Holy Saturday/Easter Eve

8:00 pm	St H	Lighting of the New Fire, Vigil & Renewal of Baptismal Vows
8:00pm	St M	Easter Vigil

Sunday 31 March – Easter Day

8:00 am	St N	Holy Communion (BCP)
9:30 am	St M	Mass of the Resurrection
10:30 am	St H	Festival Eucharist of the Resurrection
11:15 am	St N	Holy Communion and Lighting of Paschal Candle



Springtime Events

Compiled by Louise Heffernan



Come and Sing... Bach St John Passion 300th Anniversary Concert



Saturday 30th March
at
**Christ Church, Northcourt Rd,
Abingdon OX14 1PL**

Singing Workshop with soloists and orchestra conducted by Sally Mears concluding in a concert celebrating the 300th Anniversary of the first performance on Good Friday 1724

Soloists: Jonathan Todd (Evangelist), Will Orr (Christ), David Johnston (Pilate), David Mears (The Servant), David Pope (St John, the Beloved Disciple), Sara Stowe (Blessed Virgin Mary) and Tara O'Connor (The Maid)

Conductor: Sally Mears

Workshop participants will sing the CHORALES only. Performance will be in English with copies available on the day. Light refreshments served from 12:00-1:00PM

Workshop registration opens at 10AM and workshop starts at 10:30AM

Concert 5:00PM to 7:00PM

Workshop Tickets: £20

Concert Tickets: £12

Semi-chorus singers rehearsal for the choruses on Saturday 17th February in St Helen's Church from 2pm - 5pm.

Proceeds go to the staging of the 2024 Abingdon Passion Play on 22nd June 2024

HARMONY InSpires

Harmony in

SPRINGTIME

St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

Park Road, Abingdon OX14 1DS

Saturday 20th April 2024

5.00–7.00pm

(doors open to the public at 4.45pm)

Tickets £12

Accompanied children under 16 free

available from: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DCXA>
or at the door – proceeds to church funds

Sponsored by
**Taylor-Made
Mobility®**

Refreshments & raffle on the day
with proceeds to Harmony InSpires

www.harmonyinspires.org

**Good Friday Procession of
Witness and Outdoor Service**

29 March 2024 at 11.45 am from
Abingdon Library proceeding
through the town centre to the
Market Place for a short outdoor
service at 12 noon. All welcome.

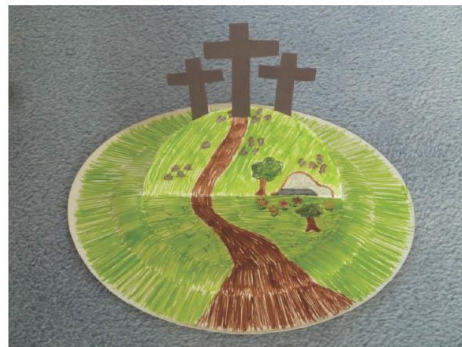
**Good Friday Procession of the
Stations of the Cross**

On, 29 March 2024, 9 pm, there will
be a candlelit outdoor procession of
the Stations of the Cross beginning
at St Helen's Church.



St Michael and All Angels, Park Road

**10am Children's Service for
GOOD FRIDAY**



A simple act of worship for families. Listen
to the Easter story and then take part in
craft activities as we share refreshments
together after the service.

All Welcome



**Circle
Dance**

in

**St Michael and All Angels
Church, Park Road, Abingdon**

**The 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the
month 11am - noon**

*Please join us in this wonderful place for some gentle
dancing to beautiful music from around the world.*

This is an informal group and new dancers are always
welcome; no experience or partner needed. All dances
are demonstrated and walked through first.

£3 a session

For further information contact Elizabeth Mitchell at
emwym@hotmail.co.uk or Sue Sheppy on 07786736226

Agnostics Anonymous

On Tuesday 23 April 2024 at 6 pm at St
Helen's Parish Centre, John Kerr will give a
talk about miracles, entitled '**Six impossible
things before breakfast**', followed by a
chance for questions and discussion.

For more information, please contact Jill Gant
on 01235 528929

Date for your diary:

(correction)

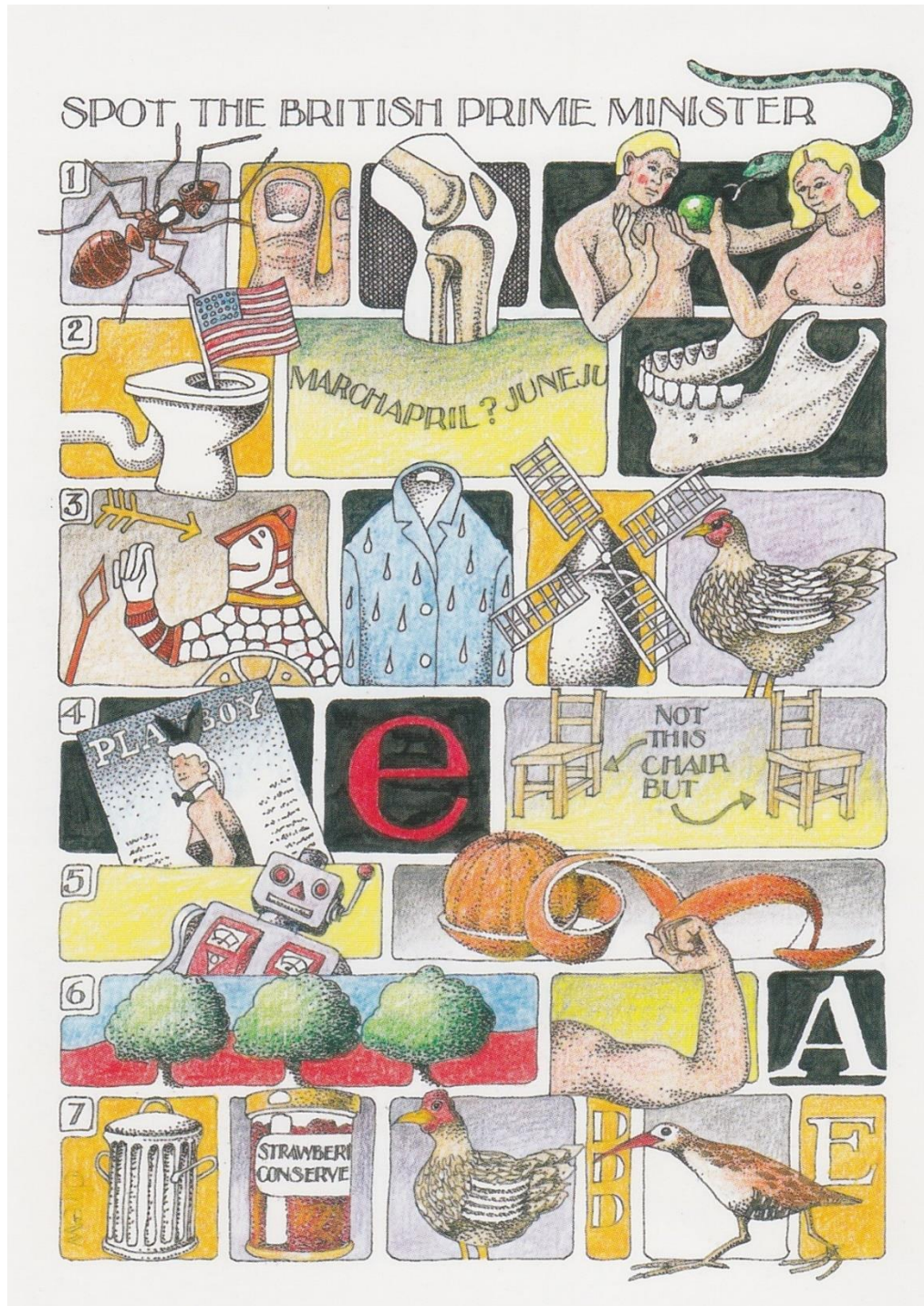
**Saturday 22nd June 2024 at 12noon and again at 5pm in the Abbey Grounds
Abingdon Passion Play**



Quiz!

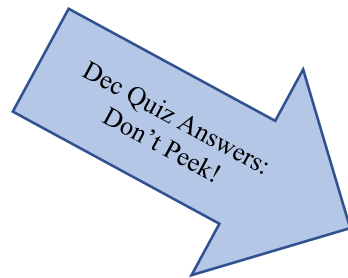
Last month's quiz was appreciated – we had a post-bag bulging with a letter from a Mrs Trellis of North Wales – so here, with Simon Drew's permission is another puzzle. As a reminder, here is his website: <https://www.simondrew.co.uk/>

The idea is that each line represents a British Prime Minister in a visual code.



Answers, we think, are on page 15.

Quiz Answers!



Anthony Eden	1
John Major	2
Harold MacMillan	3
Maggie Thatcher (Mag-E-that chair)	4
Robert Peel	5
Theresa May (trees-arm-A)	6
Benjamin Disraeli	7

SimonDrew Quiz answers



Two photographs from Norman Dawson to show the interior of St Helen's Church after the reordering was complete but before the pews came back. (see Silvia's article on page 9)



Useful Weblinks:

Services: for the latest news see the Parish Website:

<https://abingdonparish.org.uk>

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.

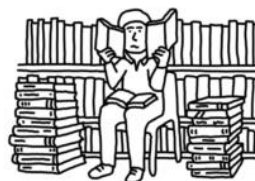
Finally, from Dave Walker

LENT BOOKS

SEVEN DEADLY SINS



SLOTH



GREED



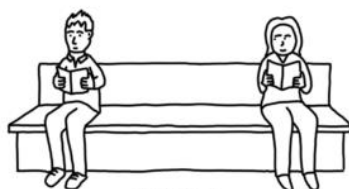
ENVY



GLUTTONY



PRIDE



LUST



WRATH

CartoonChurch.com

Thanks to all contributors and to you, the readers.

The next issue will be published on April 7th - ideas and contributions to Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk