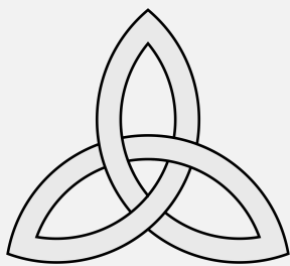


Issue 6:
July 2026

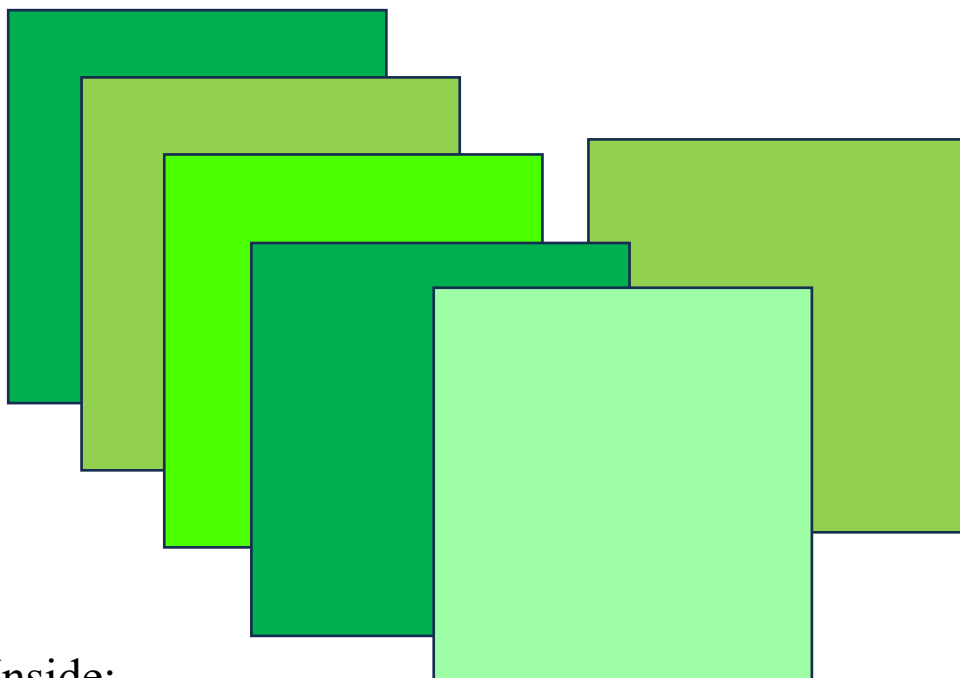


The triquetra: a
symbol of the trinity

A candle in...

THE *W*INDOW
News and Views from the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames

The Green Issue



This issue was shaped
by:

Rob Rutherford
Eluned Hallas
Louise Heffernan

Ideas for future
content to:
Candle@
abingdonparish.org.uk

Parish Office:
St Helen's
Court,
Abingdon.
OX14 5BS

Tel:
01235 520144
07395943957
E-mail:
administrator
@sthelens-
abingdon.org.uk

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Symbolism in the Liturgy

Faith Forum, 28 June 2026

Rev Dr A.K.M.Adam

Everything I will refer to is a kind of communication, whether words or actions or items or *ways* (ways of walking speaking, singing, handling items). For particular signs (words, actions, items) to do symbolic work, we should use them *grammatically*, with thoughtful attention to their contexts, their ordering, and their role in the liturgy.

There are, for understandable reasons, practically *no* effectual standards for liturgy in the Church of England. The Church that extends from Charismatic to Evangelical to BCP Low Church to Fresh Expressions, BCP High Church, Common Worship, and Roman Missal just *can't* have anything like a standard. For several main lines of liturgical thought, standards aren't necessary; indeed, they risk *hindering* the liturgist's spontaneous creativity, quenching the Spirit. For others, un-ordered liturgy resembles what Paul cautions against in his letter to Corinth, where inspired speech and action may be unintelligible without someone to explain it ('all things should be done decently and in order'). See the end of the article for helpful references.

When I was in secondary school - roughly Year 11 - my literature tutor had a particular bee in her bonnet. It became obvious when we read *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway. She probed the class with a variety of leading questions, none of which elicited the answer for which she was looking. At long last, she asked, 'Don't you see that Santiago is a symbol of Christ?' At that, we clocked that her imagination populated English literature with a repertoire of things that *mean* other things, and that she approved of readings that might have little to do with the narrative or wording, so long as we hit the bulls-eye by guessing the correct equivalents.

Rather than tangle with conflicting, interlocking definitions, let's just treat symbolism as a manner of indirect communication whereby words - or images, or gestures - convey more than they ordinarily do; they *resonate* with other expressions and figures, they *harmonise* with them. And when we say 'more', we usually mean 'a whole different *lump* of more', not just a little more. So when we talk about symbolism *in the liturgy*, we talk about ways that our words and actions, the items we hold and use, the *ways* we speak, sing, move, handle items, offer the opportunity for a congregation to see *more than* just a creaky old priest (or a vibrant young priest) and servers reading words and wandering about, but to see some of the dynamics of our faith *enacted*.

Need we be aware of something for it to operate as a symbol? The answer can vary. If we're not specifically aware of a symbol's referents, we may perceive that more is going on than meets the eye; or it may go straight over our heads, and we dismiss it as nonsense. A symbol may operate more vividly and effectively for some people than others, and likewise some people may be delighted at symbolic resonances, while others reject them vehemently as *wrong* in emotional or cognitive or ethical ways. If we respond to something as bearing greater significance than would ordinarily appear true, it's reasonable to put that down to some sort, some degree, some type of *symbolic* operation.

The first aspect of symbolism in the liturgy that I'll discuss is *reverence* - not a word or gesture or a thing, but the *way* we conduct the liturgy. Moreover, *reverence* constitutes something that the church can offer the world in a way few other practices or institutions can. Our behaviour and our attitude, *communicate* the intensity of our awe and marvel. You might not think of it as a symbol, but as inexplicit communication, it does symbolic work, especially where reverence is shared with others.

Walking constitutes another aspect of symbolism in the liturgy. On one hand, people need to get from one place to another; but when one participates in the liturgy, one's walking bespeaks the seriousness, and joy, with which one says bodily, 'I will go unto the altar of God, even unto the God of my joy and gladness.' As I said in Lent, *walking* evokes the journeys of the Bible: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, uprooted from their home in Ur and not finally settled in the land of promise for generations of wandering; the Exodus from Egypt; the exile to Babylon, and the return from there; Jesus's walking

from Galilee to Jerusalem, and then the Way of his Passion; and since biblical times, the many pilgrimages to Canterbury, to Rome, to Compostella. Further, *walk* serves in Greek and Hebrew as a metaphorical synonym for the way we live our lives: ‘walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us,’ ‘walk in light’, and so on.

The *space* of the church itself conveys more than just blueprints and measurements. A church will ordinarily be oriented with the main altar at the east end, where the sun rises, so that every morning service recapitulates the Easter dawn when Mary Magdalene and her companions found the empty tomb. Churches often favour high ceilings to hint at the heavens above (some churches have painted ceilings patterned with stars overhead). The combination of a high ceiling and an east-west orientation converge to heighten (if you will) the impression of a sacred space, a microcosm of the world to which we are sent to be salt and light.

I’ll get to more specific symbols in a second, but will just take a second to point out that these examples I’ve given - reverence, walking, space - point to Christian life *as a whole* as a matter of treating all of our lives as *expressions of a faith by which all our words, images and gestures convey more than they ordinarily do*. Or as Vatican II says, ‘visible signs used by the liturgy to signify invisible divine things....’

The main symbol in the liturgy is and must be the *cross*. Indeed, this picks up the ‘spatial’ dimension of which I was just speaking, since when Irenæus explains why there are four gospels, he says there had to be four, since there are four seasons, four cardinal points of the compass, but the four points of the compass make a cross; and of course, the cross signifies Christ, whether the crucifix (with Jesus on it) or the bare cross; the *humanity* of Christ comes to the fore in the cross, as it was as a human that Christ was tortured and died. We were signed with a cross in baptism, and we make the sign of the cross in blessing. At St Helen’s, the cross associates us with our patron, the Empress Saint Helen, Mother of Saint Constantine, Equal to the Apostles, Protector of the Holy Places. The cross, as the condensed symbolic identification of Christian faith, typically indicates the place of the altar where Christ is made present to us in the Eucharist (cross on the corporal, often on paten and chalice, on purificators), on things set apart for holy purposes. And we make the sign of the cross ourselves to receive blessings, to call on his grace to protect us from evil, and to remind us of our unity with him.

After the cross, the bread and the wine come to mind. We have Jesus’s words, reported in both the gospels and in Paul, that identify the bread with his body, and the wine with his blood. Much more, though; the bread calls to mind the bread from heaven, bread of angels, that fed Moses and the Exodus generation in the wilderness, spiritual nourishment for the Body of Christ which is the Church. Bread is broken as part of eating, as Christ’s body was broken on the cross, as the sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart that he will not reject. Similarly, wine becomes the blood of Christ, as wine *resembles* blood and recalls to us the figure of the vineyard as the kingdom of David and his successors, which God planted and set a wall around, but which has been despoiled by passers-by. Wine refreshes the heart, according to Scripture, and a little wine is good for your stomach. As we assimilate bread and wine into our own flesh and blood, so by eating the sacramental host and drinking the wine, we unite our flesh and our spirit to Christ and his Spirit.

The symbolism of water is aptly set out in the baptismal liturgy: Over water the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through water you led the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. In water your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit... In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Water is essential to life itself, as the last week has reminded us. Water refreshes us, and it cleanses away impurities. At the same time, water evokes dangers, especially as sea-going people understand.

Candles signify light and warmth, of course. The symbol of illumination resounds through our faith; Christ is the light of the world; light shines in the gloom, and gloom cannot overcome it. Moreover, like the oil lamps of the Bible, it signifies our lives, which glow with vitality, but ultimately burn out.

Our bodies burn with brightness (especially our eyes), but at the consummation of all things, we will need no light, for the glory of God will illuminate us, and the Lamb will be our lamp.

We could go on forever. The chalice, the paten; the corporal and purificators; the altar! the lectern; the preparation of the gifts, the ablutions after the service. The chasuble, stole, alb, amice, cassock, the *controversial* maniple; ashes; palm leaves; *singing*; the list goes on indefinitely. The vital aspect of all of this, though, boils down to their constituting a site, a locus of conveying *more than* the simplest version of their identity. One could be so bold as to say that what makes something a *liturgy* arises when it gives an observer the sense that something more than just what is obvious is going on. In this, our liturgies resonate with what was, perhaps, the most distinctive way Jesus communicated with us: in parables, which convey more than just prudential advice on agriculture, vineyard management and accounting, or roadside assistance. In liturgy, we take part in the gospel Jesus proclaimed, involving ourselves in the tragicomedy he catalysed in Jerusalem, the twist ending that God wrought as the last act, and in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, each of us shares in the leading role - and we take that out into the world, extending the symbolic universe of the liturgy into the world, showing the world that more is going on than meets the eye.

Romano Guardini, *Sacred Signs*. Trans. Grace Branham (Pio Decimo Press, 1956).

<https://archive.org/details/sacredsigs0000guar>

George Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols in Christian Art*. (OUP, 1954; pb 1961).

Graham Hughes, *Worship as Meaning: A Liturgical Theology for Late Modernity*. (CUP, 2003).

Percy Dearmer, *The Parson's Handbook*. (Henry Frowde, 1907).

<https://archive.org/details/parsonshandbook00dearuoft>

Adrian Fortescue, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*. (Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1920).

https://archive.org/details/bwb_C0-BOH-595

Ritual Notes, 10th ed. (Knott & Son, 1956). <https://archive.org/details/ritualnotes>

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (Liturgy Office of the Bishops' Conference, 2011).

<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/GIRM/Documents/GIRM.pdf>

I tend toward the catholic for the same reason that I tend toward formal grammar and rhetoric, namely, because I am a rule-following kind of person, and because if someone wants to understand what I'm doing or saying, they can always check a set of norms that will illuminate what I'm up to.



Question:
Does this symbolise anything?

Photograph of punts at Magdalen
Bridge by David Bevington

Feast Days and fun through the Liturgical Year

Ruth Pyke

Social media for good or ill, can be used for good as well as evil; for encouragement as well as disparagement.

I recently discovered a social media account dedicated to ways of celebrating Christian faith in the home. The writer is an American Anglican from Florida. Yes, she writes about Christmas and Easter but also of the seasons of Advent and Pentecost, Harvest and Trinity and in between the whole company of saints and apostles celebrated throughout the year.

It is something I've tried over many years in an ad hoc manner, at home and at work, encouraging families to have fun celebrating the faith of the Church. Simple ideas, using an appropriately coloured candle lit at the meal table, or a nod to the feast in our menu choices, after all many of the major festivals are rightly named "feasts".

A while ago a dinner guest reminded me that the date we had fixed was August 15th, the Festival of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Also known as The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary). So I set to work with my menu planning and decorative ideas. Often this festival celebrates fruitfulness of flowers and fruits - so some flowers on the table and a blue candle set the scene. I discovered an Assumpta salad online which I served alongside the main dish of lamb and potatoes. And then imagination and a tendency to High Anglicanism led me to make a Queen of Puddings! (Blueberries and ice cream would be just as good!) It was fun, and children could join in collecting flowers and fruits, decorating the table, lighting the candle, or making a fruit salad.

There's something very special about creating celebrations at home, structuring fun and feasting around the changing year and discovering more about the saints we celebrate. The author of this social media account calls this Liturgical Living and can be found on Instagram and Facebook and on her own website The Liturgical Home.

With July bringing the saints of Benedict, Mary Magdalene and James the Apostle I wonder how you might find small ways to celebrate these saints? An Italian meal for Benedict, and a task in the home or the garden? Special perfume for Mary Magdalene and a "Guess Who" game (Mary didn't recognise Jesus on Easter morning). Shell shaped biscuits for St James and a walk to a church as a mini pilgrimage? You probably have much better ideas but whatever they are have fun celebrating the richness of the Liturgical Year.

Here's a related idea from Cynthia at St Nicolas:

Scripture Cake

Proverbs 23:14: ½ lb Psalm 55:21, 2 cups Jeremiah 6:20 to a cream

Add: 2 teaspoons 1 Samuel 14:25

Then 6 x Job 39:14 one at a time

Chop 2 cups 1 Samuel 30:12, 2 cups Nahum 3:12, 1 cup Numbers 17:8 and add to mixture

Sift together 4½ cups 1 Kings 4:22, 2 teaspoons Amos 4:5 and a pinch of Leviticus 2:13 and stir into mixture

Pour into a well papered fairly large tin and bake in moderate oven for 2 hours

Ice when cold

Caring for God's Acre:

Rob Rutherford



Some of the group
Photo: Mike de Villiers

At St Helen's, about ten of us decided to take part in the 'Churches Count on Nature'. This event took place across the country in the week after June 7th and it involved over 300 sites. The idea was to identify, as carefully as we could, plant and animal species within the churchyard areas.



We share a worry about biodiversity. Without flowers, the insects have no nectar; without insects, pollination of the plants will be unsuccessful and bird life will suffer. There is an interdependence in nature. We want to know the present situation and we hope to make it better!

St Helen's has 4 churchyard areas and within about 2 hours we managed to count about 30 trees (of different kinds including yew, holly, beech, cedar, Austrian pine, box, willow, cherry, cypress and horse-chestnut) and make 115 plant identifications (with some duplication) using the iNaturalist 'app' to help us.

About a week later the areas were strimmed by the council and one of the trees was cut down. Therein lies a problem – the churchyards are 'closed' and their management has been taken over by the council. However, we are optimistic that if we receive advice about improving biodiversity from local experts that we can have fruitful discussions with the council about their management policy.

Insect life was not really surveyed – this is perhaps something we can improve on! We did shake one of the cherry trees and caught a few unsuspecting insects in a sheet held below it! One of our number confidently identified some as 'Harvestmen'. As for larger animals, we of course spotted squirrels and pigeons but keep your eyes open – birds are transient visitors and it is a matter of luck. If you want to identify birdsong the Merlin 'app' seems pretty good. We also found an identified a few lichens and learned from Patrick Holligan that the Abingdon Naturalists had been on a 'field trip' to the churchyard to see them. There are a significant number on the church itself.



A harvestman

Trees:



Beech, holly and box



Yew trees and holly



Horse-chestnut

Flowers to look out for:



Cinquefoil



Blue alkanet



Bindweed



Buttercup with hoverfly



Bellflower



Cranesbill



Herb Robert



Ladybirds on a thistle



A 'hard to identify' lichen
A lichen is a symbiotic joining of a
fungus and algae or cyanobacteria



Pellitory-of-the-wall



Daisies
of course!



Ivy-leaved toadflax



Creeping buttercup

Let the grass grow under your feet

Louise Heffernan

Rob's survey into plants and other species found in the St Helen's churchyard reminds us of the parish eco-policy in which we have committed to manage 'our churchyards and our other open spaces to be wildlife-friendly, eliminating, as soon as is practical, the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides where these are currently used, and in future refraining from their use, and incorporating into our green spaces plants beneficial to pollinators, birds, and other animal wildlife.'

This is quite a challenge both in a church context and also at home if we extend the policy to the way we look after our gardens if we are lucky enough to have one.

The UK has seen a decline in numerous native species of birds, insects and small mammals.

(<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org>) Gardens, however, can provide a safe haven for such wildlife – a pathway through the concrete world or intensively farmed landscape we inhabit. But only if we garden responsibly.

I'm not going to attempt to be prescriptive. I know my own gardening practice is far from perfect. As gardens are so important, though, it is worth considering making a few small changes.

No Mow May – let your grass go unmown during May. For details on how to approach this see <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/>. Because of the recent heatwave following on from my holiday, my lawn has not been mowed for several weeks. One advantage of this is that it has stayed green, as longer grass will. But it has also become home to more insects and butterflies as well as wildflowers such as red and white Clover, Selfheal, Purple Toadflax, Herb Robert and other delightfully named plants. And there is no need to let the whole lawn grow – a section of a garden left to its own devices can provide a safe place for wildlife. Or maybe, if you can't bear to lose that cricket pitch perfection, just mow less often – every other week instead of weekly.

Try to avoid chemical fertilizers herbicides and pesticides. There are often organic or biological alternatives. Slugs, my particular *bête-noire*, can be useful for gardeners as they eat decomposing organic matter. The RHS website gives excellent advice in coping with our slimy friends: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/biodiversity/slugs-and-snails>. And some would argue that weeds are simply plants in what we consider to be the wrong place. Let's not forget that in Matthew 13 the servants of the householder are encouraged to let the tares grow until harvest time.

Think about planting native plants that are attractive to our home-grown bees and pollinators. Add a few exotic plants from other parts of the world to extend the pollinating season. The RHS has a complete list of flowering plants that will get the bees buzzing.*

This research has made me consider: what are the aspects of gardening I can change and how can I promote biodiversity in a way that still enables my garden to give pleasure? For more help go to <https://www.themiddlesizedgarden.co.uk>. And share your thoughts please.

* The RHS guidance can be found [here](#):

Their list includes lavender of course. Look out for the bee-friendly symbol on their recommendations!



Practical Ecological Action

*The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is :
the compass of the world, and they that dwell therein.*

(Psalm 24 BCP)

Did you know that the Parish has an Eco Policy? On our congregations' behalf the PCC has pledged to

1. recognise the whole of creation as God's work and integral to God's salvation plan, and to value it accordingly;
2. be good environmental stewards, incorporating care for creation into all aspects of church life.

What this might mean in practice is unpacked in a series of practical procedures – see page 10

Last month the PCC (and congregation members involved in eco-church projects) met to consider the policy, its impact on the Parish - our churches and congregations - and discuss practical next steps. For example:

- all three churches have now had professional energy audits, and considered ways to reduce our carbon foot print (green energy tariffs; low energy lighting at St N, and plans for better energy efficiency in the proposed new scheme at St H etc);
- all three churches are working towards Eco-Church awards (<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>) with St N already having achieved a Silver award;
- a small group is looking at the Parish Centre – both to make it more accessible and to lower its carbon footprint;
- we are looking at all our purchasing – bringing eco-friendliness into all decision making;
- the management of our associated green spaces (from the large St H's graveyard to the small Parish Centre garden) is being reviewed to improve biodiversity (read more on this on page 6);
- reminders of the importance of our stewardship of God's creation occur in our teaching and preaching;
- longer term plans could see the replacement of gas boilers with heat pumps and the installation of solar panels (all with appropriate consents of course).

So what next?

The PCC has recommitted to ecological action – and to improved communication with the congregations (of which I hope this is a part).

We will be reviewing our Policy shortly – do you have any comments?

Would you like to get involved? Speak to your church's Eco Champions – St H: Rob Rutherford & Catherine Kimber; St M – Alex Scott; St N – Roger Cox & Patrick Holligan

Would you like to help manage our green spaces? Could you contribute articles to this publication? Or help with fundraising / grant applications for bigger projects? Or get involved in other ways?

Would you be willing to make changes to your lifestyle at home to help us live more lightly on the planet?

Don't get discouraged by what you can't do. Just make the changes you can.
As a well-known brand says, 'Every little helps'

Eluned Hallas



**PARISH of Abingdon on Thames
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

It is the policy of the PCC to

1. recognise the whole of creation as God's work and integral to God's salvation plan, and to value it accordingly;
2. be good environmental stewards, incorporating care for creation into all aspects of church life.

Signed S Scott Lay Chair

Date 30 July 2024

**THE PCC AGREES THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES TO IMPLEMENT THE ABOVE
POLICY:**

WE commit to

Undertaking regular reviews of our energy use and the energy efficiency of our buildings, and considering ways in which energy use can be reduced or made more sustainable.

Reviewing progress in implementation of changes and practices that have been identified as ways to improve energy efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint in all of our facilities, such as installation of low-energy light bulbs, solar panels, insulation, and efficient heating systems where possible, while also recognising the limitations inherent in listed ancient buildings.

Considering and where possible implementing measures to promote environmentally-friendly lifestyles, such as the provision of secure cycle parking at our church buildings or the creation of Sunday ride-share schemes.

Managing churchyards and our other open spaces to be wildlife-friendly, eliminating, as soon as is practical, the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides where these are currently used, and in future refraining from their use, and incorporating into our green spaces plants beneficial to pollinators, birds, and other animal wildlife.

Using environmentally-friendly cleaning products and office products, such as recycled paper, in all of our buildings, replacing existing products with environmentally-friendly alternatives as and when supplies need to be replaced.

Participating in local authority recycling and food waste collection schemes, and, where possible and appropriate, on-site composting of suitable food waste.

Taking into consideration the environmental policies of potential suppliers and contractors when making purchases or contracting for services (including building works).

Supporting sustainable farming practices through the use of LOAF (local, organic, animal-friendly and fair trade) foodstuffs at church functions where the church provides food and drink, and raising awareness of the LOAF principal among our congregations and encouraging congregation members to consider using LOAF products when contributing to church functions.

Promoting sustainable and animal-friendly eating practices and extending hospitality by always providing vegetarian and vegan options at church functions and reducing the use of meat and dairy products.

Regularly including environmental care and the theology underlying this in our cycle of prayer and preaching.

Appointing an Eco-Champion in each church, responsible to the DCC, to oversee and monitor progress of the implementation the above policy and procedures and our participation in the Eco-Church scheme.

Note: some wording has been amended to more closely reflect the wording of the Eco-Church survey to allow for closer matching between policy and Eco-Church surveys

Procedures agreed: 17 March 2025

England's Oldest Town?

A new book about the archaeology of Abingdon

Anne Dodd

Abingdon claims the title of England's oldest town – a place where people have lived continuously for over 2000 years. But that's far from the whole story.

Within the town and its surrounding area there are many important archaeological sites, some of which have seen major excavations of national importance. Handaxes from the days when Neanderthals roamed the Thames Valley have been found here, and bones of mammoths lie in the river gravels. Over 5000 years ago, at what is now the junction of Radley Road and Cameron Avenue, Abingdon's first farmers built a ceremonial enclosure.

For over 1000 years, from 2500 BC, Barrow Hills was a monumental barrow cemetery where Abingdon's Bronze Age people were buried, with some of the earliest copper and gold known in Britain. By 600 BC the farms of Iron Age people were dotted across the landscape, and a few decades before the coming of the Romans huge defensive ditches encircled what is now the town centre.

The Romans conquered much of Britain in AD 43 and Abingdon prospered for a long time, probably as a market centre. Remains of villas and many objects of daily life have been found in excavations at Barton, Tithe Farm and elsewhere. The Romans left around AD 410, and settlers from northern Europe, known to us as the Anglo-Saxons, moved into the country. A cemetery rich with their grave goods of weapons and jewellery was found at Saxton Road, and the remains of their farms occur across the town.

With the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, churches were built, and Abingdon became the home of one of the richest and most important Benedictine abbeys in the country, founded around AD 954. Its remains have been investigated on several occasions. The abbey was closed and pulled down in 1538, and for 250 years or more Abingdon prospered as a chartered borough, a busy market and county town for Berkshire.

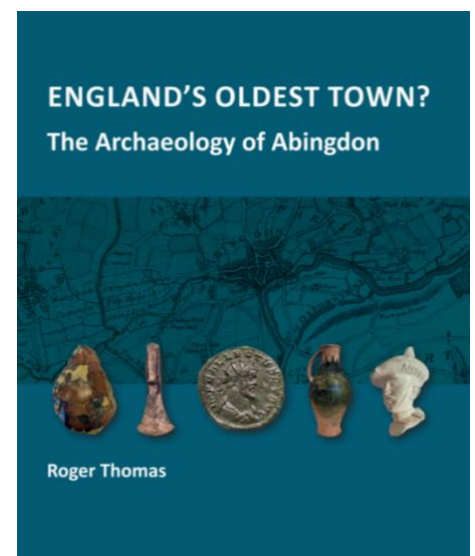
The Civil War touched Abingdon directly. The final parting of Charles I and his queen, Henrietta Maria, took place at Barton Court, and the town saw military occupation, fighting and disease. The remains of Abingdon's past are still all around us in the town's wonderful historic buildings, whose secrets are being revealed through survey and tree-ring dating of their timbers; in the layout of the streets and in the archives of our oldest institutions but the archaeology of the town remains surprisingly little known, including by local residents.

Roger Thomas, a professional archaeologist who has lived in Abingdon for many years, has written an accessible and richly illustrated book, *England's Oldest Town? The Archaeology of Abingdon* to provide an up-to-date account of this fascinating archaeological story.

St Helen's hosted the launch of this book on Thursday 9 July. There was a full church!



Photo: Rob Rutherford



Eco snippets:

Gresham College Lectures Some readers might be interested in the series of six lectures by the current Gresham Professor of the Environment, Helen Czerski. Helen is a physicist and oceanographer at University College London and has also presented numerous television and radio programmes. The lectures are available to view on-line at

<https://www.gresham.ac.uk/speakers/professor-helen-czerski>

New Eco Podcast The Diocese has launched a new podcast, *Common Ground*, hosted by Bishop Mary. The web page

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/news/its-not-inevitable-a-climate-scientist-on-hope-grief-and-the-future.php> has links to both Spotify and Apple Podcasts both of which have lists of the episodes in the series and recordings. The second episode, *The Locals Keep the Lights On*, Bishop Mary talks to farmer Henry Astor, owner of Bruern Farms, about the challenges facing British farming. For me it was a very insightful and actionable conversation

For ideas and how to Make Your Pledge to **Reduce Your Plastic Use in July** see: <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/>



A beautiful landscape photograph by David Bevington:

Wittenham Clumps with ripening wheat

for Churches 2026

It's not long now until the 2026 Ride + Stride in aid of the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust (OHCT). This year on Saturday 12th September, the event raises money for the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust, and above all is great fun!

Visit as many or as few churches as you wish by cycle or on foot, gaining sponsorship for each one from friends and family. Alternatively, a less energetic but equally important option is to sit in church and welcome Riders and Striders.

The OHCT gives grants to churches for repairs, and each of the three churches in the parish have benefitted from these grants in recent years. 50% of the money raised through sponsorship for the Ride + Stride goes to a church of the participant's choice, and 50% to the OHCT.

Full details can be found on the OHCT website <https://ohct.org.uk/ride-and-stride/> and the church co-ordinators: Alexandra Green for St Helen's alexandra.green.sthelen@gmail.com, Louise Heffernan lheff@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk for St Michael's, and Eluned Hallas eluned@hallas.org.uk for St Nicolas will be happy to give further information, including lists of churches open on the day, suggested routes, maps, and sponsorship forms.

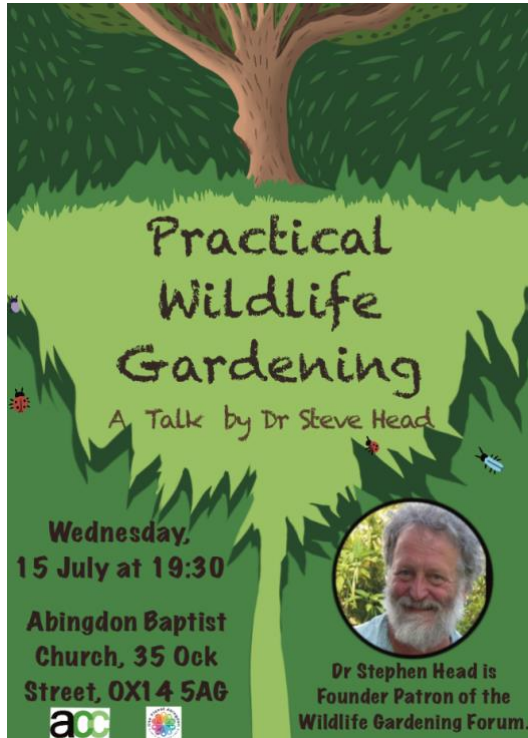
Please do join in and encourage your friends and family as well!



The buggy park at the Toddler group held in the Parish Centre on a Monday morning.
One form of outreach!

Summer Events

Compiled by Louise Heffernan



Music in Abingdon



Piano Recital

Hugh Rhys James

6th September in St Michael's Church at 3.00pm.

Or...

Abbey Chamber Concert

6 September 2026 St Nicolas church, at 3pm

Brahms Quintet for clarinet and strings –

Catriona Scott with OXUS

Pavlova Wind Quintet

Sunday 20 September 3.00pm

St Michael's Church

Piano and wind quintet with Glynne Butt play Beethoven



Cream Tea

St Michael & All Angels' Church,
Park Road



Saturday 25th July
2.30 – 4.30 pm

Tea/coffee with scone/cake £5
Proceeds to church funds
All welcome

29th August 2.30 – 4.30pm

Hiroshima ceremony & exhibition followed by lantern floating

Abingdon Peace Group invite you to this event at **St Ethelwold's House (OX14 5EB) on**

Thursday 6 August 2026, 7 pm onwards. The exhibition will be in the Garden Room from 7 pm. The ceremony will take place around the Peace Pole at 7.30 pm.

The procession to the river (St Helen's Wharf) for candle floating will be at 8 pm. All welcome. Join us when you can.

Ecumenical course: Holy Ground to train for spiritual direction

A course is designed for those, whether lay or ordained, who would like to explore accompanying others on their spiritual journey. Holy Ground offers both theoretical, experiential and prayerful learning, and formation in the practice of spiritual direction. Includes 22 online evening sessions and 3 in-person days from October 2026 to May 2027.

www.spidirnetwork.org.uk/holyground.

Or contact the local rep Sue Sheppy (susan.sheppy@btinternet.com).

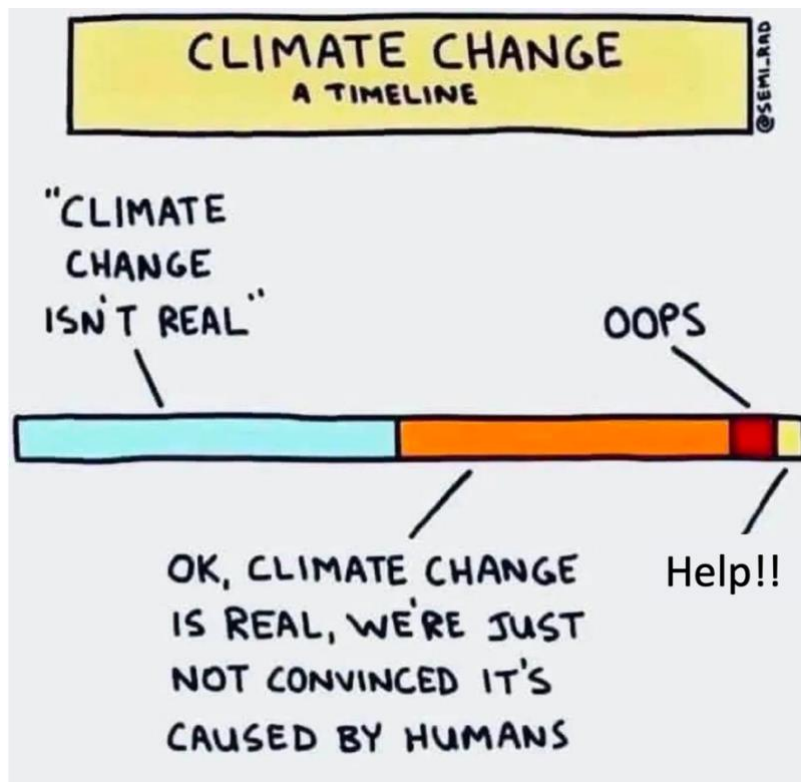
Taizé Prayer

St Helen's Church
Abingdon

Sunday 12th July
At 5.30pm

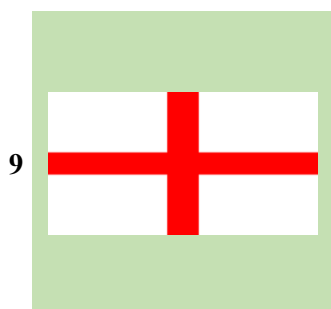
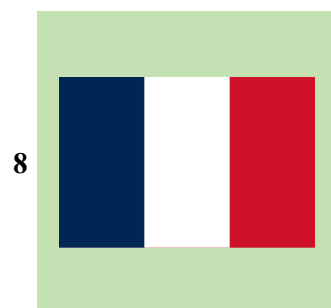
A time of Prayer, Reflection and Silence.
Using the music and pattern
of the Taizé Community

The next Taizé Prayer will be on
Sunday 13th September
At St Helen's Church Abingdon.



Adapted from the Oxford Clarion from whom we get this reminder: A 'Climate Emergency' is certainly upon us. 65 excess deaths in Oxfordshire were linked to high temperatures periods in 2022, which was made more likely and hotter by human-caused climate change. The world is now 1.4°C hotter than pre-industrial levels, and heading for 2°C by 2050 – possibly reaching 4°C later this century depending on the level of climate action by governments, businesses and individuals.

It's coming home!
But where to?
Family Hallas
Can you match map, flag and country?



It is Too Hot for Me

Eileen Duckett

(Written whilst on holiday in Weymouth during the June heatwave)

It's much too hot for me, even though we are by the sea.
The sand is too hot to stand on, so no paddling today for me.

Being England, I brought an umbrella, just in case it started to rain,
But it's useful as a sunshade as the hot sun's a real pain.

Our caravan feels like an oven, it's never been this hot before,
And trying to sleep is impossible, which is a real bore.

We are drinking gallons of water, like us old folks are told to do
And the bonus is, despite all the liquid, I have hardly needed the loo.

The sky is a beautiful blue with not a cloud in sight,
But for once I wish it was cloudy and the sun wasn't so bright.

A sea mist often covers Portland, but it's a heat haze today instead,
We could be forgiven for thinking, it's not Dorset, but an island in the Med.

The kite surfers are not on the water as there is no sign of wind today,
Usually there are loads of them out there, sailing around the bay.

It is too hot to have a cream tea, so instead we had an ice cream,
But it was melting faster than we could eat it, I'm sure you know what I mean.

It's too hot to walk around the harbour, where the chip shop does a good trade,
So I'm writing poetry on our decking, which luckily is in the shade.

But although it's too hot here at Weymouth, where there is usually a bit of a breeze,
It's better than being back in Abingdon where the temperature is 35 degrees.

Puzzle Answers:
Don't peek!

1: Morocco; 2: Belgium; 3: Norway; 4: England; 5:
Morocco; 6: Switzerland; 7: Spain; 8: France; 9: England;
10: Argentina; 11: Belgium; 12: Norway; 13: France; 14:
Spain; 15: Switzerland; 16: Argentina

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/>

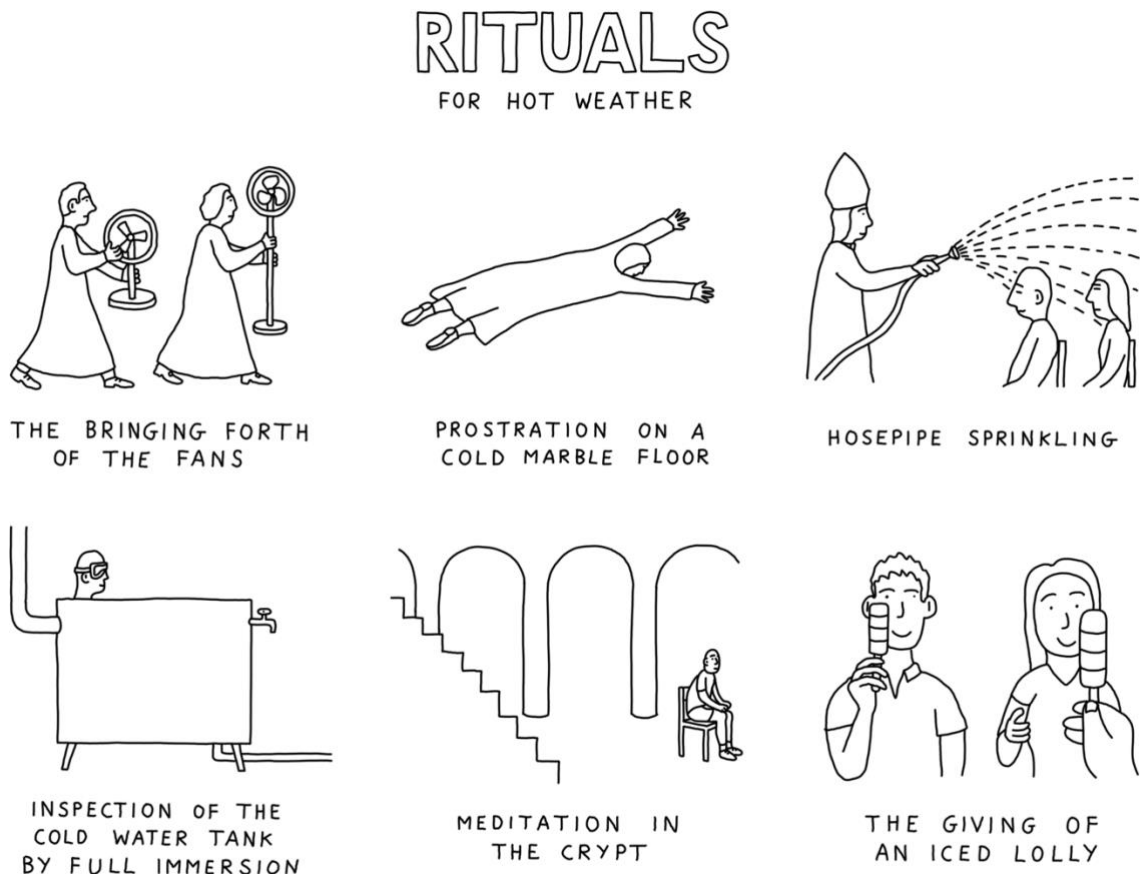
FOOD BANK. The Abingdon Foodbank is still very busy and anxious to keep up the support. Northcourt Road (Christ Church) is open to receive donations on Tuesday and Friday mornings between 9.30 am and 1.00 pm. South Abingdon distribution point: Midget Close, Abingdon, OX14 5NR Wednesday 12:30pm-2.00pm

Any food donated in the marked boxes in Waitrose will go to the Foodbank. Any food donated at Tesco goes to the SOFEA run Community Larder based at Trinity Church centre on Fridays.

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, a weather-related cartoon:



CartoonChurch.com

Thanks and all good wishes to all contributors and to you, the readers.

The next issue will be published on September 13th. Please help us by sending feedback, ideas and contributions to Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk