



St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

30th November 2025

1st Sunday of Advent

Regular Service Times

Sundays: Sung Mass, 9.30 am
Tuesdays: Silent Reflections, last Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm (except December)
Thursdays: Said Mass, 12.30 pm
Moving into Stillness, Taizé circle dancing with silent interludes, usually first Thursday of the month, 9.45 am to 10.45 am.

Contacts

Team Rector: The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown
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Team Vicar: Vacancy

Churchwardens: Miss Joyce Kelly (01235 533555 / 07833 535768)
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Associate Priest The Revd Dr A. K. M. Adam (AKMA)
e-mail: akma@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk

Bookings*: Miss Joyce Kelly (as above)

Parish Office: The Parish Centre Office is normally open from Monday to Thursday, **10 am to 1 pm.**

Administrator: During normal working hours phone or leave a message on:
Telephone (01235 520144) or
Mobile (07395 943957)
e-mail: administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk

Web site: <http://www.stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk>

If you would like to receive this pew leaflet electronically, please email pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk with the subject line SUBSCRIBE

Items for inclusion in the next pew leaflet to be sent to David Duce by midday on Tuesday.
Telephone 522591

pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk

[*for Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals please contact the Parish Office]

We welcome Fr AKMA to celebrate and preach at Mass today

Advent

The first season of the church's year. With Christmas Day falling on Thursday this year, there is time to keep and absorb the themes of all four Sundays of Advent. In one form Death, Judgement, Heaven, and Hell; in another The Patriarchs, The Prophets, John the Baptist and The Virgin Mary. There are tensions in Advent between historical and eschatological (the end of history) aspects.

This month's *Silent Reflections* material, written by The Revd Rosalind Rutherford, offers reflections on another Advent theme, *Hope*. This is available on our web site; there is a link on our *Prayer and Worship* resources page:

https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StM/StM_worship_resources.html

The background to the season of Advent is complicated, competing ideas and differing interpretations of existing and new evidence keep scholars in business and there are differences between the Western Church and the Eastern Church. Just to give a flavour of this, it might be helpful to think of four aspects of Christ's appearing: nativity, visit of the Magi, baptism of Jesus, the wedding at Cana. These aspects are given different coverage in the Gospels and in the first few centuries of the church were packaged in different ways in festivals and church calendars. There is evidence in some places that there was a festival on 6 January focused primarily on the baptism of Jesus, prior to the existence of the festival on 25 December and it was not unknown for baptisms to take place at both festivals. Nowadays 6 January (Epiphany) focuses on the visit of the Magi and the Baptism of Christ is the focus of the 1st Sunday after Epiphany, though in the Eastern tradition three of the four aspects, visit of the Magi, Baptism of Christ and the wedding at Cana are associated with Epiphany.

One view is that Advent started as a 40-day season of preparation for baptisms on the feast of the Epiphany (rather than Easter), but this is only a possibility. In Milan Advent became a 6-week period of preparation for Christmas and also in Rome, though Pope Gregory I (540 – 604) shortened this to a 4-week period. There is also evidence that Advent was once regarded as the end of the liturgical year which began with the Vigil Mass of Christmas on Christmas Eve. This view of Advent ending the year with readings about the Second Coming suggests an end-of-history orientation.

Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) summarises the four-week Advent oriented to the three comings of Christ: past, present and future:

We know that there are three comings of the Lord. The third lies between the other two. It is invisible, while the other two are visible. In the first coming he was seen on earth, dwelling among men; he himself testifies that they saw him and hated him. In the final coming all flesh will see the salvation of our God, and they will look on him whom they pierced. ... In his first coming our Lord came in our flesh and in our weakness; in the middle coming he comes in spirit and in power; in the final coming he will be seen in glory and majesty ... Because this middle coming lies between the other two, it is like a road on which we travel from the first coming to the last. In the first, Christ was our redemption; in the last, he will appear as our life; in this middle coming, he is our rest and consolation.

[quoted from Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feast, Fast and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 2011]

Bernard called his writing about Advent "The Sacrament of Advent". The Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, concluded that for Bernard:

... the sacrament of Advent is the *Presence of Christ in the world* as Saviour. In his theology Advent does not merely commemorate the Incarnation as a historical event, nor is it a mere devotional preparation for the feast of Christmas, nor an anticipation of the Last Judgement. It is above all the 'sacrament' of the Presence of God in the world and in time in His Incarnate Word, in His Kingdom, above all His presence in *our own lives* as our *Saviour*. The sacrament of Advent is *the needful presence of Christ*.

[quoted from Benjamin Gordon-Taylor and Simon Jones, *Celebrating Christ's Appearing*, 2008]

David Duce

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT ST HELEN'S CHURCH St Helen's will live-stream their 10.30 am Eucharist through Zoom. The Zoom link can be found in the St Helen's Church newsletter (on-line). A recording of the sermon (audio and video) will be made available after the service on the St Helen's web site (https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StH/StH_publications.html).

Advent Carols at St Helen's Church at 5.30 pm this Sunday, 30 November, a service of music and readings, with the blessing of the Jesse Tree, to mark the beginning of Advent and the wait for Christmas.

The next *Taizé Prayer service* will be on **Sunday 14 December** in **St Helen's Church at 5.30 pm**.

MORNING PRAYER is normally held at 9.10 am on weekdays at St Helen's Church.

ST NICOLAS' CHURCH PATRONAL FESTIVAL St Nicolas' are keeping their Patronal Festival on **Sunday 7 December**. There will be Choral Evensong at **6.30 pm**. All are warmly invited to come along.

FAITH FORUM The final Faith Forum meeting of the current series took place on 23 November at which Maranda St John Nicolle, World Development Advisor for the Diocese of Oxford, spoke on *Putting Faith into Practice (Living the Faith)*. There is no Faith Forum in December, but we will resume with a new series on **Sunday 25 January**.

Recordings of the first two talks in the series, *Prayer* by Margaret Adam and *Lectio Divina* by Sr Lizzie Ruth CSMV are available now on the parish web site, see https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_faith_forum.html and a recording of the third will probably be available by the time this pew leaflet is published.

INTERCESSORS AND READERS' ROTAS As a result of this appeal two new people will be joining the current four people who regularly lead the intercessions at Sunday Mass. This is an important lay ministry in the church and hence this appeal for more people to join the rota. If anyone else is interested in joining the rota, please speak to Sue Scott. Also if you are interested in joining the readers' rota, please contact to Sue, email: suescott719@gmail.com.

FROM THE BISHOPS is the title of a monthly online column from our four bishops. The latest post is from Bishop Steven, *Building resilience in the face of anxiety*. Where do we turn for simple, practical help to cope with anxiety, bad days and depression? <https://oxford.anglican.org/who-we-are/bishops-and-senior-staff/from-the-bishops/>

CARDS FOR GOOD CAUSES are selling a variety of charity cards in **St Nicolas' Church, Monday – Saturday 10.30 am – 3.30 pm**. <https://cardsforcharity.co.uk/>

ADVENT LABYRINTH WALKS St Michael's Church will be open on **Tuesday 2, 9 and 16 December** between **11 am and noon**. There will be an opportunity to walk the labyrinth or simply to enjoy the sacred space. Material for reflection will be available on a different Advent theme each week. A short prayer will be said at the beginning and end of each session, but feel free to come and go as you please. Parking permits are available for use in Park Road.

ALBERT PARK SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT **Friday 12 December at 7 pm**. Free admission with donations to Homeless Oxfordshire and St Michael's Church. Festive refreshments afterwards.

LAMPS Collective are returning with their brand-new Christmas Show! **Saturday 20 December - 3.00pm and 7.00pm - Peachcroft Christian Centre**. Join the OAPs (Old Angel Pensioners) of retirement home *Heavenly Realms*, as they get ready to celebrate Christmas and share memories of the very first one. Hold on to your halo and enjoy a 'holy' new take on the Nativity story! Festive fun for all the family from age 8 upwards. Come along and invite your friends! Suitable for age 8 upwards. Tickets £10 adult, £5 Child/young person (8-18)

Ticket link: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/peachcroft-christian-centre/heavenly-realms/e-gpygml>

CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH 2025 AT PEACHCROFT CHRISTIAN CENTRE Once again we are offering a Christmas Day lunch at Peachcroft Christian Centre. This is for people who are going to be alone this Christmas, for whatever reason, but who would like to celebrate in the company of others. Our catchment area is Abingdon and surrounding villages. Transport can be provided for those unable to make their own way. The lunch is always a joyous occasion, enjoyed by guests and volunteers alike. If you know of anyone who might benefit from joining us as a guest this year, please get in touch with Fiona on: 07503 178893 or via email: christmaslunch25@peachcroftcc.org.

CiA NEWS A printed copy of the **November issue** is on display on the notice board by the Welcome desk. It is also available to download from https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html.

A CANDLE IN THE WINDOW The November issue of the Parish Magazine is still available (along with previous issues) from https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_window.php. The December edition will be published on 7 December. It will be the 60th on-line edition! Contributions welcome – **copy by 30 November please**. Please send contributions to candle@abingdonparish.org.uk

Worship

November The celebrants and preachers in November and December are: 30 November and 7 December, Fr AKMA; 14 December, The Revd David and Mrs Gwen Bevington; 21 December, The Revd Canon Ruth Pyke and Mrs Beryl Clements; 25 December (10 am Christmas Day), Fr AKMA; 28 December, The Revd Dr Jane Baun.

The festival of Andrew the Apostle is transferred from Sunday 30 November to Monday 1 December. Other commemorations this week include: Wednesday: Francis Xavier, missionary, 1552; Thursday: John of Damascus, monk, teacher of the faith, c. 749 and Nicholas Ferrar, deacon, founder of the Little Gidding Community, 1637; Saturday, Nicholas, bishop, c. 326.

Lectionary Year A The readings this year are from year A in the three year lectionary cycle. The gospel readings are mainly taken from Matthew's gospel, the first of the synoptic gospels, supplemented by readings from John's gospel and other gospels appropriate to the themes of festivals etc. John Barton wrote about Matthew's gospel in an article in *A Candle in the Window*, issue 9, *The Year of Matthew*, with the intriguing opening line "What did the wise men say to the shepherds?" John's article is available on-line at the Parish web site:

https://abingdonparish.org.uk/wincontent/Candle_2022_Issue9vfinalpdf.pdf. Recommended reading at the start of the new year.

1st Sunday of Advent The liturgical colour for Advent is purple, there are no flowers in church, the Gloria is replaced by the Kyries. We use Merbecke's Mass setting and the Eucharistic Prayer is Prayer E rather than Prayer B. This year on the 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays of Advent the *Advent Prose* is sung after the New Testament Reading.

After the Greeting at the start of Mass, the first candle on the Advent Wreath is lit as the celebrant prays this prayer (in the *berakah* tradition):

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith
and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment.
May we be obedient to your call
and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ,
a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;
for you are our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God for ever.

reflecting the theme of the Patriarchs. The phrase "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path" echoes St Bernard's theme (quoted above) of "a road on which we travel from the first coming to the last".

Andrew the Apostle seems to have been one of the first four disciples called by Jesus and is recorded in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. In John's gospel we learn that all four were disciples of John the Baptist before Jesus. Tradition attributes a number of missionary journeys to him and eventually being martyred on an X-shaped cross. He is the patron saint of Scotland, through a legend that his relics had been brought to Scotland in the 8th century. From *The Go-Between God* by John V. Taylor (first published 1972), writing about the followers of Charles de Foucauld, the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus:

Unobtrusively, they keep a routine of communal prayer and silent adoration, but every day they go out in their working clothes to do the same sort of job that their neighbours are doing and to offer them an unstinted friendship in the doing of it. Out of sight, out of mind of the Church as a whole, way below the poverty line, scattered in their twos and threes across the face of the earth, they do not work for their neighbours, they work with them. Their role is that of prayer and of a silent, hidden presence of love.

Such extreme renunciation of all the normal activities of mission would suggest either a lack of concern or a policy of despair, were it not for Charles de Foucauld's ardent passion for evangelism. ... To live thus totally towards God for the sake of the world is a profoundly missionary, and indeed, redemptive way.

For more information about The Little Sisters of Jesus, see the web site <https://littlesistersofjesus.net/>

Prayers during another Season of Vacancy

The prayer below is the prayer used for the appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury. But it is not entirely inappropriate in the current situation as the next stage of ministry in the parish of Abingdon is discerned.

Heavenly Father, shepherd of your Church,
send us a faithful pastor to lead with wisdom, courage, and love,
proclaiming your Gospel, celebrating the sacraments,
and guiding your people in unity and truth.

Strengthen your Church, we pray, and direct us in your ways; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayers for the Peace of the World

The three prayers below are taken from a Church of England liturgy for The Peace of the World. If used in a Eucharistic context they would be the collect, concluding prayer to the intercessions and prayer after communion.

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed: kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, ...

Most holy God and Father, hear our prayers for all who strive for peace and all who fight for justice. Help us, who today remember the cost of war, to work for a better tomorrow; and, as we commend to you lives lost in terror and conflict, bring us all, in the end, to the peace of your presence; through Christ our Lord.

God our Father, your Son is our peace and his cross the sign of reconciliation: help us, who share the broken bread, to bring together what is scattered and to bind up what is wounded, that Christ may bring in the everlasting kingdom of his peace; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Please pray for:

- Steven (as he prepares for retirement) and Gavin our bishops in this diocese; Stephen, Archbishop of York, and Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury designate;
- His Majesty King Charles, Her Majesty Queen Camilla, and all the royal family;
- our keeping of the Advent Season;
- Ukraine;
- the suffering, especially those who are known to us and who are on our prayer list;
- all who have recently departed, and all whose year's mind falls at this time;
- people living in: North Quay, Nuffield Way, Nuneham Square, Ock Bridge Place.

Eucharistic Lectionary

Sun 1st Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 2.1-5	Ps 122	Romans 13.11-end	Matthew 24.36-44
Mon Andrew the Apostle	Isaiah 52.7-10	Ps 19.1-6	Romans 10.12-18	Matthew 4.18-22
Tues	Isaiah 11.1-10	Ps 72.1-4, 18-19		Luke 10.21-24
Wed	Isaiah 25.6-10a	Ps 23		Matthew 15.29-37
Thur	Isaiah 26.1-6	Ps 118.18-27a		Matthew 7.21, 24-27
Fri	Isaiah 29.17-end	Ps 27.1-4, 16-17		Matthew 9.27-31
Sat	Isaiah 30.19-21, 23-26	Ps 146.4-9		Matthew 9.35 – 10.1, 6-8

Collect (1st Sunday of Advent)

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Prayer after Communion (1st Sunday of Advent)

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful as we await the coming of your Son our Lord; that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping in sin but active in his service and joyful in his praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect (Andrew the Apostle)

Almighty God, who gave such grace to your apostle Saint Andrew that he readily obeyed the call of your Son Jesus Christ and brought his brother with him: call us by your holy word, and give us grace to follow you without delay and to tell the good news of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, ...

Some On-line Resources for Worship

A Church Near You Live Streamed events

https://www.achurchnearyou.com/live-stream/?tags=Live_stream&diocese=27

Parish Communications and Links http://www.abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html

St Michael's Prayer and Worship resources page https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StM/StM_worship_resources.html

St Michael's Publications page https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StM/StM_publications.html

Oxford Cathedral: Livestream events will appear on the cathedral's YouTube channel, see

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqz9I9-LbZJAPGtje0gQbbg>.

The University Church of St Mary the Virgin (Oxford) live stream, see <https://www.youtube.com/c/UniversityChurch/featured>

Community of the Resurrection: live streaming and recordings of the community's daily round of prayer and praise <https://www.facebook.com/Join-with-us-103095121647089>. Details of services can be found at the facebook page and also at the Community web site, <https://mirfield.org.uk/live-streaming/>. On Sundays Mass starts around 8.10 am, after Matins at 7.30 am.

Walsingham In addition to the daily live-streaming of Shrine Prayers at 6 pm (5pm on Saturdays). the Sunday Mass is live-streamed (usually at 7.30 am, but check the web site).

<https://www.walsinghamanglican.org.uk/whatson-2/livestream/>