



# St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

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## 5 July 2026 Thomas, the Apostle / 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity 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.  
See below for revised date in July 2026. There is no circle dancing of any kind in August 2026.

### 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)  
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**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)  
e-mail: [administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk](mailto:administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk)

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

*Items for inclusion in the next issue of pew leaflet to be sent to David Duce by midday on Tuesday.*

*Telephone 522591*

*[pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk](mailto:pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk)*

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

## We welcome Fr AKMA to preside and preach at Mass today

### Doubting? Don't be too sure.

I have a real soft spot for St Thomas the Apostle, whose day we are celebrating today (though it was really on Friday the 3<sup>rd</sup>). We know him as 'Doubting Thomas', and if you've ever heard me preach about him, you know I think that's a bit unfair. I don't think that Thomas lacked faith. He simply wanted some evidence, something more than just hearsay. After all, the other disciples had seen the risen Jesus. Thomas wasn't asking for anything more than they had had, really.

There are many people in the world who, while not hostile to Christianity, aren't able – or aren't ready – to accept all its claims without some evidence, some good arguments in favour. This is what the whole area of Christian Apologetics is about. 'Apologetics' seems a strange sort of word in our day, as 'apology' is now most commonly used to mean 'sorry'. Historically, however, an apology was a defence, through rational argument, of a position. Christian apologetics, therefore, is the presentation of rational arguments for the claims that Christians make about the faith. In other words, it is the presentation of evidence for what we believe.

Thomas is a disciple with whom many of us can relate – having questions, wanting answers and evidence. Seeking evidence isn't the same as lacking faith, and it doesn't make someone a 'bad Christian'. Thomas was an apostle, a close companion of Jesus and one whom Jesus sent to spread his good news, yet even he had his moment of, yes, we'll call it doubt. Jesus didn't reject him. He gave him the evidence he needed to strengthen his faith. Like Thomas, we can admit when we are unsure, when we have questions. That's not a failure. Just as it makes Thomas more relatable for us, it can make us more relatable to those we encounter who might be wondering who Jesus is and what Christianity is all about.

*The Revd Dr Jen Brown, Rector*

**Faith Forum** Fr AKMA spoke at the 28 June meeting on *Symbolism in the Liturgy*. A recording of the talk and handout are available at [https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P\\_faith\\_forum.html](https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_faith_forum.html).

**Church Cleaning** There is an urgent need for more help with church cleaning tasks which includes cleaning brass items and some sacristy tasks. Tasks that are becoming onerous for a very small number of people would be a lot less so if they could be shared across a team of people, each of whom could take responsibility for a small, manageable task, tailored to their availability. Do please think about what help you could offer and the kind of task you could do. There is plenty of scope for negotiation. Please speak to Joyce and Louise who need as a matter of urgency to take this forward.

**Save the Date: Saturday, 5 December 2026, at 1.30pm at St Helen's Church** Fr AKMA will be celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood with a Mass for the Feast of Clement of Alexandria, teacher and Church Father, with a sermon from the Revd Damian Feeney. Reception to follow.

**Confirmation and admission to Holy Communion** It has been over a year since we last had a confirmation service here in the parish, and I am aware that there may be both young people and adults in our churches who wish to be confirmed. This notice is to ask that if you or your child would be interested in confirmation, please speak to Revd Jen or Fr AKMA so that we can begin to plan confirmation classes. We can also offer preparation for admission to Holy Communion if there are any children who would like to begin receiving Holy Communion prior to confirmation.

*Jennifer Brown*

**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) and on the Publications page at their web site. 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/StHpublications.html>).

There is no evening service at St Helen's on **5 July**. The next Taizé Service will be on **Sunday 14 July, 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.

**Save the date: The First Annual Community of the Resurrection Lecture on the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus**

**Christ** Some readers might be interested to know that The Community of the Resurrection (Mirfield) has announced that this lecture in this new series will be given by Bishop Rowan Williams on **Saturday 10 October at 4.30 pm**. The lecture will be live-streamed.

**Abingdon Foodbank** Most needed at present are biscuits, squash, cereal, tinned mac'n'cheese and UHT milk (whole or semi-skimmed) as well as empty egg boxes, carrier bags and wet cat or dog food. There is a collection box in church and goods donated there will be taken to the South Abingdon Foodbank.

There are collection points in local supermarkets and some other local businesses. The "Give Help" page has details of ways to donate and a link to the "BanktheFood app" which has frequently updated lists of most urgently needed items. <https://abingdon.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/>

**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/three-things-we-learned-from-climate-scientist-mike-morecroft-on-common-ground.php> has links to both Spotify and Apple Podcasts both of which have lists of the episodes in the series and recordings. In the third episode, *Working with the Grain of Nature*, Bishop Mary speaks with Dr Mike Morecroft, Natural England's Principal Specialist on Climate Change and a Licensed Lay Minister in Hungerford. The web page includes a summary of the conversation.

**Petertide Ordinations** Nineteen candidates were to be ordained to the diaconate in Christ Church Cathedral on Saturday 4 July, 7 of whom will serve their curacies at churches in the Dorchester area. These include Robin Emmanuel who will serve his curacy at Christ Church, North Abingdon. A list of candidates with short biographies can be found at <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/news/meet-the-ordinands--2026.php>.

Twenty-one deacons ordained to the diaconate last year were ordained to the priesthood on Saturday 27 June and Sunday 28 June at services in All Saints', High Wycombe, Reading Minster, Dorchester Abbey, and St Clement's Oxford. <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/news/twenty-priests-ordained-across-the-diocese-of-oxford.php> This page has a link to the 2025 ordinations to the diaconate which includes biographies of these candidates and the parishes in which they serve.

**General Synod** will meet from **10 – 14 July** at the University of York. The agenda and meeting papers are available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/governance/general-synod/groups-sessions/general-synod-july-2026>

There should be a link to live-streams and recordings of the sessions in due course on <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/governance/general-synod>

The agenda includes (but is not limited to) a debate on the Church and neurodiversity. Reports on progress on the routemap to net zero, and the final report of the trust and trustworthiness project will be presented to Synod. The "net zero" session also includes a report (GS 2450) *Hope for All Creation: A theological response to the environmental crises*, produced by the Theology and Environment Working Group and proposed liturgical material for *A Festival of Creation in Christ and Commemoration of the 21 Martyrs of Libya* along with a report from the House of Bishops on this. General Synod will be asked to give Final Approval to this material. The Festival of Creation in Christ (previously the Festival of Creation) material has been developed in a wider ecumenical context and the Church of England material is aligned with that. If approved, the Creation in Christ will be added to the calendar on the First Sunday in September. The proposal for the Twenty-One Martyrs of Libya is to add this to the calendar on 25 February. Inclusion of The Festival of Creation in Christ in the *Revised Common Lectionary* used by many churches was formally approved in April this year and the first celebration will be on Sunday 6 September this year. See <https://www.feastofcreation.com/revised-common-lectionary> There are separate readings for each year in the 3 year cycle.

As one might expect there are a number of items of legislative business on Synod's agenda.

**Abingdon Mothers' Union Tuesday 7 July, 10.30 am Parish Centre.** Speaker: Maureen Weston - *Why I joined Mothers' Union*. Plus: Discussion, Quizzes, Bring & Buy. All Welcome.

**Moving into Stillness:** circle dancing to Taizé chants with silent interludes on **Thursday 9 July** in the church from **9.45–10.45 am** before the regular circle dancing session at 11 am. Elizabeth Mitchell will be the teacher. No prior experience/partner needed. Tea and coffee will be provided between the two sessions. Parking permits are available for use in Park Road. **NB Irregular date for July; there will be no circle dancing of any kind in August.**

**Book Launch Thursday 9 July, 7 pm for 7.30 pm at St Helen's Church,** launch for Roger Thomas's new book, *England's Oldest Town? The Archaeology of Abingdon*. There will be a short talk followed by refreshments and the new book will be for sale. All welcome.

**PATHWAYS** Printed copies of the Summer 2026 issue of the Diocese of Oxford magazine should be available in church on Sunday.

**CiA News** The **July** issue of CiA News is now available to download and there is a copy on the Notice Board by the welcome table. It should appear on the parish web site shortly. [https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P\\_communications.html](https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html).

**A Candle in the Window** We hope to publish the July edition of the Parish Magazine on 12 July. Do send contributions or ideas for contributions to [candle@abingdonparish.org.uk](mailto:candle@abingdonparish.org.uk) **by the end of 5 July**. It will include several pieces on an Eco-theme. Meanwhile, the **June** edition of the Parish Magazine 'A candle in the window' is now available to download from the Parish website [https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P\\_window.php](https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_window.php). Earlier issues can also be found at this location. Do read and discuss!

## Worship

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**July** Celebrants and preachers for June /July are: 5 July Fr AKMA, 12 July Fr AKMA, 19 July The Revd Rosalind Rutherford, 26 July Fr AKMA.

The festival of Thomas the Apostle has been transferred to next Sunday, 5 July.

Monday is the commemoration of Thomas More, scholar, and John Fisher, bishop, martyrs, 1535; and on Saturday, Benedict, abbot, c. 550.

**Thomas, the Apostle** From Vespers for the Sunday of Thomas – translation by Hugh Wybrew in his book *Risen with Christ – Eastertide in the Orthodox Church*:

When the disciples were uncertain,  
on the eighth day the Saviour came  
when they were assembled.  
Saying, Peace be with you,  
he said to Thomas, Come, apostle,  
feel the hands in which the nails were fixed.  
O happy doubt of Thomas!  
He brought believers' hearts to knowledge,  
and cried out in fear,  
Glory to you,  
my Lord and my God!

**Benedict** was born in Nursia in central Italy around 480 AD. Having been sent to study in Rome, he was appalled by the corruption he found there and withdrew to live as a hermit. He attracted disciples, a disaffected subset of whom tried to poison him at which point he moved to Monte Cassino with a band of loyal monks. Later he wrote his *Rule for Monks*, based on his experiences. Perhaps to his surprise the Rule was distributed widely and became the model for Western monasticism. He died around 550 AD. Benedict advocated a balanced life of prayer and work with everything done in moderation.

At the risk of misleading readers about the overall topics of the Rule, these short extracts below give a flavour of the practical content.

Chapter 2 What Kind of Man the Abbot Should Be

“An abbot who is worthy to rule a monastery should always remember what he is called and realize in his actions the name of a superior. For he is believed to be the representative of Christ in the monastery ... Let the abbot remember always that at the dread Judgement of God he will be examined ... of his teaching and of the obedience of his disciples. And let the abbot realize that the shepherd will have to answer for any lack of profit which the Father of the family may discover in his sheep. ...”

Chapter 37 of Old Men and Children:

“Although human nature is itself drawn to pity towards these times of life, ... let them be provided for also by the authority of the Rule. Let there be constant consideration for their weakness, and on no account let the rigour of the Rule in regard to food be applied to them. Let them, on the contrary, receive compassionate consideration and take their meals before the regular hours.”

Chapter 39 The Measure of Food:

“We believe it to be sufficient for the daily meal, ... that every table should have two cooked dishes, on account of individual infirmities, so that he who perchance cannot eat of the one, may make his meal of the other. ... any fruit or young vegetables be available, let a third be added. Let a good pound weight of bread suffice for the day ... But should their work be heavier, the abbot shall have the choice and the power, ... to increase this allowance. Above all things, however, gluttony must be avoided, ...”

In chapter 40, Benedict expresses some misgivings about stipulating how much others should eat or drink, suggests a “hemina” of wine a day. A hemina is an old Roman measure said to be about 250 ml litres (about ½ pint). As an aside, there is a Benedictine monastery in Hungary making red and white wines with the label “Hemina”.

Many books have been written about the rule, including Rowan Williams, *The Way of St Benedict*, 2020. The introduction ends:

“We are badly in need of the undramatic but transformative wisdom of Benedict’s Rule if we are to live with gratitude and, in the very fullest meaning of the words, common sense in our feverish, lonely and fearful world. Listen; other ways are possible.”

**The Middle East** This prayer for Iran appeared in diocesan e-News, and on the Church of England web site. It has also been reproduced in the March issue of *A Candle in the Window*. The prayer was written by the Rt Revd Dr Guli

Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford. Bishop Guli was born in Iran. Her family left the country in the wake of the Iranian Revolution in 1980, when she was 13 years old, and to date she has been unable to return.

Ever-loving God,  
who hears us in our anguish and distress,  
and longs for us to be free.  
We pray for the people of Iran and the wider Middle East,  
at this time of fear and uncertainty.  
Be near to those who are anxious;  
bring comfort to all who are suffering.  
Guide those with the power to make decisions,  
and lead them in the ways of wisdom, compassion and moderation:  
that people of goodwill would seek harmony and reconciliation.  
Join us with our Christian brothers and sisters in all places,  
in praying for peace with justice,  
through him who is the prince of peace, Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Prayers for the Peace of the World**

A prayer from the Church of England:

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, ...

### **During another Season of Vacancies**

The Church of St Mary Magdalen, Oxford, provided this prayer when they were recently seeking a new Vicar.

O God, who alone guides and guards the Church  
by your Spirit. Strengthen and encourage us  
in this time of uncertainty and opportunity, and inspire  
those who maintain our worship, and those engaged  
in the discernment and selection of a new Team Vicar.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

This prayer taken from the final report of the Vacancy in See Committee.

Almighty God, giver of every good gift:  
Look graciously on your Church and illuminate our path as we seek a new Bishop.  
Help us to work together for the good of your kingdom and all who live, work and study in the Diocese of Oxford.  
Give wisdom and listening hearts to those who have influence.  
Send out your Holy Spirit to call one who will faithfully teach, pastor, care for and equip us;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Please pray for:**

- Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury and Stephen, Archbishop of York;
- Bishop Gavin, Acting Bishop of Oxford, the Crown Nominations Commission, and the Archdeaconry of Dorchester team: David Tyler, Jane Haslam and Rob Glenny;
- His Majesty King Charles, Her Majesty Queen Camilla, and all the royal family;
- the continuing conflicts throughout the world and all those working for peace;
- the right appointment of a new Team Vicar;
- those ordained to the diaconate and priesthood at Petertide; The Revd Robin Emmanuel to serve his curacy at Christ Church in our sister parish of North Abingdon;
- those who are seeking a relationship with God, those who come with questions, and those who doubt;
- those who engage in apologetics and help others understand the Christian faith;
- all who work in the sciences and all who seek truth;
- the suffering, especially those who are known to us and who are on our prayer list;
- those recently departed and those whose year's mind falls at this time;
- people living in Baillie Close, Baker Road, Banbury Court and Barton Lane.

## Eucharistic Lectionary

<b>Sunday 5 July Thomas, the Apostle</b>	Habakkuk 2.1-4	Ps 31.1-6	<b>Ephesians 2.19-end</b>	<b>John 20.24-29</b>
<b>Monday</b>	Hosea 2.14-16, 19-20	Ps 145.3-9		Matthew 9.18-26
<b>Tuesday</b>	Hosea 8.4-7, 11-13	Ps 103.8-12		Matthew 9.32-end
<b>Wednesday</b>	Hosea 10.1-3, 7-8, 12	Ps 115.3-10		Matthew 10.1-7
<b>Thursday</b>	Hosea 11.1, 3-4, 8-9	Ps 105.1-7		Matthew 10.7-15
<b>Friday</b>	Hosea 14.2-end	Ps 80.1-7		Matthew 10.16-23
<b>Saturday</b>	Isaiah 6.1-8	Ps 51.1-7		Matthew 10.24-33

### **Collect (Thomas, the Apostle)**

Almighty and eternal God, who, for the firmer foundation of our faith, allowed your holy apostle Thomas to doubt the resurrection of your Son till word and sight convinced him: grant to us, who have not seen, that we also may believe and so confess Christ as our Lord and our God; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

### **Post Communion (Thomas, the Apostle)**

Lord God, the source of truth and love, keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, united in prayer and the breaking of bread, and one in joy and simplicity of heart, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Collect (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity)**

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, ...

### **Post Communion (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity)**

Grant, O Lord, we beseech you, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by your governance, that your Church may joyfully serve you in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Some On-line Resources for Worship**

*A Church Near You* Live Streamed events <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/live-stream/?tags=Livestream&diocese=27>

*Parish Communications and Links* <http://www.abingdonparish.org.uk/Pcommunications.html>

*St Michael's Prayer and Worship* resources page <https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StM/StMworshipresources.html>

*St Michael's Publications* page <https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StM/StMpublications.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, see <https://mirfield.org.uk/live-streaming/> and *YouTube* page <https://www.youtube.com/@StreamingAtMirfield>. 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/>