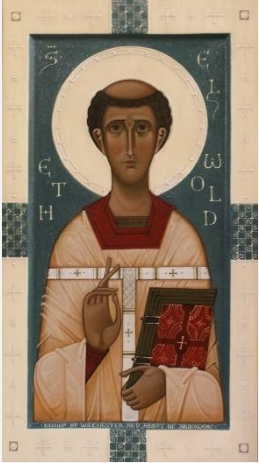


Issue 9:
November 2024



A candle in...

THE

WINDOW

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

St Edmund of Abingdon

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November 16th is the Saint's Day of St. Edmund of Abingdon. There is an article about him by Anne Dodd on page 7.

This 'illumination' was created by Jed Gibbons for St. Edmund's Institute of Sacred Art, part of St. Edmund's Retreat, on Enders Island Connecticut. Permission was given for its use here by Fr. Thomas Hoar.

Here are some questions:

1. Why the Latin quote?
2. Why the Sunflowers?
3. Why the French church? See page 8 for the answers

‘A Season of Vacancy’

‘For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.’ (Ecclesiastes 3.1)

You will be familiar with those well-known words at the beginning of the third chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes. The author of the book, (known as ‘the Teacher’), continues to list different seasons or ‘times’. (3.2-8)

Following the retirement of Charles, our Team Rector, we begin ‘a season of vacancy’. I use that term intentionally. This is because I would like to invite us all to see this time as precisely that: ‘a season’, just as the Teacher writes.

The purpose of my writing here is simply to help us – and not least myself – to live this season in a particular way. And that is to continue faithfully in following in the way of Jesus, worshipping together to the glory of God, as we encounter in him in the scriptures and the breaking of bread and ‘not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some’. (Hebrews 10.25). All this will equip us to go on sharing the good news of Jesus. We may need to remind ourselves that this way of life and perspective must be at the very heart of all we do, because any new season brings change and sometimes the weight of uncertainty and even anxiety is felt.

This ‘season of vacancy’ will, undoubtedly, have moments like that for us all. Indeed, there are likely to be ‘twists and turns’ as we journey together. And yet in all that may lie ahead, in our ongoing day-to-day life, ministry and witness, my counsel is one of daily prayer. This is by way of encouragement that our common life be firmly rooted in prayerfulness brimming with love, hope and joy.

During this time I shall continue to lead and care for the congregations of St Michael’s and St Nicolas. Additionally, I shall be working with AKMA and Jen, as the Clergy Team, supported by the Wardens of the parish, and our honorary assistant clergy who are continuing to generously help cover our Sunday worship. So we pray together and for one another, especially our Wardens, and the work of the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Moreover, we pray for the priest God will call to serve and minister among us as Team Rector.

It is with all this in mind that I have written a Parish Prayer for use in this season of vacancy (the text of which is at the end of this letter). It shall be said each weekday when Morning Prayer is said in St Helen’s – to which anyone is always welcome. We shall use it in worship on Sundays in our three churches and I invite you to use it privately too.

Please be assured that I shall be praying for us all in the sure knowledge that God will both bless us and keep us.

With every blessing,
Father Paul, Team Vicar

PARISH PRAYER FOR THE SEASON OF VACANCY

Almighty God,
You have called us to follow in the way of Jesus.
By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we are equipped to build up his body in this place.
During this season of vacancy, strengthen us to be faithful to our calling,
raise up a faithful shepherd and pastor to serve among us in this parish,
and grant that, together with the one you choose and call,
we may proclaim the good news with courage and joy.
In the name of Christ, we pray, Amen.

The Year of Luke

John Barton

Some of the things we do in church baffle people who come to services only occasionally. Vestments, taken for granted by many Anglicans, though hated by others, can strike the occasional visitor as attractive yet weird, not unlike Abingdon's bun-throwings on royal occasions, or our annual election of the Mayor of Ock Street with the accompanying Morris dancing. Consuming tiny portions of bread and wine, or sprinkling water on babies, are at the centre of the church's worship – respectively Holy Communion (Eucharist, Lord's Supper, Mass, whatever it's called in different churches) and Holy Baptism. To outsiders they seem incomprehensible. As 'insiders', for whom they express deep meaning, we need to remember that.

But there's one thing we do that probably doesn't seem so strange. We have a big collection of holy books – the Bible; and the part of it that for us is the absolute centre, the Gospels, record the life and teachings of Jesus. They are read aloud every time we meet to worship. One (John) stands alone in many ways, but the other three (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) are quite similar to each other. The technical term for them, the Synoptic Gospels—meaning Gospels told from the same point of view—captures this.

How would you expect the church to organize reading these books week by week? I don't think many people would be surprised if each was read in order, page after page: how else? And in our worship that's exactly what we find. To make it a bit more organized, one of the Synoptic Gospels is read each year, so there's a three-year cycle. This gives us a year of Matthew, a year of Mark, and a year of Luke. The church year beginning with the first Sunday in Advent (in 2024, 1 December) will be a year of Luke. It's a simple and obvious way of reading the church's books. Surely, we may feel, it must always have been like that.

If you remember the Scripture readings for Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer, you'll quickly realize that in the church what is simple and 'obvious' often comes on the scene late in the day, after many more complicated systems have been tried. Reading through in order is so simple that it took centuries for anyone to think of it. It's thanks to a group of experts on liturgy in the Catholic church that we Anglicans, and many other churches, started to catch on to the idea that a Gospel is a book, and quite a good way of reading a book over time is to start, each time you pick it up, from the point where you left off. But sometimes it takes a genius to spot the 'obvious'.

By the time the first English Book of Common Prayer was compiled in 1549, in the time of Henry VIII, the traditional readings, which were mostly retained from medieval prayer books, had become not much more than a loose anthology of bits from all the Gospels. No attention was paid to the sequence within any given Gospel, to which Gospel had been read the week before, or to why this story or set of sayings had been chosen rather than that. Even so the selection succeeds in preaching the whole gospel message, but many important passages are left out, and some quite difficult ones are included.

A three-year syllabus, including the whole of Matthew, Mark, and Luke in order, strikes almost everyone as more sensible. We come to know the Gospels in their entirety. Personally, I think it really was a stroke of genius. The 'Common Lectionary', as this new arrangement is known, is one of the contemporary Catholic Church's gifts to all Christians. It may look like a train timetable, but it brings order and understanding to reading Scripture.

Like any system for Bible reading, it naturally emphasizes some things and plays down others. No way of arranging Scripture for weekly reading is simply neutral. The year of Luke reminds us of some of the drawbacks as well as the advantages of 'continuous reading' as opposed to 'selective reading'. Here are a few points to ponder.

First, the church used to treat the Gospels as an anthology. Taking stories and sayings from anywhere in the whole collection and arranging them in any order, Christians still had ‘the gospel’, the message that lies behind all the individual Gospels. Believing this reflected a very high view of the truth and inspiration of the Bible. Never mind which Gospel a story came from, or whereabouts in that Gospel, it isn’t a human fabrication, but divine truth. Having a separate year of Luke (or Matthew or Mark) suggests, by contrast, that we should keep our eyes open not only to how divine and inspired the story we’re reading is, but also (or even more) to how ‘Lukan’ it is. We learn to see it as different from the other Gospels because it had a human author, whose special concerns have been highlighted in the way the story of Jesus is told.

That’s why in many sermons nowadays you will hear not ‘as Jesus said’, but ‘as Luke says, in the words he reports Jesus as speaking’, or ‘the Jesus of Luke taught that ...’. I am used to this, and relaxed about the way it distances us slightly from the belief that what the Gospel writers record is just exactly what Jesus said and did. It means we have to wonder whether Luke developed the traditions he’d investigated (see Luke 1:1-4) in his own way. That isn’t the same as claiming that he simply made them up, but it does mean seeing him as a biographer, rather than merely a scribe. Biographers don’t give us ‘just facts’; they offer their take on the person they write about. Reading each Gospel as a separate whole tends to make us see them in that way too. Not all Christians can accept that, because it reduces the sense that the Gospels give us immediate access to Jesus as he really was—and is. It reminds us that we’ve got Luke’s (or Matthew’s, Mark’s, or John’s) *version* of Jesus.

A second point. There is a lot in Luke that isn’t in the other Gospels. Two great parables, the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, are only in Luke, as is the walk to Emmaus on Easter Day, when the risen Lord made himself known in breaking bread, as Christians believed and believe he did and still does. A large part of the Christmas story also comes exclusively from Luke: the birth of John the Baptist, the census, the manger, the angel choir, the shepherds, the presentation of the baby Jesus in the Temple, the boy Jesus among the teachers.

In the way these stories are told there is another fascinating feature, but one we should also find slightly disturbing. Although it’s clearer in the original Greek, even in our English translations we get a feeling that these stories aren’t told in the same style as the rest of the Gospel. Luke wrote good Greek. Whereas Mark and Matthew seem to have had Aramaic as their native tongue, because it shows through their Greek, Luke’s reads as if it was the language he thought in. He comes across as very much a Gentile (non-Jewish) Christian, writing when the Christian message had begun to seem more in place among Gentiles than among Jews. Yet this is strikingly *not* the case in the first two chapters. There Luke’s writing reads much more like the Greek version of the Old Testament that was used in his day. That version was in a ‘biblical Greek’—think ‘Authorised Version English’. This Greek was grammatical and correct, but the original Hebrew showed through. The Old Testament stories about angels announcing miraculous births, and talking to mortals, must have been his models.

So Luke was a clever and original writer: he could imitate the style of Genesis or Judges. But if so, was he perhaps so clever that he composed these imitations of the Old Testament from scratch, describing things that ‘must have happened’ because they were foreshadowed in the old Scriptures, rather than because he knew they really had happened. I’m not saying that is so, but it’s possible to think it might be. That again raises questions about the Gospels’ literal truth. It’s why biblical scholars are sometimes a bit uneasy at carol services and nativity plays.

Another surprising thing: Luke’s Gospel is volume one of a two-volume work. The Acts of the Apostles tells the story of the early church after Jesus’ resurrection, and claims to be by the same author as Luke (Acts 1:1-2). None of the other Gospels has a continuation like this, and the church has never quite known what to do with it. Acts has never been treated as part of the Gospel of Luke, even though that seems to be what was originally intended. On festivals such as Ascension Day, Pentecost (Whitsun), or the Conversion of St Paul, the central readings come from Acts. But they still aren’t treated as we treat Gospel readings, with a little procession for the Gospel book, and we don’t stand to hear them as we do for Gospel readings. The idea that ‘Luke-Acts’ was really a single book somehow got lost in the church’s worship. But it’s the biggest difference between Luke and the other Gospels: so big, and so obvious, that we don’t notice it.

The doctrine of the Trinity

Paul Sheppy

How do you explain the doctrine of the Trinity? For Christians this is another way of asking how you explain God. If we try, we get inconsistent answers because we are trying to explain what is beyond definition (which is another way of saying 'infinite').

Christianity declares that God is one and cannot be split into parts. At the same time, Christians recite (or at least subscribe to) a fourth century creed which says that God is three-in-one. Over the past millennium and a half, gallons of ink have been used to explain what this means and thousands of sermons have been preached with the same purpose. They have inevitably failed to a larger or smaller degree because we do not have the words or the minds to comprehend infinity.

Professor Keith Ward tackled this issue at the October meeting of Agnostics Anonymous. He began by pointing out that the word 'trinity' does not occur in the Old or the New Testament: God is One is their clear message. At the same time, the Old Testament does speak about the breath (wind/spirit) of God and it also talks about the wisdom of God. Interestingly, both words in Hebrew are feminine. Equally, in the New Testament there are references to the word of God and to the spirit of God. However, there is no detailed doctrine of the Trinity. Christians of the first three and half centuries did not use the word 'trinity' either. That came with the later creed and its talk of three Persons of 'one being' who shared that 'being' eternally.

This language arose from the ideas of the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle who lived in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. Their ideas were later merged by Plotinus, who was a philosopher in the second century AD but not himself a Christian. To put it simply, he gave a clearer and more organised expression to the idea of body, mind and soul/spirit as a description of human existence and experience. When the bishops of the fourth century tried to decide between various debates about who God is, who Jesus is in relation to God, and how the spirit of God fitted in, they used the language of the Greek philosophers to arrive at an answer. In so doing, they were using language from worlds of thought that were not Christian and certainly not scriptural. The formula they arrived at is what we now call the Nicene Creed. The doctrine of the Trinity had landed.

Professor Ward then outlined two main lines of thought in current Christian theological discussion: 'social' and 'modal'. A social description of the Trinity, which was extensively worked out by St Augustine of Hippo, sees God as three Persons interacting in mutual love and united purpose. Bishop Rowan Williams is a modern champion of such a view. One difficulty with such an explanation is that it is difficult to see how any conversation (a feature of any loving relationship) might work. One of Persons says to the others, "Let me tell you a story." The other two reply, "We know it already." Conversation would be impossible.

The modal description of the Trinity, which Professor Ward himself prefers, sees God not as distinct persons but as being understood by ways (or modes) of acting or being. God acts on the cosmic scale, God reveals Godself in the human scale, God encourages and energises us in our hearts and minds. All descriptions are inadequate and trying to use analogy is imperfect since God is unique and so comparisons cannot be made. Nonetheless, we do need to think about God and we predominantly use words to express our thoughts.

For myself, I do find a modal description helpful. This is not to say that God was first the Father, then the Son, then the Spirit. Although analogy does not work, I will use one. Philip Sheppy was my father, he was Fred Sheppy's son, he was my mother's husband. He was a leading specialist on corporate taxation, he was a Baptist church secretary, he was a keen amateur botanist. He could be gregarious and charming, he could be solitary and introspective. He was none of these things exclusively, but he revealed himself by turns in each of these ways (or modes) of being. I should add that Keith Ward's talk lasted for forty fascinating minutes. The above is the short version!

Forest of Dean

Autumn rains have drenched the forest.
Raindrops, clear as light, hang from
leaf tips, waiting to fall to swell
fast-flowing streams;
moss is vibrant against black, rain-
soaked bark; cobwebs, silvered with
mist, are slung like miniature
hammocks between branches.

Bracken is everywhere,
about the path and between the
trees, a riot of colour: splashes of
bright summer green, palest
lemon, toffee and cinnamon,
chocolate and treacle-black.

Above, trees blaze and burn,
while on the ground, leaves
varnished with rain-shine glow,
a multi-coloured carpet of
yellow, green and bronze,
a luminous path plunging ever
deeper into the forest.

Susan Gee
28th October 2024

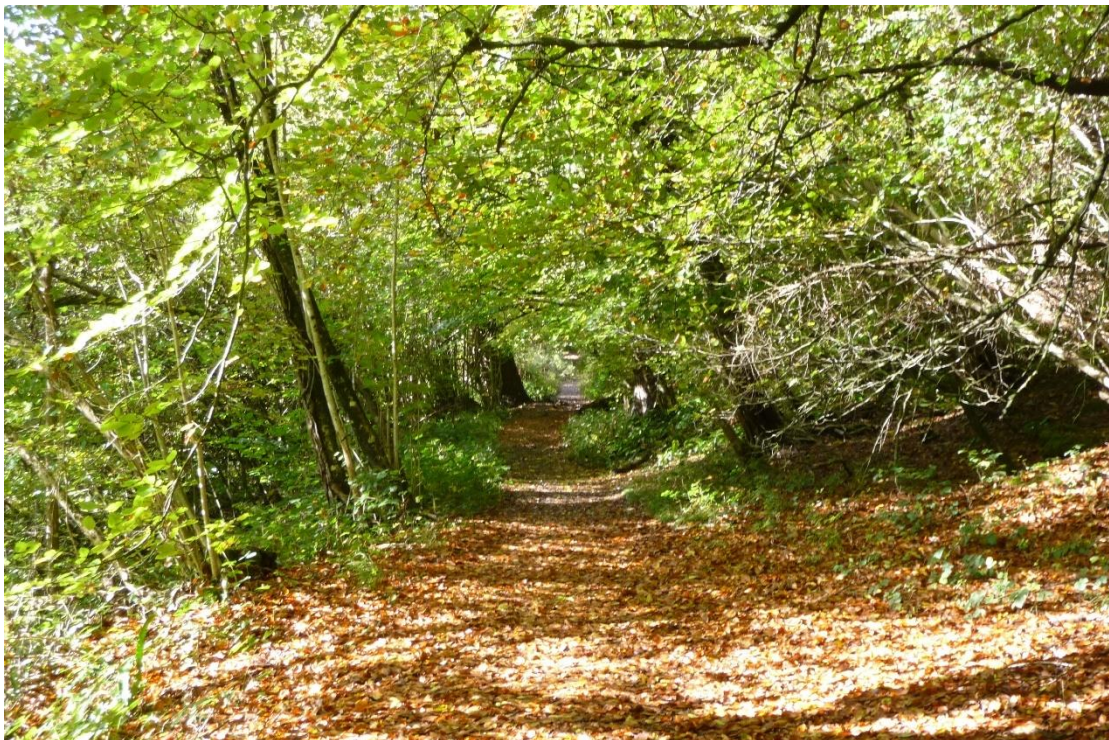


Photo: Norman Gee

St Edmund of Abingdon

Anne Dodd, A member of the congregation of the Church of Our Lady and St Edmund

How many Abingdonians, over the centuries, have been at the centre of the most significant events in England? John Roysse perhaps? John Mason maybe?

One who certainly was and yet is so little known in the town of his birth is St Edmund who signed himself, throughout his life, as Edmund of Abingdon. First a great scholar, then a church administrator and finally Archbishop of Canterbury, his life so impressed his contemporaries that he was made a saint within six years of his death in 1240.

So what was he like, this local boy who became a national figure but is so little known in Abingdon now? He was born about 1175 within a stone's throw of St Helen's church in the area of St Helen's carpark now called St Edmunds Lane. As a little boy he would have watched the present tower of St Helen's Church being built and his father, Reginald, was almost certainly connected with the great Benedictine Abingdon Abbey which dominated the small town. At the age of 12, he and his brother Robert were sent to Oxford for their education and then to the University of Paris at the age of 16. There he would have seen the great cathedral of Notre Dame in construction just as he had seen St Helen's church being built as a small boy.

After his studies in Paris, the premier university in Europe at the time, he taught rhetoric, geometry and allied subjects in Oxford as the University around him took shape. At some point his mother Mabel, a formidable and devout woman who had died leaving the care of the family in Edmund's hands, appeared in a dream, according to accounts of Edmund's life. Pointing to a figure of three interlocking circles of geometry, she drew an identical three interlocking circles representing, symbolically, the three Persons in one God and urged her son to study only that subject, i.e. Theology, in future. Edmund's mother was a woman to be obeyed and he went back to Paris to study theology and then returned to Oxford to teach, becoming the first Doctor of Divinity there. "Study as if you were to live for ever; live as if you were to die tomorrow" was his advice to his students, which he certainly followed himself.

His reputation as a teacher and preacher grew and his life of frugality and prayer was widely acknowledged. In 1222 he went to Salisbury as Treasurer and again watched a cathedral rise from its foundations – it having started only two years before he arrived from Oxford. For nine months of the year he lived quietly in the small town of Calne as the parish priest there. As a natural recluse and a man of prayer he loved his life at Calne, quietly and devotedly ministering to the people there. His life changed abruptly in 1233 after 11 quiet years at Calne when he was nominated personally by the Pope as Archbishop of Canterbury, overriding three choices by the monks at Canterbury. Edmund obeyed the Pope very reluctantly and the people of Calne and Salisbury were equally sorry to see him leave. "They are taking away from us not only our Treasurer but our Treasure".

The last six years of his life as Archbishop of Canterbury were not happy ones for Edmund. A scholar and an ascetic, he was ill-equipped to deal with the difficulties with the King, Henry III, as his predecessor, Thomas a Becket, had struggled with Henry II to defend the rights and powers of the Church against the power of the monarch. Edmund had difficulties too with the monks at Canterbury who had opposed his appointment by the Pope. Edmund, however, showed great moral courage in standing up to the King and diplomatic ability in making peace between the King and his barons, thus preventing a civil war.

In October 1240 he set off for Rome to confer with the Pope, stopping with the monks at Pontigny, 100 miles SE of Paris. Two previous Archbishops of Canterbury, Thomas a Becket and Stephen Langton, had found temporary refuge at Pontigny in their own difficulties with the King. Certainly, Edmund felt at home there with the Cistercian monks and their austere lives. He became ill however and set off back to England but died at Soissy, 50 miles north. He expressed a wish to be buried at

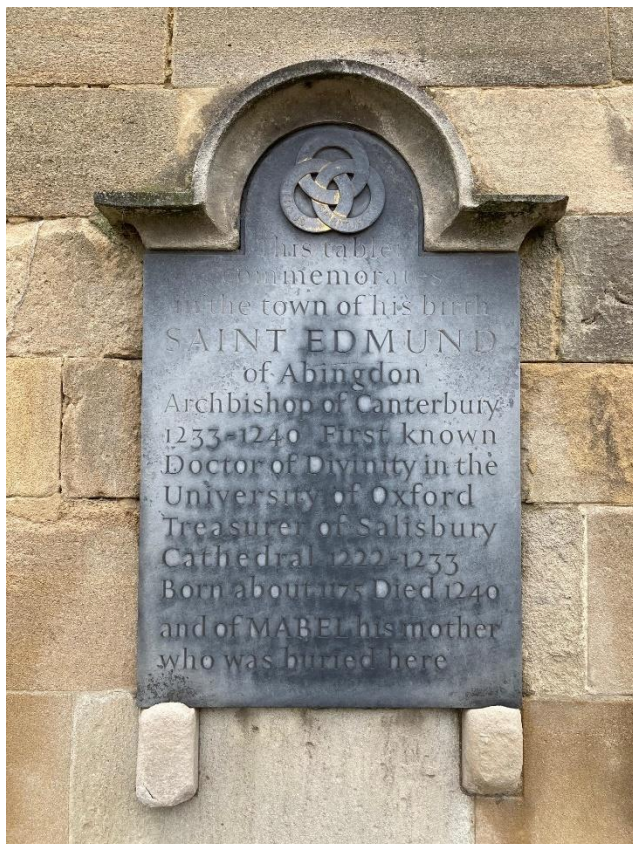
Pontigny and the route his body took back is still called the Chemin de St Edme, the name he is known by in France. Within months there were calls for his canonisation supported by the abbots of Abingdon, Reading, Westminster and many bishops. The only opposition was from the King and the monks at Canterbury. He was declared a saint in 1246 only 6 years after his death and his feast day is November 16th the date of his death.

So why is Edmund, who always signed himself as Edmund of Abingdon so little known in the town of his birth? Four reasons, I think. Firstly, he always gets mixed up with the other St Edmund, King and Martyr who was killed in East Anglia by the Danes in 870.

Secondly, he is overshadowed by an earlier Archbishop of Canterbury and saint, Thomas a Becket who had similar struggles with the King, Henry II in his case. His murder in Canterbury Cathedral was only five years before Edmund was born.

Thirdly, there is no trace now of his birthplace in Abingdon and he had no descendants as he and all his brothers and sisters became monks, priests or nuns. In addition, he died abroad and is buried there, leaving no grave to become a shrine in Abingdon.

So, all in all, there are few traces in Abingdon of Edmund - a plaque on the front of St Nicolas Church, his name given to the Catholic church and primary school and the lane off West St Helen's Street. Nothing else. But perhaps a quiet hidden presence is appropriate for a natural recluse like Edmund who preferred, throughout his life, to shun the spotlight. It is a pity though that this man of faith, prayer and moral courage, a peacemaker, scholarly, generous to all, is not better known in Abingdon. Perhaps the time has come to raise his profile.



The plaque on the west wall of St. Nicolas Church
Photo: Rob Rutherford



The statue of St. Edmund of Abingdon in the grounds of
St Edmund Hall, Oxford. Photo: Peter Dodd

The questions on the front cover:

1. St Edmund's mother exhorting him to study only theology
2. Just as a sunflower strains to follow the sun in the sky, so a follower of Christ strains to follow the Son of God
3. St Edmund is buried in the abbey of Pontigny, France

Taizé Prayer Update

Richard Pyke

As the Parish vacancy gets underway, the small steering group, that has taken on the responsibility of planning and leading Taizé services at St Helens, felt it was time to update all interested in the Taizé style of prayer on progress made since the service resumed and indeed some plans and thoughts for the future.

There has certainly been an uptake of interest in Taizé, its songs, prayer and meditative worship. Many have rekindled and rediscovered the joys and benefits of this unique way of praying and also the experience of the period of silence; not only the singing of the songs, but for a few, an opportunity to play an instrument to accompany them.

There has been some ecumenical interest in the Services which we pray we can continue to build on.

One of our steering group Dominie, has visited Taizé again this summer and we hope that in time that others, especially some of our young people, may also go on Pilgrimage there.

However, we have reached that time of year, when the set pattern of having reserved the second Sunday of the month for the prayer, clashes with other evening Services. The next date at St Helens, in November, falls on Remembrance Sunday, where by tradition, due to the morning being given over to the Civic Service and Act of Remembrance, the evening service is a Sung Eucharist which will include some Taizé Songs in the liturgy.

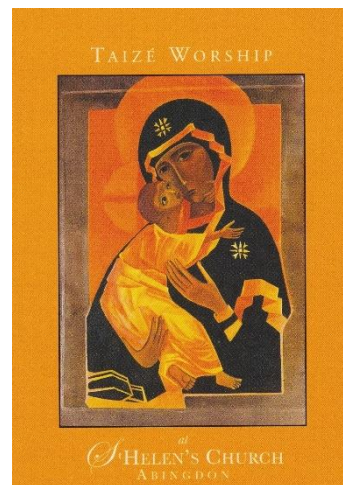
The following month of December, the evening service slot falls on the same date as that of St Nicholas's Patronal Festival and when there will be a designated Evensong. That means there would be a long gap before settling back into the regular evening service format and routine, beginning on 12th January.

All this being so, our steering group having consulted with Fr. Paul, are proposing to hold a Taizé prayer in St Michael's Church on the Saturday evening of the 30th November at the usual time of 5.30pm. By holding this prayer at St Michael's, we hope that it may provide an opportunity to not only remedy quite a long gap, but also encourage others by introducing them to this style of prayer, and particularly the Taizé songs that resonate especially with Advent.

A very busy Saturday for many at St Helens with the annual Christmas Fair, yet perhaps a chance to relax later into this contemplative prayer at the end of the day, which not only is bound up with the Christmas Fair, but commemorating the Feast of Saint Andrew, and also ushering in the Holy and beautiful Advent Season.

One of my favourite sayings of the late Prior Roger of Taizé, is "The dynamic of the provisional". Applying his words to our own situation then, using the need to alter the pattern in change of circumstances in a positive and creative way, will create new opportunities to engage and enjoy this prayer and worship.

However busy we may well be, this is an opportunity to go deeper into faith as the Church New Year is poised to begin.



Cursillo

Hazel Glennie

Have you ever heard of "Cursillo"?

It's a Spanish word that means short course. After the Spanish Civil war, the Catholic Church began running short weekend courses to encourage people in their Faith. The movement, which became known as the "Cursillo" movement spread worldwide. It was Americans who took the movement to Geneva, where I encountered it in 1992. I found my weekend such a profound experience, that I was keen to stay involved in the movement. However life and babies intervened, and it was in 2015 that I resolved to get involved with the Oxford Cursillo movement. Unlike Geneva where Cursillo is Ecumenical (as my friend put it, it's Geneva's answer to the Church in Abingdon!) in England Cursillo is denominational. That means it covers a wider geographical area but we're all Anglicans. I am now a member of the British Anglican Cursillo Council (BACC).

The weekends last for two or three days and are residential retreats. You are divided into small groups which sit around a table and discuss talks (rollos) given by members of the Cursillo Community. (Our group in Geneva was called "La Joie"). The talks are grouped into 3 areas - prayer, study and action. They support us in our Christian life just as a three-legged stool is very stable.



Sitting in the evening sun during my Cursillo weekend

The next Oxford weekend is at the end of May. <https://oxfordcursillo.org.uk/weekends/application-form/>. There were still spaces when I last checked, but do contact them if you are interested.

There is also lots of time for fun and fellowship and quiet introspection. I happened to be at a Cursillo event the weekend my mother died and a memory I shall cherish is sitting quietly in the Chapel that evening just before the candle-lit service with tea-lights laid out on the floor in the shape of a Cross.

After the weekend you will be invited to join a Reunion group. This is not obligatory but it is nice to continue the fellowship. We also run larger get-togethers for the whole of Oxford Cursillo, called Ultreyas. There is one at St Helen's on Saturday 18th January at 9.15 for 10.00am. Do join us to taste the flavour of Cursillo.

As Cursillo is a National organisation, there are also National Ultreyas which are great fun. These are held annually at the beginning of September i.e. the Saturday after the late August Bank Holiday. In 2016 I had the privilege of carrying our banner through the streets of York. Sadly this year I was too old and decrepit to do it, but I really enjoyed walking into Sheffield Cathedral as the choir were singing, "My Jesus, my Saviour", the hymn we had at my daughter's Christening.

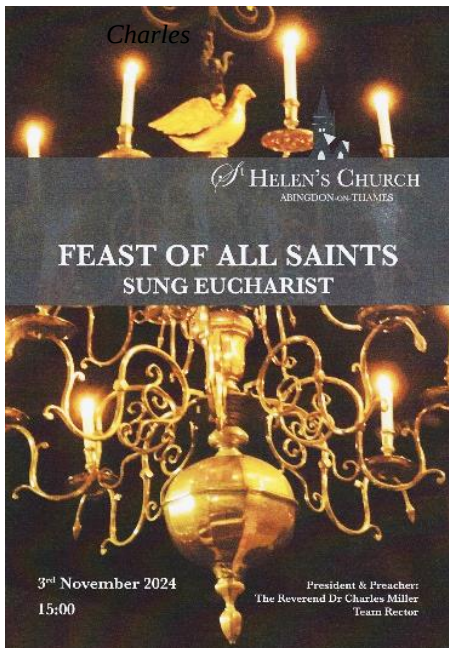
If you want to know more about Cursillo do speak to me or Linda Hobbs.



Oxford Anglican Cursillo

Growing in faith through prayer, study and action

Go well!



Margaret Horton presents Charles Miller with a book of good wishes and memories from the congregation of St Helens. 27 Oct 2024.

Photo: David Bevington



Charles Miller steps down from the governing body of Christ's Hospital of Abingdon.

October 3rd 2024 Long Alley Hall.

Photo: Marion Evans

Also:

At the celebration lunch in September, thanks to the generosity of the congregations of the three churches in the Parish, Charles Miller was presented with life membership of The Wine Society, a year's Membership as a Friend of the National Gallery, and a substantial cheque.

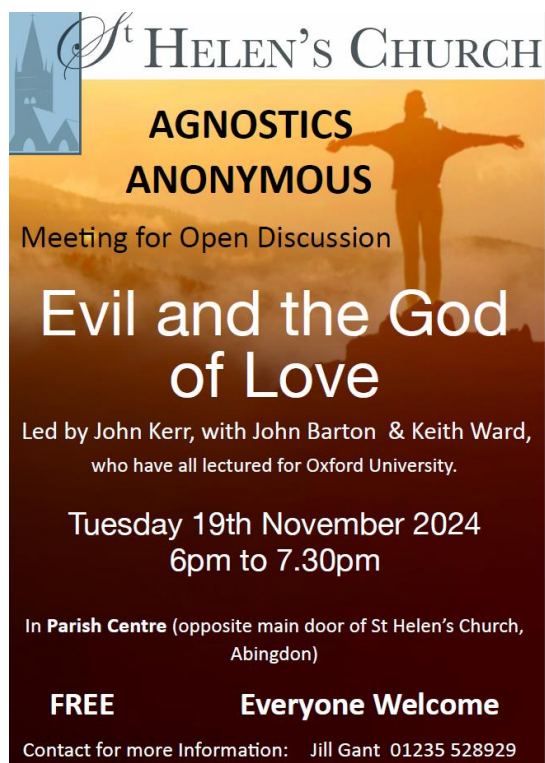
Autumn events

Compiled by Louise Heffernan

Moving Into Stillness

Circle dancing to Taizé music with silent interludes on **Thursday December 5th** in St Michael's Church Room from **9.45 – 10.45 am** before the regular circle dancing session at 11 am (now on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month only). No prior experience/ partner needed.

Tea and coffee provided.



St HELEN'S CHURCH

**AGNOSTICS
ANONYMOUS**

Meeting for Open Discussion

Evil and the God of Love

Led by John Kerr, with John Barton & Keith Ward,
who have all lectured for Oxford University.

**Tuesday 19th November 2024
6pm to 7.30pm**

In **Parish Centre** (opposite main door of St Helen's Church,
Abingdon)

FREE **Everyone Welcome**

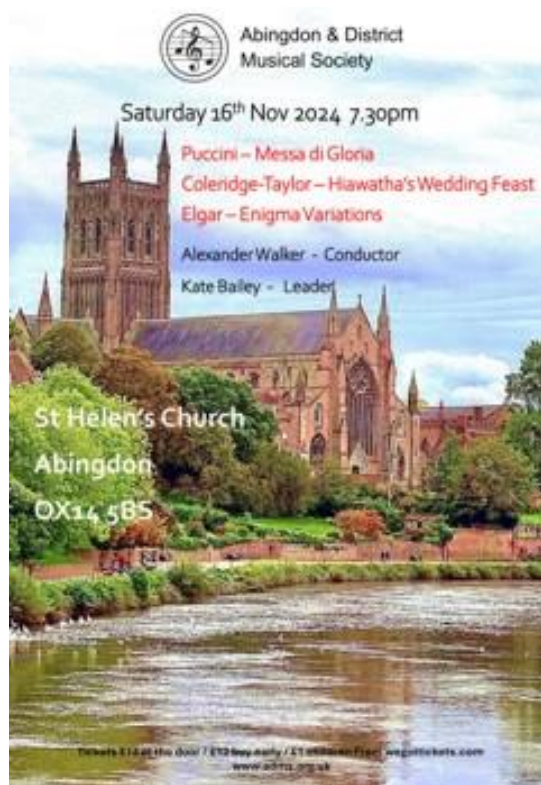
Contact for more Information: Jill Gant 01235 528929

An informal Christmas concert for all ages by Abingdon Chorale in aid of The Abingdon Bridge (TAB) in St Michael's Church on December 1st 2024 at 4 pm. Tickets £10 (£2.50 under 16s) from <https://bit.ly/AbChorale>

Abingdon School Concerts

Remembrance Concert Sunday November 10th at 7 pm featuring **Fauré's Requiem** along with a number of choral items and chamber music performed by pupils, staff, and OAs. The concert is **free** but please **book tickets** through the Abingdon School website and go to What's on/Events and Online Booking. The direct link is:
<https://www.abingdon.org.uk/sports-and-leisure/performance/remembranceconcert-faure-requiem/>

The School will also be holding a concert on the **November 22nd at 7 pm**. *The Joint Chamber Choir* will give a recital of both sacred and secular choral music. Tickets should be booked as above but are free. The direct booking link is:
<https://www.abingdon.org.uk/sports-and-leisure/performance/joint-chamberchoir-concert/>.



Abingdon & District Musical Society

Saturday 16th Nov 2024 7.30pm

Puccini – *Messa di Gloria*
Coleridge-Taylor – *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*
Elgar – *Enigma Variations*

Alexander Walker – Conductor
Kate Bailey – Leader

St Helen's Church
Abingdon
OX14 5BS

Tickets £14 at the door / £12 free early / £10 advance from www.abingdon.org.uk

Faith Forum.**Sunday December 1st**

The final Faith Forum of the current series on Ways of Engaging with the Bible. Our speaker will be Karen Laister from BRF Ministries (formerly Bible Reading Fellowship), on using Bible Study notes, either as individuals or in a small group, as a way of engaging with scripture.

At the **Parish Centre**, beginning at 12.45 pm preceded by a light buffet lunch.

**Concert at St Nicolas Church**

On **Sunday 24 November**, Arco Strings and guests offer '**An afternoon of Similarities and Differences**' – a concert featuring works by Mozart, Handel, Debussy and many others – and featuring two regular musicians at St Nic's. Proceeds to church funds – so do try to join us.

Abingdon Church Twinning.**Saturday November 23rd,****6.30pm for a prompt 7 pm start.**

Join us for a fun evening with quizmaster-extraordinaire Richard at the Conduit Centre, Abingdon, who will test your general knowledge with 7 rounds of 10 questions. All questions are on the big screen with the answer booklet to help. Tickets: £15 per person, including one welcome drink and a ploughman's dinner in the interval.

Max. 6 people per table, prizes for the winning table, raffle, further refreshments with donation. For tickets, please contact:

Elizabeth Simpson, simpsonem123@gmail.com.

St Helen's Church Christmas Market**Saturday 30 November 2024 from 10 am to 1 pm.**

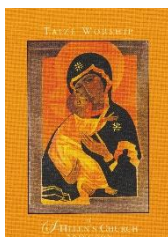
Lots to buy, including home baking, gifts, books, jewellery and preserves, a raffle and delicious refreshments on offer. The handbell ringers will be there and there may be some carol singing as well. All proceeds to church funds.

St Nicolas Day

St Nicolas' Church celebrates its Patronal Festival on Sunday 8 December with a traditional St Nicolas' Day lunch at Coseners' House at 1pm. Lunch will be followed by Choral Evensong to honour St Nicolas, at 5:30pm. The Revd Joshua Brocklesby, the Bowles Lecturer at Trinity College, Oxford, will preach. Menu and booking forms for the lunch - £32 for a three course meal, with welcome drinks and tea / coffee – are out now: <https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StN/downloads/StNicsMenu2024.pdf> and in hard copy. All welcome.

Taizé Prayer

Saturday November 30th at 5.30pm in St Michael's Church (see page 9)

**Advent Carol Service**

St Helen's Church
1st December
5.30pm

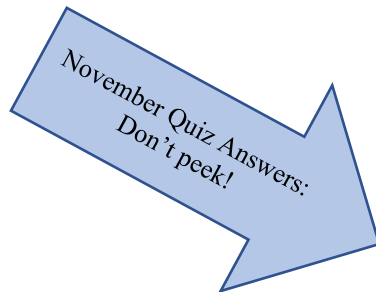
Autumn November Quiz

Louise Heffernan

The answers to the questions below all start with either 'nov' or 'au'.

1. A self-taught person (10)
2. First name of champion tennis player (5)
3. A writer (6)
4. A devotion of prayers of services over nine successive days (6)
5. First name of actor who starred in 'Roman Holiday' (6)
6. A star increasing in brightness (4)
7. A nerve agent (8)
8. Goddess of dawn (6)
9. A long short story (7)
10. Shout for help across the Channel (2, 7)
11. These are found in crackers (9)
12. Vegetable (9)
13. Its capital is Halifax (4, 6)
14. An extinct cattle species (7)
15. Surname of Czech tennis player (7)
16. First name of writer and journalist with a more famous brother - born in 1939 (7)
17. A beginner (6)
18. Real (9)
19. Songwriter and singer who kept the home fires burning (surname) (7)
20. A helper, subsidiary (9)

Quiz Answers!



20. Auxiliary
19. (Ivor) Novello
18. Authentic
17. Novice
16. Auberon (Wagh)
15. (Jana) Novotna
14. Aurochs
13. Nova Scotia
12. Aubergine
11. Novelties
10. Au secours
9. Novella
8. Aurora
7. Novichok
6. Nova
5. Audrey (Hepburn)
4. Novena
3. Author
2. Novak (Djokovic)
1. Autodidact

From the Mothers and Toddlers

Photo: Rosalind Rutherford



Useful Weblinks:

Services: for the latest news see the Parish Website:

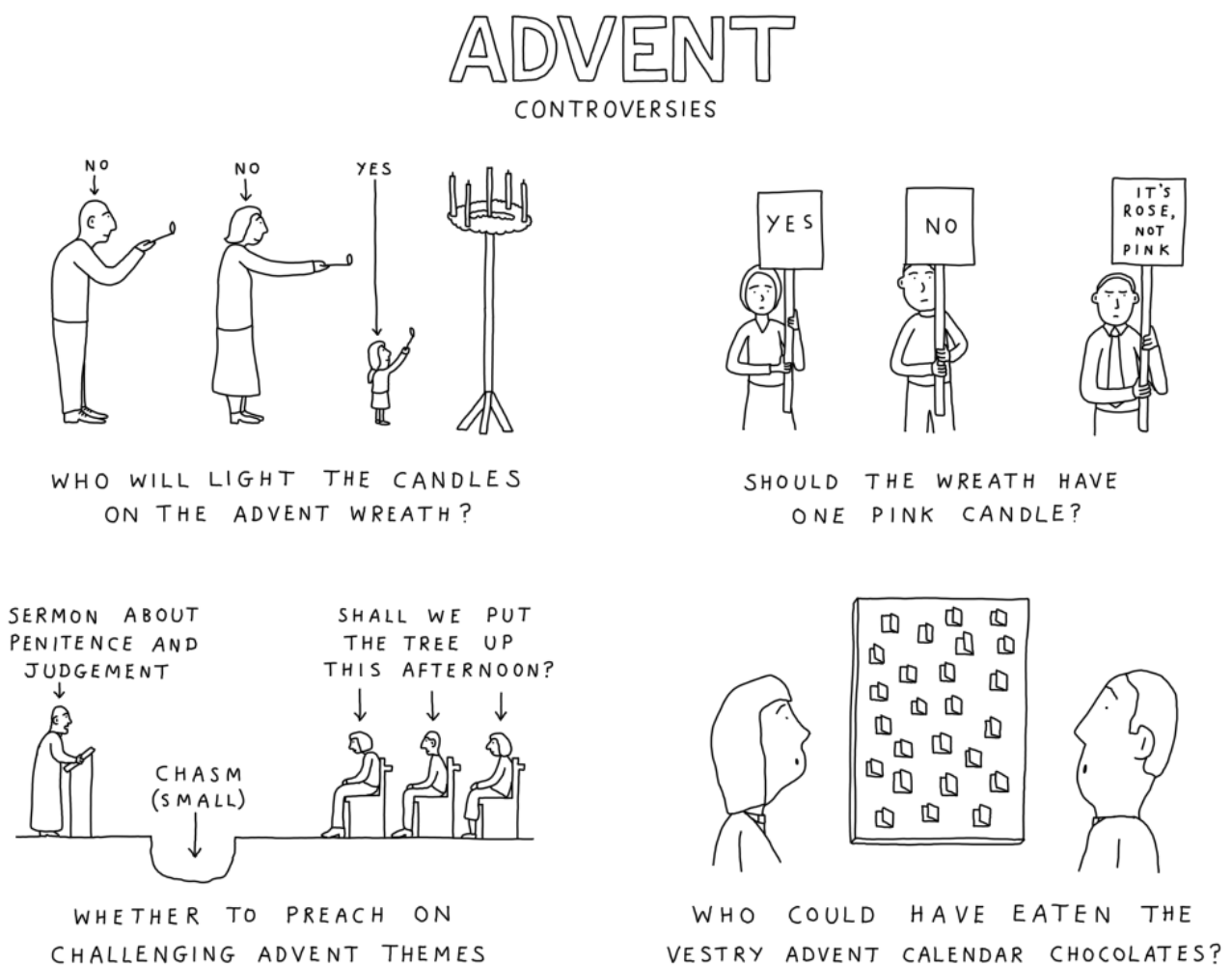
<https://abingdonparish.org.uk>

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:



CartoonChurch.com

Thanks to all contributors and to you, the readers.

The next issue will be published on December 8th - ideas and contributions to Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk