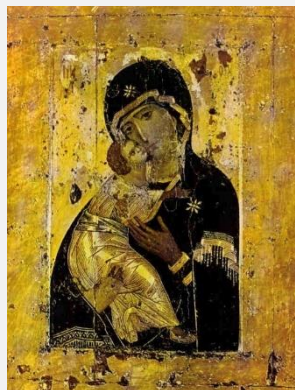


Issue 4:
May 2025



The Virgin of Kyiv
known by some as the
Virgin of Vladimir

A candle in...

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



Christian Aid Week

Rob Rutherford

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Happy Birthday Christian Aid! 80 years old and still going strong.
Perhaps we should worry that the need for it still exists but we rejoice that the churches, working together, have achieved so much.

If, like me, your experience of Christian Aid has been formed by this one week in May, you may be surprised to learn that the week-long street collection has only existed since 1957 and that the charity was then called 'Inter-Church Aid'. Perhaps you even remember that first weekly door-to-door collection. Do let us know if you do. On the Christian Aid website [here](#) you can listen to Douglas Tucker talking about collecting coins in a deprived area of Newcastle from 'people with nothing but who gave something'. (This may remind you of something – perhaps Luke 21?) £26000 was raised in that first collection. The strapline was 'Help the Refugees'.

A bit of maths tells us that the charity was founded in 1945. It was started by British and Irish churches to help refugees following the Second World War.

The methods for raising money are evolving. The pandemic probably put paid to the door-to-door collection. Will it be missed? It took a bit of courage to knock on doors – sometimes rebuffed – but often rewarded and as someone says on the CA website, it was probably the 'biggest single act of Christian witness in the country.' Do share your memories of this and other imaginative ways of raising funds too. My feet remember a sponsored Christian Aid Walk in Leamington Spa about 1970 and my Mum bathing the resulting blisters. The market stall in Abingdon on May 10th 2025 is another example of imaginative fund-raising. I hope it raised both funds and awareness.

The 2025 fundraising campaign features on page 2. Do consider how to respond to it. Remember that the government has reduced the overseas aid budget in order to spend more on defence. Our taxes have not risen so perhaps we can tax ourselves to make a difference. Remember to gift aid it too if you can! See page 2 for details.

Christian Aid Week 2025

In 2022 the Christian Aid campaign featured Zimbabwe, in 2023 Malawi, in 2024 Burundi. In 2025 the campaign shifts the focus of our attention to Guatemala in Central America.

In the manner of my Geography lessons, here are the major exports of Guatemala: exports are led by Bananas (\$1.55B), Coffee (\$1.08B), Palm Oil (\$824M), Raw Sugar (\$756M), and Knitted Sweaters (\$614M). The main destination for the exports of Guatemala is the United States (\$5.16B). What will Trump's 10% tariff do to that?

Of course the main focus of Christian Aid's campaign is the small farmer. This year it features Aurelia whose farm is suffering from gruelling heatwaves and extreme weather. Climate change is likely to impact the poor disproportionately – they did little to cause it and seem likely to bear the main impact of it. An inspirational farmer and community leader. Aurelia and her family belong to the indigenous Q'eqchi' community of the Alta Verapaz region in the centre of Guatemala. When she heard of an organisation called 'Congcoop', a partner of Christian Aid, she put herself forward for training.



An excerpt from the Christian Aid website gives an idea of what happened next:

“With funding from Christian Aid, Congcoop supports communities to return to indigenous farming practices and adopt agroecological approaches that conserve their land, culture and livelihood. Agroecology, put simply, is farming in a sustainable way that works with, not against, nature. It's the application of ecological principles in farming – a blend of ancient and modern wisdom. By working with Congcoop, Aurelia gained the skills and knowledge to cultivate native seeds that are better suited to the changing climate. She's producing her own organic fertiliser, creating nurseries, constructing rainwater collection systems, and making nutritious food and medicine for her chickens.

Thanks to Aurelia's ever-growing knowledge base, she's now cultivating cacao, sugarcane, cinnamon, corn and pineapples. It's steady progress that holds promise. Aurelia's resolute hope has also inspired her to develop and lead other activities in her community, including producing chocolate, establishing a farmers' market, and fighting for women's rights.” (See [here](#).)

To donate to the local digital 'envelope' click <https://fundraise.christianaid.org.uk/envelope-2025/abingdons-envelope> or use the QR code

In 2023-4 Christian Aid Week raised about £5million out of a total income of £83Million. So we need to give at other times too!

In 2023-4 £29Million came from 'Institutional Grants'. This will include contributions from the overseas aid budget. This is bound to fall. Can we make up for it so that Christian Aid work is not affected?



Faith Forum: Salvation

Dr Tobias Tanton's talk on Sunday 4th May. Summarised by Rob Rutherford

The doctrine of salvation is a huge topic. It interconnects with many other aspects of our Christian theology. There is a strong link to the notion of sin. If sin is the problem, salvation is the answer - its solution, so how we see sin shapes how we see salvation. Likewise, it is deeply connected to Christology - how do we see Jesus - and similarly how we see God. It also influences the way the church preaches salvation to people and this in turn is influenced by how human beings see themselves.

We are celebrating the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea and the Nicene Creed which emerged from it. In order to restrict the scope of the talk, I will take the Council as the starting point. There will be three main elements to the talk: what motivated the Council of Nicaea; what the creed says about salvation and what the creed doesn't say about salvation:

The council in the year 325 was convened by emperor Constantine to resolve a dispute between two camps. On one side was Arius who argued that Jesus was a created being, not equal with God. He was possibly the most important of God's creations, identified with 'Wisdom' in the Old Testament, but not part of God's self. Arius was motivated by 'monotheism' – there is one God – and he didn't want to risk confusion with Roman and Greek religions with their pantheon of gods. On the other hand, Athanasius argued that Jesus could only do what he did – heal and forgive sins (Luke 5.21) and bring about salvation - if he were fully God. At this council Athanasius won the argument and this led to the wording of the Nicene Creed:

“God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the father.”

There is an important Greek word used - "Homoousios". It is a theological term meaning "of the same substance" or "of the same essence". In Christian theology, it is used to describe the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ, affirming that they share the same divine nature. The wording of the creed implies that salvation is brought by Jesus - Jesus is the Saviour. Also that the whole ministry of Jesus contributes to salvation - everything that Jesus does.

What the creed *does not* say is how salvation works. There is no agreed 'mechanism' for atonement. There have been various theories of atonement but the church has never formally decided on how Jesus achieves salvation for us.

These theories of atonement use metaphors. An early metaphor is that of 'ransom' – money paid to free someone from slavery. In this metaphor the slave is powerless to free him or herself – we can only be freed if God pays our ransom. In the early church, the view was that we are held captive by the devil and that God pays ransom to the devil.

In the Middle Ages, Anselm argued that this gave too much weight and status to the devil and instead he used a metaphor based on the feudal society of the time – if you dishonour your 'lord' some redress or 'satisfaction' is called for. Anselm used these social relations as an analogy for sin and salvation. Sin dishonours God and what is needed is for someone to give satisfaction for that dishonour. God himself does that through sending Jesus and Jesus is the satisfaction. Crucially for Anselm, the satisfaction is given to God so the devil does not have any rights over humanity.

Another (related) metaphor is the court of law – we have all sinned and deserve punishment and the

only way we can be saved is if someone accepts the punishment on our behalf. This idea of ‘penal substitution’ as a model of atonement makes us uneasy as it sees God as ‘wrathful’ rather than a God of grace.

There are other metaphors too – Jesus as the ‘moral exemplar’ showing us how to behave. Jesus triumphant in battle. Jesus as the sacrifice to end all sacrifices. Another metaphor comes from the Eastern Orthodox theology. God is trying to reconcile us to God’s self and that in the incarnation Jesus brings divinity and humanity together in a way that draws us up into the life of God.

In the face of this variety, do we pick our favourite one? All feature in scripture. One way to reconcile them is to understand them as different metaphors. All metaphors lead to nonsense if taken too far, but they also use an image to convey a powerful truth. Hymns often use metaphors and mix them! Perhaps we need to hang on to them all, since together they see that the whole of Jesus’ life is the vehicle for our salvation – his teaching, his relationships, his healing, his acceptance of death and his resurrection.

Discussion:

Salvation is about the nature of God. A loving God provides the means for salvation but does it also imply that an angry God requires us to seek salvation?

Is salvation ‘universal’? There are various theories about who is saved. Is it those who believe in Jesus (does belief become a work?). Is it those who are chosen by God (the ‘elect’) – and, taken to extremes, by predestination? There is some sense in the idea that God seeks to reconcile the whole of creation to God’s self. God can achieve this if he wills it.

The parable of the prodigal son makes salvation sound easy – the younger son practices his apology but does not get the chance to deliver it. It pictures the God of grace giving salvation freely. It leaves us with the question ‘why the cross?’. Is it just the consequence of the life Jesus lived rather than a piece of cosmic magic? Here Tobias referred to the work of a modern thinker René Girard who explores ‘scapegoat’ theory in relation to Jesus.

The importance of stories – perhaps it is more important to tell stories than to describe theories? Tobias mentioned ‘narrative theology’ including the work of Robert Jenson. He also said that metaphors tell stories so they are not just ‘theories’.

The session finished with the idea that love is central to the concept of grace and that grace is central to the idea of salvation.

Dr Tobias Tanton is Early Career Fellow and Tutor in Theology at Harris Manchester College.

This was the last in the present series of Faith Forum. It will resume in due course on the 4th Sunday.

The return of the prodigal son –
Rembrandt. Source [here](#):



Unfeignedly

Rod Hunt

And we beseech you, give us that due sense of all your mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives;

Prayer of General Thanksgiving. The Book of Common Prayer

Now here's a classy word.
A 'Koh-i-noor diamond' of a word,
A one-off, matchless stand-all-alone word.
It is 'unfeignedly';
One of those words one never uses,
But could not be without,
Since it is a peerless ambassador
For the wonder of language.
It reposes in an elegant and beautiful phrase,
Which, in turn, is enfolded in a prayer,
'*that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful.*'
It is derived from the verb 'to feign,'
Meaning to dissemble, not to be genuine;
To pretend or to give a false appearance.
And, used in the negative,
Means exactly the opposite.
I admire it for this simple reason:
One could not say, for example,
'*You have returned my lost cat . . .*
Or '*Doctor, you have made me better . . .*
Or '*How kind of you to remember me,*
My heart is unfeignedly thankful.'
Could one?
For which . . . I am . . .



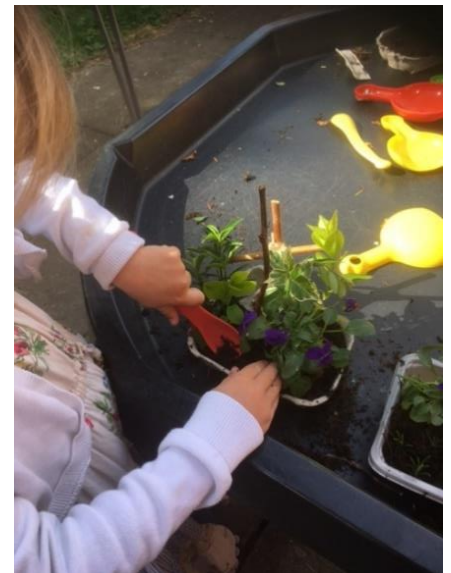
Mallard ducklings off Wilsham Road.
Photo: David Bevington

Children's Crafts in Holy Week

School holidays were the two weeks before Easter this year. Toddler group would not happen on those Monday mornings, but the Parish Centre hall was free – and so were most of those who help with the Toddler group.

We decided to offer an hour of crafts linked to Easter on the Monday of Holy Week, and invite those who usually come to toddlers and any older children who might normally be in school and we extended the invitation to other children and families linked to St Helen's.

Fourteen children and their parents or grandparents turned up and had a busy and enjoyable time making their own individual Easter gardens, icing Easter biscuits, making and decorating simple wooden crosses, and colouring crosses, Easter cards and moving models of Jesus riding on a donkey on Palm Sunday. The children went home with their various handicrafts and a knitted Easter chick hiding an egg (from the MU).



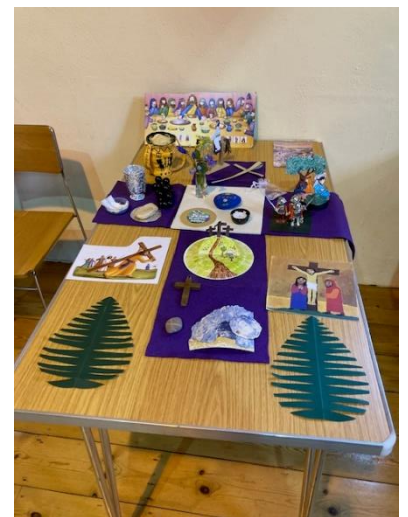
Good Friday Children's Service St Michael's

A bare church, an empty altar with a purple felt cross on the floor in front of it..... this is the sight that greets the first arrivals on Good Friday morning, but there is also a glimpse of a row of laden tables in the south aisle waiting for the activities to begin.

As the service starts children of all ages, from babes in arms upwards, bring up the objects and pictures representing the items and events associated with the Easter story to fill the cross and place on the altar.

After half an hour or so of story, songs and prayers, it is time for the craft activities to begin - and plates of hot cross buns and chocolate fingers to be consumed. Crafts range from representations of the Easter Story - this year a revolving wheel showing the main events of Holy Week and Easter Sunday and also a card fronted by a miniature palm cross - to reminders, suitable for all age groups, of the new life of springtime, eggs, chicks, rabbits, flowers etc. The one essential for all the children is their own handmade miniature basket, complete with chocolate eggs!

It is true to say that many of the parents participate in the crafts as enthusiastically as the children.



Welcome Pope Leo 14th!



Bell Ringing!

Susan Read

The Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers (ODG) held their annual “Ringing Day” on Monday 5th May. This is the day when ringers are invited to visit part of the diocese to ring at all the towers in that area. It was our area, the “Old North Berks Branch” this year and a detailed itinerary was provided at [Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund \(ODBF\) Ringing Day ONB branch - Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers](#)

There are often queues of ringers waiting for their chance to ring on the bells on these days. Some ringers come quite long distances for the chance to “grab” a lot of towers. It’s a good opportunity to ring with other ringers and try out lots of different bells. The ODG takes a small charge from each ringer and the money is used to make grants toward the repair and augmentation of rings of church bells throughout the Oxford Diocese.



Bell ringers at St Nicolas' Church.
Photo: Alastair Fear of the Abingdon Blog

Events May and June

Compiled by Louise Heffernan



Music for a Summer's Evening

from Henry VIII to Bernstein and Sinatra

7.30pm, Friday 16th May

St. Michael's Church, Abingdon

Free admission with retiring collection

Abbey Chamber Concerts Spring 2025



St Nicolas Church
Abingdon
Sundays at 3pm

Sunday 11 May

Coleridge-Taylor

Nonet for piano, winds and strings

Spohr

Nonet for winds and strings

Pavlova Winds

Cotswold Ensemble

Malcolm Pearce piano

Tickets £12 online or on door. Profits donated to local charities.
Subscribe to our email list at www.abbeychamberconcerts.org



Cream Tea

St Michael & All Angels' Church,
Park Road



Saturday 24th May

2.30 – 4.30 pm

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





DEMENTIA

Turning Understanding into Action

A talk by

Susan Williams

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friends Ambassador

Tuesday May 13th

7.30pm

St Helen's Church Centre, St Helen's Court
Abingdon OX14 5BS

All welcome ~ Admission free ~ Refreshments



St HELEN'S CHURCH

AGNOSTICS ANONYMOUS

Meeting for Open Discussion

Believing, Behaving, Belonging: which is the heart of Christianity?

Led by John Barton with John Kerr & Jennifer Brown

**Tuesday 27th May 2025
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 invitation to the 150th Anniversary Celebration of Trinity Church, Abingdon



Rev'd Georgina Bondzi-Simpson, the Trustees and members of Trinity Church,
cordially invite you to a Thanksgiving Service for 150 years
of ministry, witness and service at Trinity Church

**At Trinity Church, Conduit Rd, Abingdon OX14 1DB
On Sunday 1st June at 3 pm,
followed by afternoon tea.**

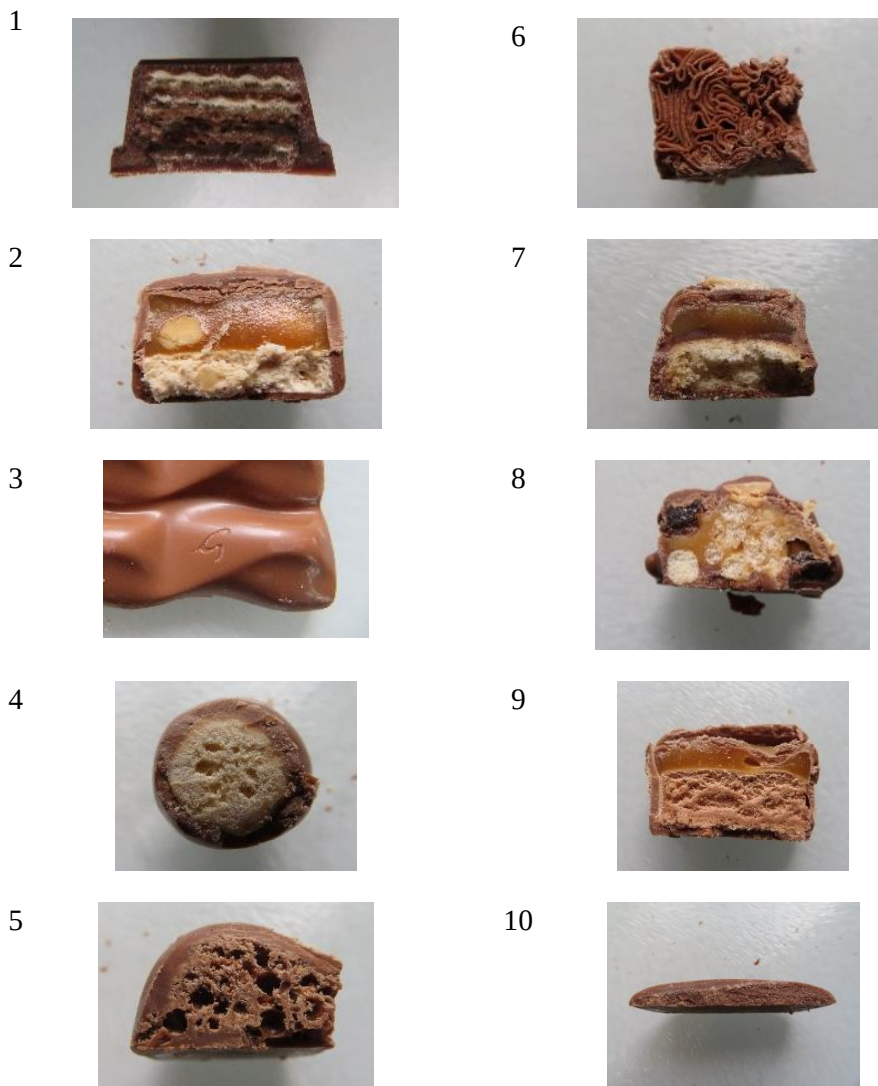
Please RSVP to the church office, by 25th May
email: trinity.abingdon@gmail.com or telephone: 01235 520282

**Parking restrictions will be lifted on Saturday evening.
There are no restrictions on Sunday.**



Quiz 1: Can you identify these sweet treats?

The Hallas family



Not to scale

Disclaimer: no chocolate was eaten during the creation of this quiz.

Disclaimer disclaimer: disclaimers may be inaccurate.

Quiz 2: Cheese or Service Station?

With thanks to Facebook and a local quiz night compiler!

Which of these are cheeses and which are motorway service stations?

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Duddleswell | 6. Pont Abraham |
| 2. Pease Pottage | 7. Kidderton Ash |
| 3. Dunlop | 8. Baldock |
| 4. Tunworth | 9. Cotherstone |
| 5. Rivington | 10. Gordano |

There's A Rat in My Garden



There's a rat running round my garden
He's driving me insane
Just when I think he's gone
He suddenly pops up again.

I can't put out my washing
Or go down to the shed
For fear of meeting Ratty
Which is something which I dread.

I swear that rat is taunting me
As back and forth he goes
I feel I am being terrorised
And this I'm sure he knows.

But could Ratty's days be numbered
Because my husband has a plan
He's bought a trap from Amazon
To catch him if he can.

So will this solve our problem
I am not convinced it will
Because I think despite the trap
I'll be seeing Ratty still.

Or at least one of his mates!

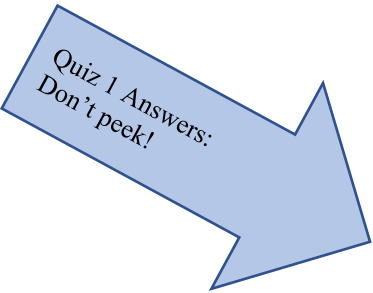


Eileen Duckett

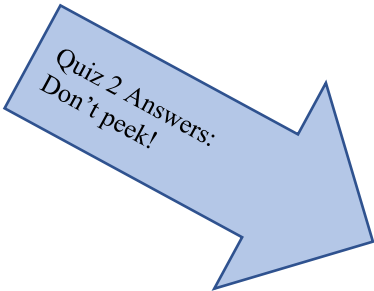
Illustrations by the anonymous rat artist
of Abingdon



The Parish Centre garden May 4th 2025. Photo: David Bevington



- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | Kit Kat (large size) | 6 | Flake |
| 2 | Snickers | 7 | Twix |
| 3 | Galaxy Bar | 8 | Picnic |
| 4 | Malteser | 9 | Mars |
| 5 | Aero | 10 | Cadburys Button |



1. Cheese:
2. Service Station on the M23
3. Cheese
4. Cheese
5. Service Station on the M61
6. Service Station on the M4
7. Cheese
8. Service Station on the A1(M)
9. Cheese
10. Service Station on the M5

An hour at the Nuneham Arboretum May 2025



Photos: Rob Rutherford

Useful Weblinks:

Services: for the latest news see the Parish Website:

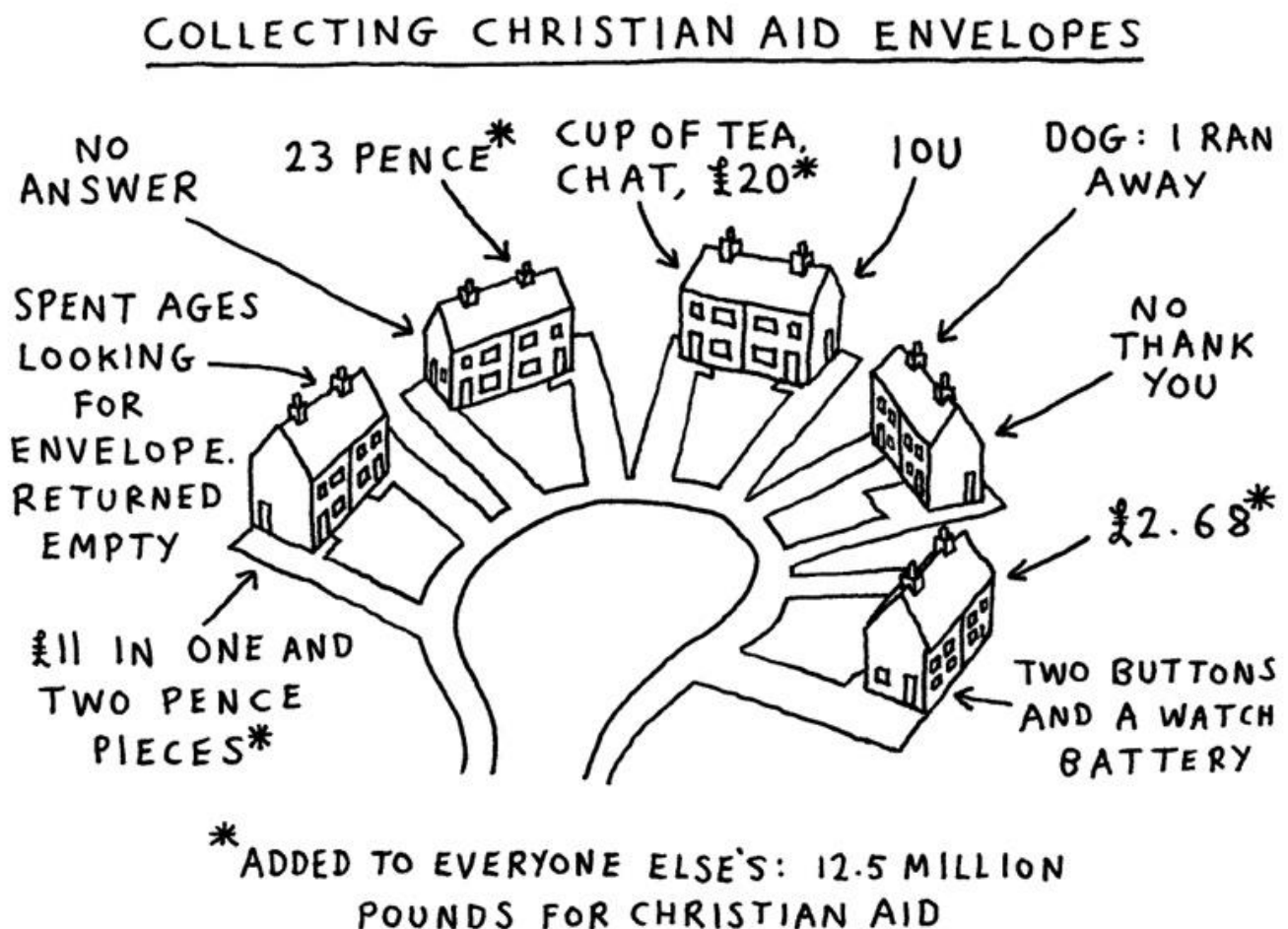
<https://abingdonparish.org.uk>

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, a nostalgic reprise from 2017 by Dave Walker:



@davewalker / CartoonChurch.com

Thanks to all contributors and to you, the readers.

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