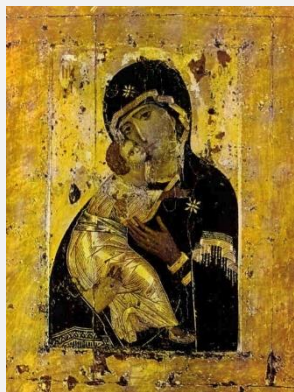


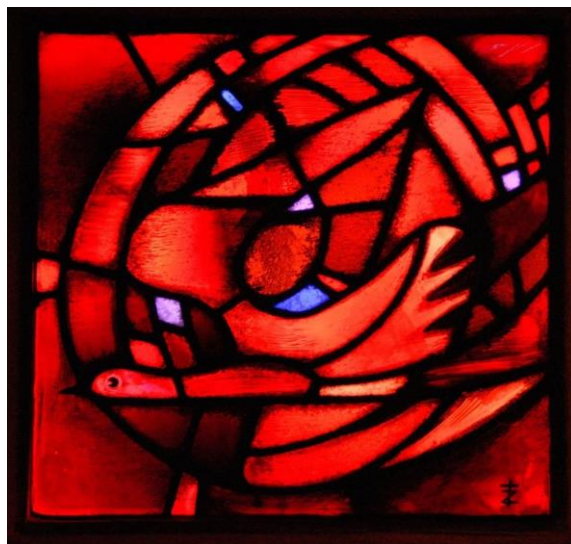
Issue 5:  
June 2025



A candle in....

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

## Pentecost 2025!



The Taizé Pentecost window

Holy Spirit, come to us,  
kindle in us the fire of your love.  
Holy Spirit, come to us,  
Holy Spirit, come to us,

Taizé Chant

### Inside:

The GoBetween God  
Agnostics Anonymous  
Poems  
Dementia Friendly Churches  
Trinity at 150  
Labyrinth Day  
The Parish Centre Garden  
Events  
And, of course, a quiz and a cartoon

This issue was shaped  
by:

Rob Rutherford  
Eluned Hallas  
Louise Heffernan

Ideas for future  
content to:  
Candle@  
[abingdonparish.org.uk](mailto:abingdonparish.org.uk)

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

Tel:  
01235 520144  
07395943957  
E-mail:  
administrator  
@sthelens-  
[abingdon.org.uk](mailto:abingdon.org.uk)

## The GoBetween God

Excerpts from the first chapter of John V. Taylor's book about the Holy Spirit and Christian Mission

Please note that this book was written in 1972 and the author uses 'he' and 'his' rather than what we might call 'inclusive language'. God of course is neither male nor female. John Taylor would have understood that. I decided not to edit it. RR

The chief actor in the historic mission of the Christian church is the Holy Spirit. He is the director of the whole enterprise. The mission consists of the things he is doing in the world. In a special way it consists of the light that he is focussing upon Jesus Christ.

This fact, so patent to Christians in the first century, is largely forgotten in our own. So we have lost our nerve and our sense of direction and have turned the divine initiative into a human enterprise. 'It all depends on me' is an attitude that is bedevilling both the practice and theology of our mission in these days....

If for Jesus himself both messiahship and mission were derived from his self-immersion in that flood-tide of the Holy Spirit, how could his followers possibly be involved in the same mission except through the same immersion?...

But, while we piously repeat the traditional assertion that without the Holy Spirit we can get nowhere in the Christian mission, we seem to press on notwithstanding with our man-made programmes. I have not heard recently of committee business adjourned because those present were still awaiting the arrival of the Spirit of God. I have known projects abandoned for lack of funds, but not for lack of the gifts of the Spirit. Provided the human resources are adequate we take the spiritual for granted. In fact we have only the haziest idea of what we mean by resources other than human wealth, human skill and human character. This book is an attempt to interpret the meaning of the Christian mission for our contemporary world within the context of a fresh understanding of the Holy Spirit and his action in the world. What is it, essentially, that he adds to our natural human capacities, without which we can't even begin to be witnesses for Christ? We say glibly that we need his power and his guidance: what sort of power are we to expect beyond that of ordinary men and by what kind of communication does he point out the way?...

In this study, I take the position that the Spirit who is central to Paul's theology is the same being whom the Old Testament knew as the Spirit, or Breath of God....the New Testament authors nowhere appear to infer from the uniqueness of their experience of the Holy Spirit that he himself had been quite unknown hitherto. The symbolism of the Pentecost experience - rushing wind, fire and ecstasy - linked the new experience with the familiar images of the Old Testament, as did the Johannine account of Christ's breathing the Spirit upon his disciples...

All is imagery. Or, rather, all is experience which only images can adequately convey. We do well, therefore, to remember that the word 'Spirit' itself is a metaphor, just as the words 'Father' and 'Son' are also metaphors. The Hebrew 'ruach', the Greek 'pneuma', the Latin 'spiritus' all mean 'wind' or 'breath'. Even the north European 'geist' and 'ghost' are linked, according to Webster, with the Anglo-Saxon root 'gast' meaning 'breath'. In other words we are dealing with a double analogy. Something in the physical world - the fierce wind of the desert, the breath of a living creature - is used as an image of an incorporeal element in man which cannot easily be named in any other way; and then this human 'spirit' is itself used as an image of another ineffable force which man feels working upon him and believes to be divine.

John V Taylor (1914-2001) was a former Bishop of Winchester

## Our Mother-tongue Is Love; A Sonnet for Pentecost

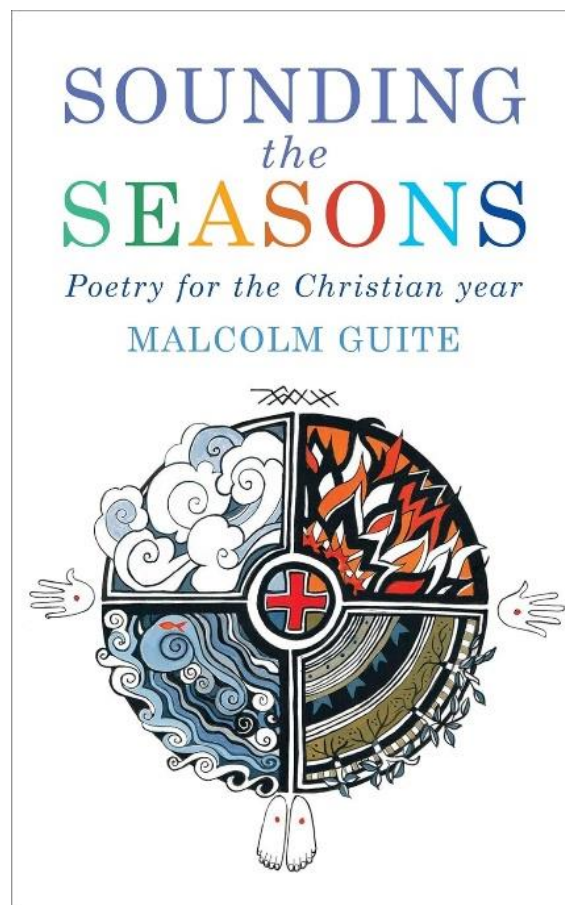
Today we feel the wind beneath our wings  
Today the hidden fountain flows and plays  
Today the church draws breath at last and sings  
As every flame becomes a Tongue of praise.

This is the feast of fire, air, and water  
Poured out and breathed and kindled into earth.  
The earth herself awakens to her maker  
And is translated out of death to birth.

The right words come today in their right order  
And every word spells freedom and release  
Today the gospel crosses every border  
All tongues are loosened by the Prince of Peace

Today the lost are found in His translation.  
Whose mother tongue is Love in every nation.

Malcolm Guite  
From *Sounding the Seasons*,  
published by Canterbury Press.  
Available [here](#):



## Agnostics Anonymous, 27 May 2025

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

John Barton, supported by John Kerr and Jen Brown. Reported by Gwen Bevington.

John is kindly making the text of his talk available, so this time I won't attempt a point-by-point summary. I want instead to give a flavour of surely one of AgAnon's liveliest-ever meetings in a whole series of lively meetings. It was greatly appreciated by those who attended.

Had I been addressing the subject, I would have made a lot of obvious, predictable comments and ended with, "Of course, we need all three." John drew deeply on his knowledge and experience of Judaism to offer us new perspectives and stimulating challenges, acknowledging insights from study of the sociology of religion.

The talk, and really the whole meeting, was informed by the opening illustration: the question, "What's the best fish and chip shop in Paris?" It's a question that can be answered, if you really press, in a sort of straightforward way – but that would bypass the glaring fact that the answer isn't worth having; that the very question reveals the questioner's ignorance of French cuisine and what Paris has to offer. Similarly, questions about what Jews believe, or how they think they will achieve salvation, reveal our non-understanding of Judaism – which isn't about believing or being saved, but much more about practice and belonging, being part of a tradition.

For this kind of reason, the centrality of "belief" for (some) Christians can be a problem for Jews. John went on later to wonder if Jews and (some) Anglicans could have significant areas in common. He identified three shared attitudes:

- 1) Religion is focused more on what you do than what you think.
- 2) Jews say that to understand Judaism you must be there when people worship – see the bodies, hear the singing.
- 3) Where lies authority? For Jews, certainly liberal Jews, no such authority really exists. Truth emerges from arguments. In the Catholic church, it's clear where authority lies. But for Anglicans? We have a very loose structure of authority as regards actions and beliefs, being held together by prayers and liturgies. Queen Elizabeth I (a significant architect of the CofE edifice) asked a lot in terms of religious *practice* (observable conduct); yet she denied any wish to "make windows" into people's inner thoughts.

This all, for me, sheds light on places I have come from (very low-church) and who I am now (a basic sort of Anglican). Sometimes old friends will ask me if so-and-so is "really a Christian". I tend to answer them in their own language; now I know what I can more truthfully say: that I no longer feel a need to make windows into other people's souls. I have shed that anxiety about what exactly people believe.

John wondered if you could have a religion that makes NO demand in terms of belief. Liberal Judaism is close to being such a religion. It's all about behaving and belonging.

Unsurprisingly, we had a stimulating Q&A session. An interesting point was that even in churches where acceptance of basic doctrines is expected, belief often follows belonging. In practice, people are attracted into the worship, and then decide to sign up to faith – however "incorrect" an order this may seem to some. Remember, Jews say that to understand the faith you have to be there when people worship.



My question followed from this. We had been thinking about “belief” in terms of “believing that”, ie accepting doctrine, rather than “trust in”. I wonder if the heart - or one possible heart - of both Judaism and Christianity is found in worship which stands in the historical tradition, affirms the goodness of God (and thus moral behaviour expected of humans), and uplifts the heart as the worshipper is made aware of God, of Something/Someone beyond. Those who take part in such worship may cherish many different “takes” on doctrine.

The question logically followed: is it a good thing to recite the Creed, or use it in question and answer form, in worship? The panel thought yes, because it puts us alongside all those with whom we stand. (And remember some organisations have a “basis of faith” which is much more difficult than anything in the Creed.)

We were glad that someone asked the crucial question: what about Love? In other words, is that the heart of Christianity, more than any of the B’s?\*

One of John's most intriguing observations was that Jews believe that keeping the Torah (631 commandments?) is hard and demanding, but possible. Some Jews see Christians as being set an impossibly high bar, inevitably falling short and constantly feeling guilty. Exploring that could be a topic for another Ag Anon in itself. (In fact, all sorts of questions pop up.) But is it salutary to consider that the two great commandments (recorded in all three synoptics) were taken by Jesus from the Torah. And they are all about love.

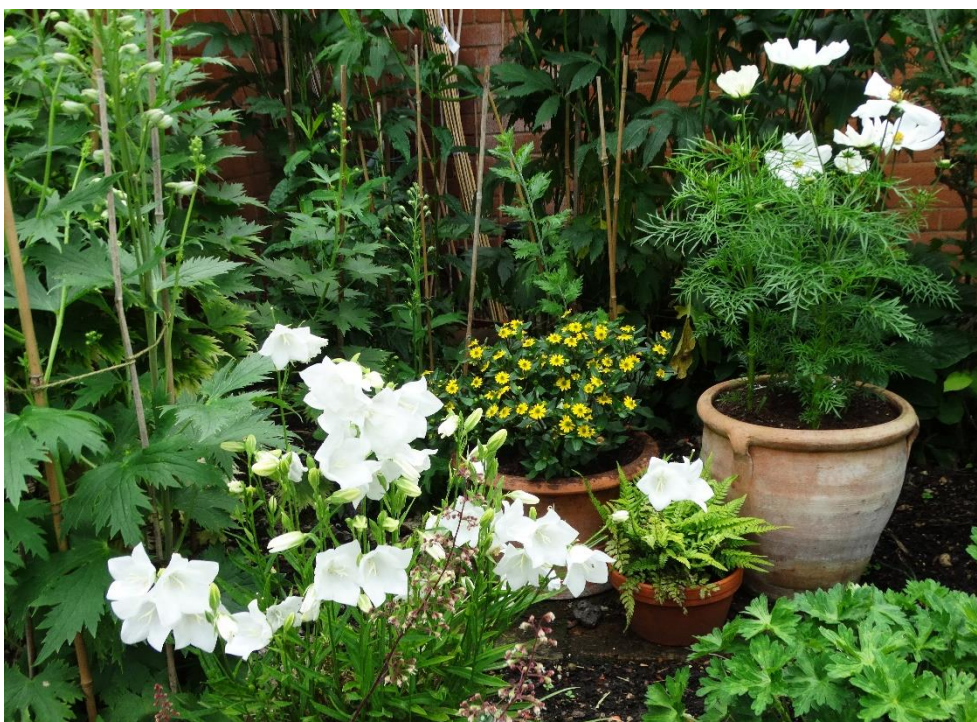
Deep Thinking To Be Continued...

---

.\* John Crook, a very wise Ch’an Buddhist master who died recently, left a collection of brief meditations, in one of which he describes an encounter with his own spiritual teacher, where he poured out a number of elevated thoughts and aspirations about enlightenment and so on. His master, he said, looked at him in silence for a long time, then sighed and said, “John, when were you last kind?”

Quoted in ‘Meeting God in Paul’ by Rowan Williams: page 78 RR

---



The Parish Centre Garden: photo David Bevington

## Dementia – turning understanding into action

*Pat Hudson*

Many thanks to Susan Williams secretary of Dementia Friendly Abingdon for talking to us about becoming “Dementia Friends”.

It is a sobering fact that currently 1 in 14 adults aged 65 + have some form of dementia so it is increasingly important that we create a dementia friendly community for our families, circles of friends, our parish, our town. Dementia can carry a negative image, as do other additional needs but as we value each and every human being as precious to God, we can promote a positive attitude which benefits everyone. We need to adjust our environment to be inclusive not expect the individual to change.

Dementia is associated with progressive memory loss, notably short-term memory and confusion. There can be loss of perception, heightened sensitivity to temperature, sound, smell and taste. However, as the person living with dementia loses their memory of events and facts, they never forget how people and situations have made them feel so kindness, patience and positive input to make people feel good are never wasted.

Key messages were:

- Dementia is not a natural part of ageing. A degree of forgetfulness is perfectly normal with age but it is important to seek a professional diagnosis initially via GP, if this impacts adversely on everyday life. The sooner the diagnosis, the sooner support can start. There are drug therapies. Practical support includes blue badge, attendance allowance, discounted council tax, a carers card with benefits, access to daycare and memory cafés.
- It is a disease of the brain – a helpful analogy is the Christmas fairy lights circuit where one (or more than one) bulb can flicker on and off. Other aspects of development are affected e.g. communication, word retrieval, language processing, understanding social situations, motor movement, sequencing, mobility, dressing, self-care, visual perception e.g. judging distances. People can change from being super active to super passive or become disinhibited and behave quite out of character.
- There are several types of dementia. Alzheimers being the most common but also including vascular, Lewy body, frontal temporal lobe and a form associated with Parkinsons. There is also early onset from as young as the twenties.
- It is possible to live well with dementia. No individual needs to be defined by their condition; there is far more to any human being than that.

The wobbly bookcase is another image which helps explain how memory works. If the earliest memories from childhood are like books stored on the bottom shelf, working up to the top shelf housing the most immediate e.g. ten minutes ago, if the bookcase shakes, it will be the top books (memories) that fall out first whereas the oldest remain secure so a person will remember something from many years ago but not what they had for breakfast.

So how do we welcome people living with any form of dementia and their carers into our parish?

- Be patient with mobility difficulties



- Be understanding that any form of anxiety creates a reliance on routine – people need to sit in the same seat, to do the same things in the same order.
- Do speak to them but don't use too many words or words that are too abstract or complex – literal language only, no jokes etc and do allow adequate processing time for brains that work slowly to grasp what you've said and reply.
- Stick to “here and now”, what is visible in front of you, the weather not the past or future. Comparisons and decisions are often too hard. Do you want this or that is safer and use visuals as much as possible.
- Match your body language to your words – look cheerful if you're saying something nice
- Reduce background distractions to aid focus.
- Join the person where their mind is especially if they're in the past.  
Above all, avoid preconceived ideas – if you've met one person with dementia, you've met one person with dementia. Each is unique.

For further information please visit: <https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/>

With approval from PCC, I would like to register our parish as a dementia friendly organization

---



The Parish Centre Garden: photo David Bevington

## Trinity Church: 150 years and counting!

*Rosalind Rutherford*

Sunday June 1<sup>st</sup> saw Trinity Church in Abingdon filled with present and past congregation members, and ecumenical friends from Abingdon, joining to celebrate 150 years of worship in this building.

The joyful service included memories of the past years, and tributes to some of those who had contributed significantly to the building of the new Methodist church in 1875, particularly John Creemer Clarke, who was well known in Abingdon, and whose children donated the window in the east of the church.



Prayers and messages from past ministers were shared, and the reading (1 Cor 13) and sermon both focused on the faith, hope and love at the centre of the life of Trinity and its congregations over the years.

Methodists are known for their hymn singing, and for the faith expressed through song, so hymns were a significant part of the service, and chosen to reflect what makes Trinity the community it is. We began singing a relatively new hymn “Let us build a house where love can dwell” with the chorus “All are welcome, in this place.” We recognised the years that Trinity has encouraged faith and prayer as we sang:

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,  
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,  
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided,  
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

And, of course, ended with a Wesley hymn: “And can it be”.

Then also in good Methodist tradition, we all went to the church hall to continue fellowship over sharing tea and an anniversary cake. (



The photographs of the cake topper and of Fr. Paul leaving a message in the visitors' book are courtesy of Alastair Fear



## Labyrinth Retreat Day at St Michael and All Angels

*10<sup>th</sup> May 2025 Reported by Sue Scott*

About 30 people came to this event which was led by Jim Bailey a member of the Northumbria Community. Jim declared that he had wanted to lead a retreat day at St Michael's since first hearing about our unique Labyrinth. The group was comprised both of people who had worked with Labyrinths before and those who were new to the experience.

The day allowed each of us to enjoy the sacred space of the Labyrinth and to find out about how Labyrinths had developed and are used as an aid to spiritual practice. There was also opportunity during the day to explore other Labyrinth designs and to create our own miniature examples if we wished.

At the beginning of the day Jim asked all of us in the group to share what we wanted to get out of the day. Answers were varied but all the responses had a common theme – to find a space in a busy world to just “be” and experience a closer walk with God. Amen to that.



## Dates for your Diary

Compiled by Eluned Hallas

# taizé Prayer

for Pentecost  
St Helen's Church  
Abingdon

Sunday 8th June  
At 5.30pm

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

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



ABINGDON  
PEACE  
GROUP

Online meeting open to all:

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 8.00 pm on Zoom

## From Tanks to Tearfund One Man's Journey Towards Peace

Speaker:  
David Couzens,  
Peacebuilding Lead  
at Tearfund



Tearfund is a Christian charity which partners with churches in more than 50 of the world's poorest countries to tackle poverty and injustice, often caused by armed conflict. David served in the British Army as a tank commander for 30 years, including two tours in Afghanistan. In 2013 he left the army and helped create Tearfund's peacebuilding focus, which helps people work together to prevent and respond to conflict.

For the Zoom link, email: [abingdonpeace@gmail.com](mailto:abingdonpeace@gmail.com)

For more info see <https://www.tearfund.org/>

Please complete David's survey here:



ALBERT PARK  
SINGERS

## SUMMER CONCERT

An evening of classical and  
pop choral favourites from  
Mozart to ABBA



FRIDAY 20 JUNE, 7.00PM  
ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH,  
PARK ROAD



Free entry and  
refreshments -  
Donations to  
Enrych Oxfordshire and  
St Michael's Church

[albertparksingers.wordpress.com](http://albertparksingers.wordpress.com)



St HELEN'S CHURCH

## AGNOSTICS ANONYMOUS

Meeting for Open Discussion

## Can Christianity combat the extinction crisis?

Led by Jennifer Brown,  
with John Kerr & John Barton

Tuesday 24th June 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



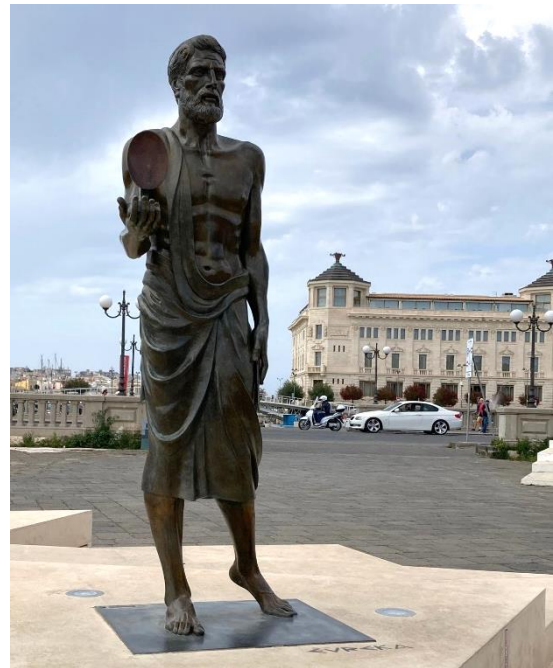
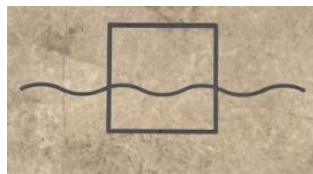
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"> <br/> <b>Cream Tea</b><br/>           St Michael &amp; All Angels' Church,<br/>           Park Road<br/> <br/> <b>Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June</b><br/> <b>2.30 – 4.30 pm</b><br/>           Tea/coffee with scone/cake £5<br/>           Proceeds to church funds<br/>           All welcome         </p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p style="text-align: center;">  <b>WANTAGE ACADEMY<br/>BRASS</b>  </p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>with CARITAS Children's Choir</b><br/><br/> <b>ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH</b><br/>           PARK ROAD ABINGDON OX14 1DS<br/> <b>SATURDAY 5 JULY 2025 at 7 pm</b><br/><br/>           ADULT TICKETS £12, CONCESSIONS £10, 16 &amp; UNDER FREE<br/>           Available from: <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/EUPN">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/EUPN</a> or at the door<br/>           Refreshments available<br/><br/> <b>RAISING FUNDS FOR THE ABINGDON BRIDGE, THE CHURCH AND<br/>TARIRO – HOPE FOR YOUTH IN ZIMBABWE</b><br/><br/>     </p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">  <b>Harmony InSpires</b>  </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Award winning ladies a cappella chorus presents</b><br/> <b>Summertime Harmony</b><br/> <b>With special guests, the South West's leading British Men's Barbershop Quartet</b><br/>  </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>St Michaels &amp; All Angels' Church</b><br/> <b>Park Road, Abingdon. OX14 1DS</b><br/> <b>Saturday 12th July 2025</b><br/> <b>5-7pm</b><br/> <b>Tickets £12, available in advance from</b><br/> <b><a href="https://www.trybooking.com/uk/EUWJ">https://www.trybooking.com/uk/EUWJ</a></b><br/> <b>or on the door on the day</b><br/> <b>Free Parking</b><br/> <b>Ticket proceeds to the church</b><br/> <b>Accompanied children under 16 free entry</b><br/> <b>Refreshments &amp; raffle proceeds to Harmony InSpires</b><br/> <b><a href="http://www.harmonyinspires.org">www.harmonyinspires.org</a></b><br/> <b>Kindly sponsored by</b><br/>  </p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> | <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>taizé Prayer</b><br/><br/> <u>St Helen's Church</u><br/> <u>Abingdon</u><br/> <b>Sunday 13th July</b><br/> <b>At 5.30pm</b><br/><br/>           A time of Prayer, Reflection and<br/>           Silence.<br/>           Using the music and pattern<br/>           of the Taizé Community<br/>  </p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |



## It's all Greek to me!

*Rob Rutherford*

1. Who is this? There is a clue at the bottom of the statue if you zoom in!
2. Where did he live?
3. When did he live? (see if you can get within 50 years without using Mr Google!)
4. What is he holding and why?
5. What is this image all about?



6. What shape is this? Why is it part of this quiz?



7. What did he say about this?

$\pi$

8. What other simple machines is he associated with?

## A Grey Day at the Seaside

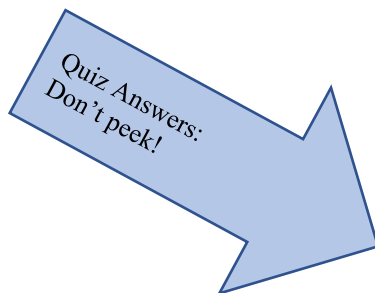
A grey day at the seaside  
The clouds are threatening rain  
But we aren't really bothered  
It's just good to be here again.

We paddle in the cold sea  
Then shiver on the sand  
The clouds are getting blacker  
It must be raining inland.

We pack up our belongings  
As the wind it starts to blow  
But do we want to go home  
The answer to that is "No".

It doesn't really matter  
That it's cold and rather damp  
We would rather be at the seaside  
But we are glad we no longer camp.

Eileen Duckett



- 
1. If you zoom in you might see the word Eureka. This is Archimedes!
  2. He lived in Syracuse on Sicily – then part of the Greek empire.
  3. Roughly 297-212 BC
  4. A focussing mirror which he reputedly used as a weapon of war – unlikely!
  5. I'm sure you know Archimedes' Principle: A body partly or totally immersed in a fluid experiences an upthrust equal to the weight of fluid displaced.
  6. If you think 'football' you are doing pretty well. It is known as a truncated icosahedron, one of the 'Archimedian' solids.
  7. Archimedes didn't calculate the exact value of pi but he argued from geometry that it must be between 22/7 and 223/71
  8. The lever, the archimedian screw for lifting water, the claw of Archimedes etc!

## Useful Weblinks:

Services: for the latest news see the Parish Website:

<https://abingdonparish.org.uk>

for Church of England links: services, daily readings etc

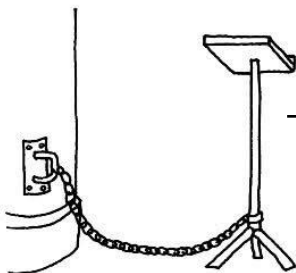
<https://www.churchofengland.org/>

**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.

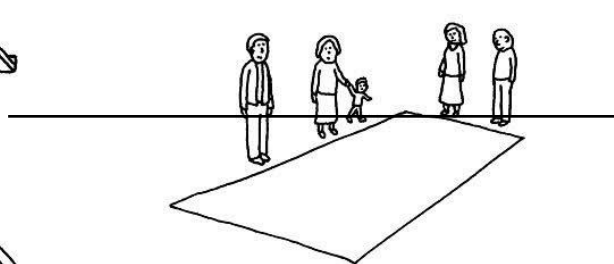
Finally, from Dave Walker:

## SACRED ITEMS

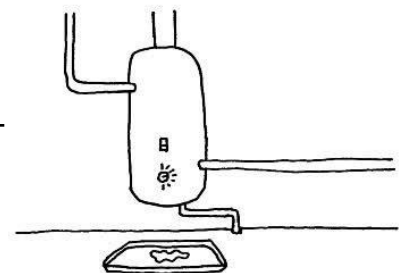
INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE



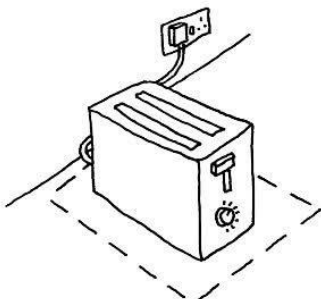
PLEASE DO NOT MOVE  
THE PORTABLE LECTERN



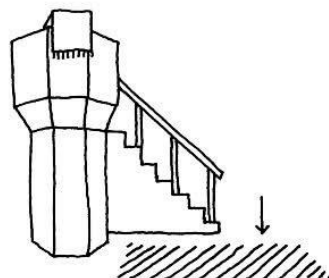
WALKING ON THE NEW  
CARPET IS FORBIDDEN



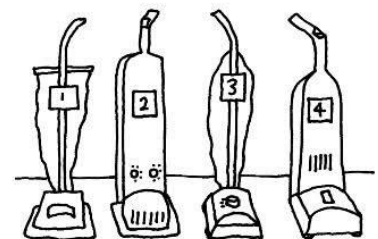
LEAVE THIS TRAY UNDER THE  
BOILER TO CATCH DRIPS



THE CHURCH KITCHEN TOASTER  
MUST REMAIN WITHIN THESE LINES



THE NATIVITY CAN ONLY BE  
PLACED IN THIS SPOT



THIS IS HOW WE PARK  
THE VACUUM CLEANERS

CartoonChurch.com

**Thanks** to all contributors and to you, the readers.

The next issue will be published on July 13<sup>th</sup> - ideas and contributions to [Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk](mailto:Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk)