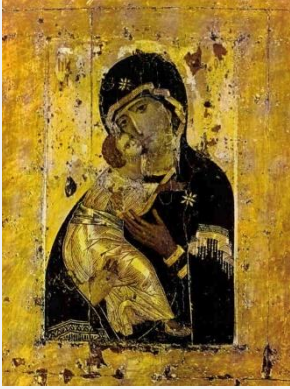


Issue 8:
October 2025



A candle in...

THE

WINDOW

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

Thank you Fr. Paul and Good Wishes



Picture taken at the farewell lunch for Charles Miller by David Bevington

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On Becoming Rector

It feels a bit strange to be writing an article introducing myself to a parish where I have served for six years now! But it does make a certain sense, as I will be taking on a new role within the parish when I am inducted as Rector on 21st October.

Although leadership is part of the ministry of every priest, it is perhaps a more prominent part of the role of Rector. My own style of leadership is collaborative. I like to work with others, and I value the experience and insights that others can provide. I hope that as we move forward together as a parish, people will feel able to share with me their own hopes and ideas for the parish and their congregations. That said, we have to be realistic – not every idea can be acted upon, and there will inevitably times when I, with Wardens, DCCs, and PCCs, have to take decisions that don't please everyone. But I do hope that we'll keep open lines of communication and work together to serve God, one another, and the wider community of our parish. And I trust that we'll have plenty of opportunities to share fellowship together and to have fun.



Many of you will know that the Eucharist is at the heart of my vocation. As important as the Eucharist is to my spirituality and vocation, I also value the non-Eucharistic services that we have in the parish. I'm passionate about the importance of preaching, and helping people to discover their own vocations and ministries, whether that's in church through reading, leading intercessions, or serving, or in more behind-the-scenes roles, such as hospitality, being on DCC or PCC, or serving God through serving the community in paid or volunteer work. I'm looking forward to growing different ministries across the parish, including our work on creation care and Eco-Church.

Finally, as Rector, I'll be moving from being in the parish part-time to full-time. This will give me more opportunity to get to know members of all three congregations better, and it is this that I am looking forward to the most!

Jen Brown
Rector Designate

Welcome to our Archbishop Designate

Rosalind Rutherford

Sometimes it is not until something actually happens that we realise how much it matters. Which was my feeling on Friday 3rd October, when I discovered that the current Bishop of London, Bishop Sarah Mullally, had been nominated as the next Archbishop of Canterbury. It was good to realise that the new archbishop has proven skills in leading a fractious church with grace, dignity and pastoral compassion. I realised later that my real joy was that being a woman had not prevented the Committee from choosing her. In wording Sarah Mullally has used: she will be an archbishop who happens to be a woman. It was not just long-time campaigners in England who were filled with joy: in Kenya Bishop Emily Onyango, called the news "a new dawn".



In her first address, Bishop Sarah said: "Today I give thanks for all the women and men – lay and ordained; deacons, priests and bishops – who have paved the way for this moment... I will not always get things right. But I am encouraged by the psalmist's words 'the Lord holds you fast by the hand.'...Held fast by the Lord's hand, please pray for me as I will pray for you." She will need our prayers during the coming months and years, as will Jen, so let us offer them wholeheartedly.

The Apocrypha

John Barton

Which book of the Bible is the name of a number of pubs in our region? Answer: *Bel and the Dragon*. It's found in Cookham, Wendover, Reading, Kingsclere, to mention just a few. But not many people read the book. The dragon in question is being worshipped as a god by some Babylonians (all-purpose villains in the Bible) but Daniel (remember him?) secretly feeds it a mixture of pitch, fat, and hair. The dragon explodes. So much for Babylonian religion!

This tale is never read in church, and it's surely 'apocryphal', as we call such tall stories. But it's also apocryphal in a literal sense, because it's to be found in neither the Old nor the New Testament but in the collection of extra books that are printed between them, in some Bibles but not in others. In the Church of England and most other Protestant churches, this collection is usually called the Apocrypha. Its most important books are Sirach (aka Ecclesiasticus, *not* the same as Ecclesiastes), Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, Judith, Baruch, the books of Maccabees, and some additions to Esther and Daniel. The additions to Daniel include a hymn still used at morning prayer in Prayer Book worship, the Benedicite ('O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord'); also the story of Susannah, the first detective story; and Bel and the Dragon.

Since the Reformation, in the sixteenth century, Protestants have regarded the Apocrypha as outside the Bible and having no authority over faith or behaviour, whereas Catholics (and the Orthodox, such as members of the Greek and Russian churches) treat them as fully part of the Old Testament. If you buy a Catholic Bible for example the *Jerusalem Bible*, you'll find the books of the Apocrypha incorporated into the Old Testament. Books of stories or history, such as Tobit and Judith, stand next to Kings and Chronicles; books of wisdom and advice, such as the Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach, next to Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Catholics nowadays don't use the term Apocrypha but do sometimes call these books 'deuterocanonical', meaning they theoretically belong to a second level in the canon (official list) of the books of the Bible—*deuteros* is Greek for 'second', as in Deuteronomy, the 'second version of the law'. But this doesn't make any practical difference. In Catholicism these books are treated in just the same way as the other biblical books.

Anglicans, as so often, can't quite make up their minds. The Church of England's *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion* say that 'the other Books (as *Hierome* saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine.' This encourages us to read the Apocrypha ('the other books'), not to reject it, while making it less important than it is for Catholics. The Book of Common Prayer made readings from the Apocrypha compulsory at Morning and Evening Prayer. In the twentieth century some Evangelicals in the Church of England adopted the more hard-line Protestant opposition to the Apocrypha. But a compromise was reached. The lectionary still includes readings from the Apocrypha, but there is always an alternative from the 'real' Bible.

So is the Apocrypha 'biblical' or not? Christians disagree, and in the case of Anglicans the disagreement exists even inside a single denomination. You might think that the question of exactly which books are part of the Bible is important enough to be discussed a lot in dialogue between the churches. But it isn't. It's seen as a marginal issue nowadays, and we've mostly agreed to differ. I find this extraordinary, but I don't foresee a change. Indeed I recently gave a talk called 'Is the Apocrypha important? A question no one is asking'. And (almost) no one is.

Some quick points about the Apocrypha:

- All the books are Jewish in origin, none is by a Christian author.
- All are pre-Christian, but written later than most of the Old Testament. They come from the last two or three centuries BC. The Wisdom of Solomon, indeed, was written not long before the birth of Jesus.
- So if we want to know what Jews believed and how they lived in Jesus' day, the Apocrypha sometimes tells us more than the Old Testament, which reflects more ancient times.
- Most of the books were written in Hebrew, like the Old Testament, but by the time of Jesus they were mostly known only in Greek translations, used by Jews living in countries where Greek was the daily language, such as Egypt. Bits of the original Hebrew texts have now been discovered.
- The Apocrypha has no authority in Judaism. Oddly, these Jewish books have had more prestige for Christians than for Jews.
- Until the Reformation virtually all Christians regarded these books as part of the Old Testament, and as fully authoritative. The case for excluding them is (I think) very hard to make.

The Apocrypha crops up in unexpected places. George Eliot makes Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) a favourite of Adam Bede's in the novel of that name, while most of us have probably heard the passage that begins 'Let us now praise famous men' (Sirach 44) read at a memorial service. Some people will know the play *Tobias and the Angel*, based on Tobit. And it's Daniel's role as a detective and lawyer in Susannah that is referred to in *The Merchant of Venice* when Shylock calls Portia 'a Daniel come to judgement'.

Christian liturgy sometimes draws on the Apocrypha. At Christmas we may hear the ancient anthem *dum medium silentium*: 'While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, thy almighty Word, O Lord, came down from heaven from thy royal throne', from Wisdom of Solomon 18:14-15 - though check out what it referred to in its original context! Finally, some of us will remember that our churchwarden David Pope marked a significant birthday by performing Thomas Tallis's 40-part motet *Spem in alium*, in an arrangement for 40 countertenors. The text is from Judith 9:

I have never put my hope in any other
but in thee, God of Israel,
who canst show both wrath and graciousness,
and who absolvest all the sins
of man in suffering.

Lord God,
creator of heaven and earth.
look upon our humility.

Faith Forum: 28th September 2025 on Prayer

Margaret B. Adam

I'll talk about prayer for a bit, and then about how to pray.

Prayer is difficult. Most people struggle with prayer, at some points or always. It is not necessary to resolve problems about prayer before praying. Prayer can be a **conversation** with God, sharing with God what is on the heart of the one sharing. Prayer can be an opportunity to be present, honest, and receptive. Prayer can **reorient and reorder** oneself or community toward God. Prayer isn't supposed to 'work', if by work we mean accomplish what we want promptly. Prayer is not a transaction, but a humble request. **God does listen to prayer.** An apparent silence from God does not mean that the prayer wasn't heard. In fact, prayer can be the practice of trying to listen to silence. Prayer comes in **all shapes and sizes**: silent, cleared mind, wordy, private, corporate, already written, extemporaneous, while kneeling, standing, sitting, running, or showering. However one prays, setting aside time for prayer is one way to be sure it happens. Sometimes, it seems that we cannot pray at all. At those times, prayer can be complaint or anger, or simply: 'I cannot pray'. God will hear, prayer will be come possible again.

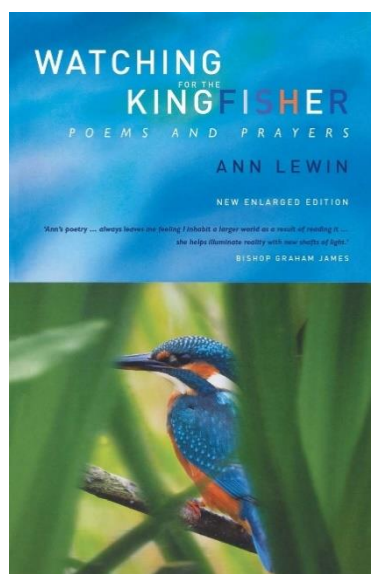
How to Pray

The place to start is the prayer Jesus taught his followers to pray - the prayer Jesus teaches us to pray, **The Lord's Prayer**. Another ancient, much used prayer is the **Jesus Prayer**: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*

Pope Francis recommended a **Five Finger Prayer**: one finger each for those closest, those who teach, leaders, the neediest, and oneself. Another **5 Finger Prayer** identifies: Praise, Thanksgiving, Confession, Intercessions, and Personal Petitions. **The Psalms** are full of all sorts of prayers, to be read as one's own prayers or used as outlines for one's own details.

Explore the prayers in Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer. Try out the Psalms. Sing some hymns of praise; read about some saints who prayed and struggled with prayer; sit in silence; pray with others; open your heart.

A poem about Prayer taken from Ann Lewin's book:



Prayer is like watching for
The kingfisher. All you can do is
Be there where he is like to appear, and
Wait.
Often nothing much happens;
There is space, silence and
Expectancy.
No visible signs, only the
Knowledge that he's been there
And may come again.
Seeing or not seeing cease to matter,
You have been prepared.
But when you've almost stopped
Expecting it, a flash of brightness
Gives encouragement.

Licenced lay Ministry

Linda Hobbs

Following my Licencing on the 1st of November 2025 I anticipate my ministry within the Parish will be one of continued support for Ordained Ministry, whilst also maintaining and increasing my current ministry roles within St Helens and continuing to serve the Parish in any way required.

I feel privileged to have been able to complete training as a Licensed Lay Minister with continued support and encouragement from Ordained and Lay Ministers and our three congregations. For the coming year my training will encompass required modules and specific areas of interest,



I anticipate opportunities will present themselves to preach regularly in all three churches, I have a love of preaching and hope experience will enable me to grow, learn and improve! I believe involvement with all our churches is important, it can be easy to feel exclusively attached to the church you regularly worship in; as I see my ministry being within the whole of the Parish, I hope to avoid this.

Within the Parish, the retirement of Father Paul will inevitably give rise to areas of ministry which require additional support, such as services of Communion by Extension at Bridge House and Station House; following discussion, I now anticipate being able to offer cover for this important ministry as these services can be lay led.

In October, I begin a course in Funeral Ministry with the Diocese, an area of ministry I feel called to explore, I would anticipate this will be of future value within the Parish.

I believe all churches should focus on welcoming families and young people. To support this goal, next year I will begin a course in Family Ministry, anticipating that within St. Helens I will gain experience with Junior Church and Quest, which are areas of involvement that are new to me. I recognise that I will depend on our youth leaders for guidance and support.

After recent surgery, I plan to resume Chaplaincy at John Radcliff Hospital in November. Inspired by my placement training, I will support this ministry with additional Diocesan training in 2026.

I have a particular interest in several other areas of ministry, including funeral care and ministry, marriage preparation, pastoral care, welcome, and hospitality. I am committed to continuing my exploration and growth within these and new areas of ministry, as ministerial opportunities arise. The Oxford Diocese requires all ministers, both Lay and Ordained, to complete Continued Ministerial Development training. After completing all required modules, I intend to continue regular training with the aim of supporting the Parish as a whole.

The Fellowship of St Birinus

Susan Worthington

The Fellowship of St Birinus was awarded to Sue Pemberton at a beautiful service of Evensong held at Dorchester Abbey on Sunday 14th September. The Fellowship was founded by the Bishop of Dorchester to honour church members who have given exceptional service in one way or another to their church and community over a number of years. Sue was presented with a certificate and pin lapel badge by Bishop Gavin for her longstanding and faithful commitment to the children's work, and to the DCC, at St Helen's Church. She was accompanied by our Rector-designate Jen Brown, and myself; and along with the other 12 or so nominees - from the four corners of the Diocese of Oxford - their supporters, members of the clergy and the Abbey choir, we enjoyed a wonderful afternoon tea which preceded the service and presentation. On what was a very Autumnal afternoon, Dorchester Abbey provided a warm and light-filled refuge as it has done down the centuries for its pilgrims.

St Birinus was the 'apostle' of Wessex who baptised King Cynegils at Dorchester in 635. He was the first Bishop of Wessex with his see at Dorchester and then at Winchester. St Birinus was the first Bishop of Dorchester - Bishop Gavin is, of course, the latest. Sue joins other members of the Parish who are recipients of the Fellowship of St Birinus: Susan Scott, Steve Thomas, Gwyneth Lewis, Colin Sanderson, Geoffrey Currey and Eluned Hallas.

St Birinus himself is immortalised in a stone carving on a pillar facing the West end of the nave in St Helen's [it is actually a memorial to Deacon Sydney M.W. Brooks who travelled from Abingdon to North China where he died as a Martyr in 1899 aged 25 years.]



Agnostics Anonymous: Why would a good God create through evolution's violence and waste?

Bethany Sollereder 'summarised' by Rob Rutherford

Bethany Sollereder is an Associate Professor in Science and Religion at the University of Oxford and Wills Tutor in Theology at Harris Manchester College.

As I listened to this very interesting talk I wondered if it was easier for a physicist than for a biologist to believe in God. A physicist can see the grandeur of the Universe and appreciate the beauty in its 'laws'. A biologist, as was pointed out, hears the screams of an animal caught by a predator, and sees the ugliness in the way a wasp lays its eggs in a tent caterpillar so that its larvae can feed on the 'living' animal. Then there is the havoc created by accidental happenstance – earthquakes, hurricanes, pandemics and the like. One agnostic questioner, whilst impressed by the scale of the Universe, talked of the insignificance of human beings in the middle of this immensity – why should God be interested in us? The fact that we are the most complex and interesting form of matter in the Universe didn't seem to persuade him - why should we matter to God and why did God choose this way of doing things? How do our beliefs hold up when faced with the destruction within the natural world – that was at the heart of this Agnostics Anonymous talk.

Evolution may have resulted in thinking, self-conscious beings like ourselves but there has been a lot of death and destruction along the way. We have to ask "is it all worth it?"

Bethany outlined possible approaches:

One is to embrace denial in various ways – we could, for example, deny the existence of God. Or we can deny evolution – it just didn't happen like that. Some Christians adopt this position– but surely we have to agree that science can reveal God's truth and that we can harmonise our science and our belief. Another aspect of denial is that we could deny that animals suffer – this might be true of simple creatures but surely not of the higher mammals.

Another approach is to blame the 'Fall' - all the wrong in the world was caused by human sin. God did not intend for it to be like this. We can surely acknowledge our responsibility for some of the mess. There is no doubt that we are responsible for moral evil but natural evil poses a different challenge. We can read Genesis without giving it the status of a scientific text book and see the 'fall' in a more abstract way but there is still a problem of chronology. Surely there was suffering before human beings came on to the scene. Some theologians blame the devil and see the workings of the world as a battle between the forces of good and evil. But... the unspoken question was: do *we* believe in a devil? (we didn't take a vote). Yet another approach to this is to claim that you cannot have life without shadow and that in all creation there is some sort of "fallen-ness". What links these views is the belief that none of this pain and destruction was intended by God.

The challenge is this: can we find a theology that accepts that evolution is the way that God chose to create? Perhaps God set up the rules and then left the Universe to see what the interplay between rules and chance could bring about. Admittedly the role of chance does give freedom to the natural world to innovate and to explore the landscape of possibility and if we believe that God is bound by the logic of love, then love is inherently freedom-giving, even if this involves pain. It has resulted in the wonderful variety of animals and plants and we even feel awe in the presence of all this natural beauty. Even Richard Dawkins feels awed by the natural world without accepting the idea of a designer with a purpose. It does make us uneasy though, to think that God didn't care how it turned out.

Bethany quoted from the film 'Shrek' to illustrate how a spectator God could legitimately be criticised. In the story, Lord Farquaad, an arrogant ruler, calls a tournament to decide which of his knights should be sent to rescue Princess Fiona imprisoned in the tower (for the Lord wants to marry her but does not want the inconvenience of having to rescue her himself!). He announces to the assembled throng "Some of you may die, but that is a sacrifice I am willing to make".

As Christian believers - can we say that we need the 'bad' to give us the 'good'? We can find some helpful arguments – the plate tectonics that cause earthquakes are caused by the mobile interior of the Earth. This same mobility generates the magnetic field that protects Earth from harmful cosmic rays. Pain is necessary protection. If you could not feel pain, you would be at greater harm - from burns for example. The explosions of stars (hazardous to any life nearby) are needed to spread the elements needed for life. The fleetness and agility of the antelope is brought about by the sharp teeth of its predator. In the *Origin of Species* Darwin writes in his concluding remarks about the evolutionary vision: *“There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.”*

So, can we have the good without the bad? To pick up an image used elsewhere in this issue, can we have the beauty of the kingfisher without the death of the fish?

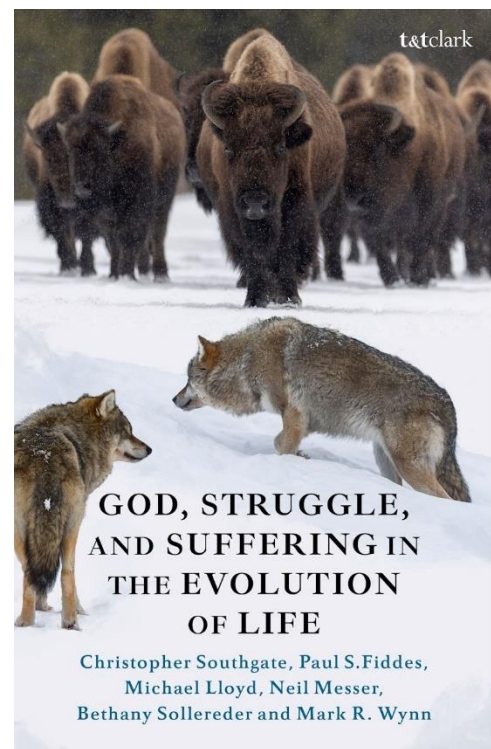
Bethany suggested that to make sense of this, we need to see the cross at the centre of creation. God isn't a 'spectator God' who stands back but a God who, in the incarnation, suffered and experienced all that the world could throw at him. Through this suffering came redemption. Creation is somehow cruciform and the whole of nature tells a story which parallels the cross and resurrection. Nature is redeemed from within and on the cross, Christ takes up the suffering of all creation. So perhaps if God suffers pain in some way, it might make our suffering bearable although this idea is not shared by all theologians.

Here are some questions that are connected to this discussion:

1. If we lived for ever, would we do anything worthwhile?
2. If God intervened every time something went wrong, would we ever take responsibility for our actions?
3. Even though our lives have had ups and downs, is 'living' a good thing?
4. If the universe necessarily involves suffering, was it selfish of God to make the world?
5. How can we help to relieve the suffering in the world?

There is much to think about!

Bethany and 5 others have recently published a book:
If you would like to explore these ideas further,
the book is available as an open-access pdf [here](#):



Fr Paul's last service at St Michael's 9th October 2025 to mark his retirement and 25 yrs of ordained ministry

On the Eve of the Feast of St Paulinus, St Michael's Church was full of family, friends and colleagues of Fr Paul who had gathered to give thanks for his 25 years of ordained ministry and wish him well in his retirement. The preacher, Fr Patrick Taylor, was a fellow student at Cuddesdon theological college, and he explained that 'Paulinus' is a nickname for Paul, dating from his early days at theological college. You may have noticed that when Paul finishes a painting, he signs it 'Paulinus'.

St Paulinus, was an early Christian evangelist and the first Bishop of York. Patrick talked about St Paulinus, who arrived in England in 601, as a 'good companion' as well as a missionary. He was sent to accompany Æthelburg, sister of the Kentish King, to Northumbria to marry King Edwin. He eventually persuaded Edwin to be baptised. According to tradition, one of the women Paulinus baptised was a future saint, Hilda of Whitby. Thus, the foundations of the northern province were laid. One of Paul's great gifts to us and many others is being a good companion 'one who breaks bread with another', (from Latin *com-* 'together with' + *panis* 'bread') both for him and for the Parish. The anthem, accompanied by Glynne Butt on the piano and conducted by the organist Graham Howell, was John Rutter's setting of 'For the Beauty of the Earth'.

We wish Fr Paul well and hope that he finds more good companions when he moves from Abingdon.



After the service, refreshments were served and conversations had. Speeches thanking Paul for his ministry were made and Paul was presented with a large sum of money – a gift from congregants in all three churches of the Parish. Finally, Eileen Duckett read, and the assembled throng greatly enjoyed, her poem:

A Sad Farewell

Eileen Duckett

It's a sad farewell, dear Vicar
We will miss you it has to be said.
For you no early mornings on Sundays
You can have an extra hour in bed.

You can now watch all of Strictly
On an autumn Saturday night
As you don't need to prepare for Sunday
With yet another sermon to write.

There will be no more meetings in the evening
DCC and PCC to name a few
And no more members of your congregations
On the phone for an hour or two. (That's usually me!)

We will miss you at the market on Mondays
And the stall holders will miss you as well.
There was always lots of friendly banter
Between you as their wares they sell.

We wish you a happy retirement
With a lot less problems and cares.
You can spend more time on your hobby
And paint lots of birds and hares.

So it's a sad farewell, dear Vicar
We will miss you as I've already said
But we are glad you are leaving for retirement
And not because you are dead.



Goodbye
Paul, enjoy
your
retirement.

Robin's Ride for Camp Mohawk!



Oyez Oyez Oyez

*My Lords, Ladies and Cyclists
Welcome on this special Saturday
As with his brace of kids, Mr Robin Day
Will on their weird and trusty steed be on their way
To reach RAF Benson, without delay.*

*Their resolve to collect many groats they ask
For this wonderful charity, Camp Mohawk, is their task*

*With the Grace of God, go forth I pray
To complete this task on your special day.*



Photo:
David Bevington

I would like to tell you all the reasons I did this ride.

I did it as a big, big thank you to the managers and staff of Camp Mohawk who helped me from my early struggling days as a single dad with my 3 children Michael Andrew and Helena.

My wife Katrina died of a fast acting cancer and destroyed me. I had a busy MOT car, motorcycle and van repairs garage with 8 people working for me. I had built this garage up over numerous years, my wife died when Andrew and Helena were very young and my garage took second place. My family came number one to me and I dissolved my busy business as I couldn't do both. I had to go into a life that was new to me - caring for my family on my own with the occasional help of carers My late mum Dorothy helped me with finance.

I heard of Camp Mohawk and took my family there in 2018 on my own with 3 children. On going into the gate, I was told by Kate and Matthew "We will put this carer to Michael, this one to Andrew and this one to Helena". I said "What should I do?" and they said "Go and have a coffee - you deserve it". I did - and then went to see each of my family being very well cared for. We went back regularly and I knew I was in a very safe place with my children.

It's a beautiful place for special needs children and their families. It's in a lovely wooded area above the village of Wargrave near Henley on Thames with a fence all around it. It has inside rooms for children, a ball pool, music room, sensory room, a 'making' room and lovely outside play areas with walks, an outside swimming pool and picnic places. My family love it and we have gone back several times a year. It has helped my family and many others over the years. However it now has financial hardship, having lost some grants. They are having to cut back on open-days and special events like firework-night.

So this is why I did the cycle ride to pay them back for all the happy years they have given me and my family. I had the idea of cycling with my children from Abingdon to Camp Mohawk but it was quite lengthy with fast roads with no footpaths so I decided on a shorter route from old RAF Abingdon (Dalton Barracks) to RAF Benson, it being half way to Camp Mohawk.

I obtained a special tandem and tag-along at the back from 'Charlottes Tandems' and got it from Reading Berkshire. They loaned the bike for our ride and helped me by delivering it and taking back. It is 12 feet long! The masons helped me along the route with water stops and rattled buckets along the way. Davina from Camp Mohawk helped us with the organisation. (She is an amazing woman, part of the money raising team there. She has a young disabled son and I take my hat off to her.)

We also had help from Mark and Melanie from Abingdon Freewheeling cycle club and they wonderfully escorted our ride, even helping by walking with the children on busy roads. David Bevington cycled to Dalton Barracks alongside us and we cycled into Abingdon town Centre and parked up by the old NatWest Bank. I had arranged for one of Abingdon's Town criers - Laury Conn - to meet us there. Andrew and Helena met their older brother Michael and some of our friends. The town Mayor saw us off and then we cycled over the bridge.

We cycled along the Culham road with a 40/50mph tail wind that helped us and had a few short stops and went to the H cafe for a bacon butty. As an ex-biker I hoped that this would be a good money bucket rattling spot. Sadly, only 10 hardened bikers were there and we raised little. We went through Dorchester and onto the busy road and walked, pedalled and even crawled along to the Waterfront café. There to Benson church and on around to RAF Benson main gate. We met the guard and took photos by the Spitfire and John and his wife picked up the tandem. Gwen Bevington took us home

It was a lovely day and we met so many good friendly people on the way. Thank you again to everyone who helped us that day including Jeanette who helped us gather sponsorship and to all that gave. Thanks too, to the Abingdon town mayor Rawda Jehanli. She and her office were brilliant to us! We raised £2500.

Best wishes to you all, Robin Day, caretaker at St Helen's

More details of Camp Mohawk can be found here:
<https://www.campmohawk.org.uk/>

Comings and Goings – in Literature, Music & Science

The team!

1. Which mainline station is the venue for a famous ursine arrival?
2. In which Shakespeare play does the stage direction appear: 'Exit, pursued by a bear'?
3. Who arrive '...all hopping through the frothy waves / And scrambling to the shore'?
4. Who emerges from the sea in a shell and lands near Pafos, (Paphos) Cyprus?
5. Whose arrival is celebrated in Handel's oratorio, 'Solomon'?
6. When is it predicted that we see Halley's Comet again?
7. What coming and going might be observed in a hygrometer weather house?
8. Which small birds annually migrate between the Arctic Circle and the Antarctic Circle – possibly the longest known migratory round trip of over 30,000 kilometres?
9. Which of Shakespeare's characters vanished 'into the air... melted as breath into the wind'?
10. Who sang 'I don't know why you say, "Goodbye", I say, "Hello, hello, hello"'
11. Who 'arrived in London on Saturday, the twenty-first day of December, when it was really Friday, the twentieth, the seventy-ninth day only from his departure'?
12. Who 'Just blew in from the windy city'?
13. "George said: "Let's go up the river." He said we should have fresh air, exercise and quiet; the constant change of scene would occupy our minds (including what there was of Harris's); and the hard work would give us a good appetite, and make us sleep well." How many were where?
14. Which majestic centre of worship 'stood and (you) watched as my baby left town'?
15. Where does the train from Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ go?
16. Who went visiting and got into a tight place?
17. Which man made object is furthest away from us now?
18. 'There must be 50 ways to leave'?
19. Who "Came, saw, conquered"
20. Who said 'So long and thanks for all the fish'?

Events October and November 2025

Compiled by Louise Heffernan

The Licensing of Revd Dr Jennifer Brown as Team Rector

21st October at 7pm at St Helen's Church

All welcome

The Licensing of Linda Hobbs as a Lay Minister in the Diocese of Oxford 1st November at 11.00am in Christchurch Cathedral

Following the service, Linda invites you to join her and her family for lunch in the parish centre. Please email to confirm (lindahobbs1954@gmail.com) and please keep her in your prayers.



*Music at St Helen's Church
Abingdon*

Saturday 25th October 7:15pm
St Helen's Church, Abingdon OX14 5BS

HAYDN

THE CREATION

The Inauguration Choir & Orchestra

Soloists: Sara Stowe, Peter Willis, Will Orr
Leader: Tom Gregory-Smith
Conductor: Sally Mears

Tickets £15 (accompanied under 16s free), on the door, from The Bookstore, Abingdon, or from the QR Code:




St HELEN'S CHURCH

AGNOSTICS ANONYMOUS

Meeting for Open Discussion

"Why do Christians bother with the Old Testament?"

Led by John Barton with Jennifer Brown & Bethany Sollereder

Tuesday 28th Oct 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

Faith Forum

Lectio Divina and Meditation on the Scriptures,

A talk by Sr Lizzie Ruth, CSMV, as part of a series on personal spirituality.

Sunday 26th October

12.45pm at the Parish Centre preceded by lunch at 12.20pm



The Pavlova Wind Quintet together with Glynne Butt (piano),

**Sunday 9 November at 3 pm
Performing at St Michael's Church**

An exciting programme which will include
the famous

Mozart Quintet for Piano and Winds.

Tickets £12, Accompanied children under
16 free. Available by card/cash at the door
or from <https://w.trybooking.com/uk/FFRF>



The Year of Matthew

At Advent 2025 the lectionary cycles back to the 'Year of Matthew'.

You may want to revisit the article by John Barton about the Gospel of St Matthew in the November 2022 edition of this magazine. Found here: https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_window2022.html

The book group that meets under the name 'Desiring Life', with members across the Parish, is studying "Meeting God in Matthew" by Elaine Storkey. The next meeting will be on 21st October in the Parish Centre to discuss pages 23 to 34.

Just turn up or email candle@abingdonparish.org.uk for more info.

Subsequent dates will be: 4 Nov and fortnightly.

Quiz Answers:
Don't peek!

1. Paddington
2. 'The Winter's Tale'
3. The oysters from 'The Walrus and the Carpenter' by Lewis Carroll
4. Venus or Aphrodite
5. The Queen of Sheba
6. 2061
7. In dry weather, the woman appears; in damp weather, the man comes to the door.
8. Arctic terns
9. The weird sisters (witches) from 'Macbeth'
10. The Beatles
11. 'Philias Fogs: 'Around the World in Eighty Days' by Jules Verne
12. Calamity Jane (Doris Day) (Calamity Jane – musical)
13. Three men in a boat. Four if you include Montmorency!
14. Winchester Cathedral (song of same name)
15. Hogwarts School (Harry Potter)
16. Winnie the Pooh (Winnie the Pooh)
17. Voyager 1 (launched 5 September 1977)
18. Your lover (50 Ways to leave your lover, Paul Simon song)
19. Veni, vidi, vici, attributed to Julius Caesar around 47 BCE to describe his swift, decisive victory in a short war against Pharnaces II of Pontus at the Battle of Zela.
20. The dolphins when they left Earth just before it was demolished to make way for a hyperspace bypass. (Douglas Adams)



A presentation to Fr. Paul at the celebration tea at St Michael's. Photo Roger Cox

Useful Weblinks:

Services: for the latest news see the Parish Website:

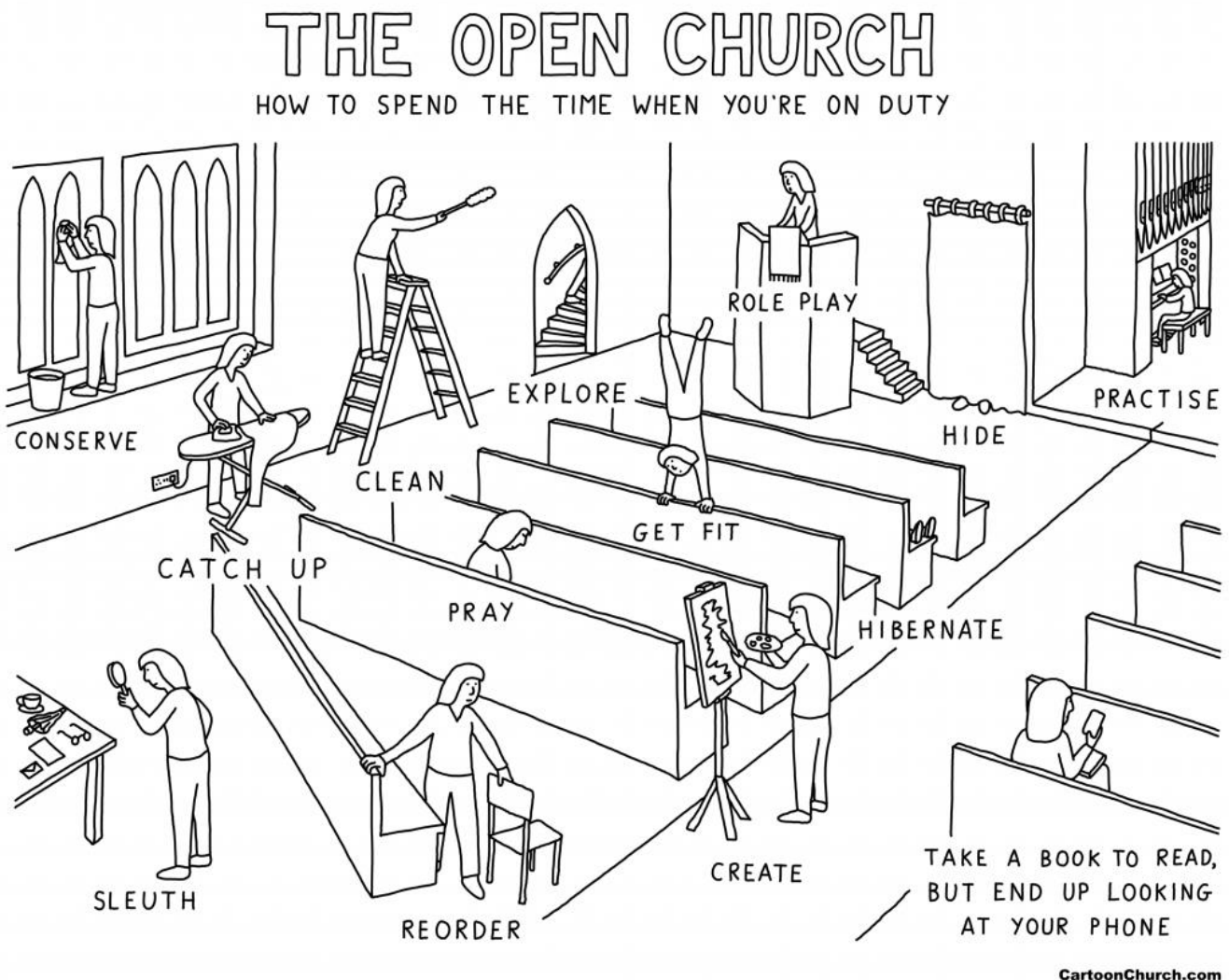
<https://abingdonparish.org.uk>

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:



Thanks to all contributors and to you, the readers.

The next issue will be published on November 9th - ideas and contributions to

Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk