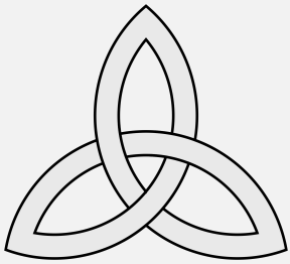


Issue 8:
October 2026



The triquetra: a
symbol of the trinity

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A candle in...

THE

WINDOW

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



These beautiful flowers are on display, free of charge, outside the Parish Centre. Their full name is *Biden ferulifolia* and the variety is 'Bee Alive'. which seems very suitable for our wildlife friendly garden.
Flowers: thanks to Anne Faulkner. Photo: Rob Rutherford

Inside:

The Goodness of Creation
Sustainability and computers
Why I like Norway...
A lot of events
Pictures from David Bevington, Rob Rutherford and
Chris Brown
A Poem from Eileen Duckett
and, of course, a puzzle and a cartoon

Goodness of Creation

Margaret B. Adam - Faith Forum 28.9.2026

We know that creation is good, because the people of God tell us so. Scriptural interpretation and tradition - from the origins of the Hebrew Bible, and the development of the New Testament, through to contemporary Christian theology and ecological ethics about care for the earth - all claim that God is good, God creates creation, and what God creates is good.

1. **God is Good.** God is not good the way creatures are good. God's goodness is goodness itself. God IS goodness, through and through.

2. **God is Creator,** God, one and three, is THE Creator. God creates, and unlike created creators, God creates out of nothing. Because God is goodness itself, what God creates is good. Creation reflects the goodness of its good creator.

3. **Creation is All that is Created.** All that is created is creation, is a creature. The creator is not a creature. All creatures (plants, mountains, seas, weather, human animals, nonhuman animals, time, space, outer space) share more in common with each other than any creature shares with God. Accounts of creation in scripture are not historical reports. They address who God is, what God is like, how God relates to creation. *See Psalm 104.*

4. **Creation is Good.** Creation is Good because God creates it, out of nothing—because of God's goodness. Whatever is good comes from God and reflects God's goodness. *See 1 Timothy 4:4-5.* God's goodness is reflected in creatures through distinctiveness, through particulars, as well as shared createdness.

Cyril of Jerusalem (5th C.) urged his catechumens to observe 'the spring, and the flowers of every kind in all their likeness still diverse one from another'... 'the thickness of knots around reeds', 'wild beasts, cattle, fish', 'drops of dew' all of which God 'the Artificer' made.

Basil of Caesarea (4th C.) urged his listeners to witness through their senses the abundance of beauty that is observable in animals, plants, landscapes, and the sky.

Augustine (4th-5th C.) expressed his appreciation for the beauty of the land, ferocious animals, elements of weather, mountains, trees, cattle, and birds, the agility of a mosquito, and the work of ants, the salubrious air, good health, and celestial bodies.

Hugh of St Victor (12th C.) expressed gratitude to God for senses through which to experience 'very sweet and pleasant 'aspects of the natural world, and he urged frequent training of the senses to facilitate investigating creatures 'characteristics.

5. **God's Ordering of Creation is Good.** Interdependence reflects the goodness of God's ordering of creation.

Augustine noted 'all nature's substances are good, because they exist and therefore have their own mode and kind of being, and, in their fashion, a peace and harmony among themselves [...] in the orderly scheme of nature that God made and sustains in existence.'

Thomas Aquinas (13th C.) names 'the harmonious functioning of all creatures in relation to one another...the most beautiful order given to things by God'.

6. But what about the badness in creation? Throughout time the people of God have struggled with how bad things happen in God's good creation. One sort of response names God as the problem, as a disappointment to human expectations. This is a familiar and generally unfruitful approach. Another response still struggles with disasters, violence, cruelty, suffering, and death, but without blaming God or God's gift of good creation. Creatures do not have a God's-eye view of creation, and humans do not understand much about God or God's creation. What appear to be natural disasters or God's wrath may well be part of what the earth does as it flourishes. Human actions and inactions can disrupt God's good ordering of creation. Humans crowd out other animals' habitats, deplete resources, pollute, abuse, and waste other gifts of creation. Christians can learn to name what is not good and to discern faithful responses to bad things by noticing the goodness of God's creation and nurturing it.

7. Gift and Responsibility. God's creating, God's creation, is a gift. Humans and all other creatures are created by God, of God's goodness. As Benedict XVI wrote, creation is a gift of God and not mere matter left at our disposal. Our responsibility for that good gift is to receive it, give praise to God for it, and nurture it. What does that look like? Scripture (Genesis and beyond), doctrine, and the life of the church provide ways to honour the goodness of creation.

- Notice God's good work in creation.

- Sing praises and give glory to God for the goodness of creation. See *Psalms 19*. See hymns of praise and thanksgiving for creation.

- Follow the saints and their relationships with nonhuman creatures. Find out about Sts Medardus, Swithin, Anthony the Abbot, Seraphim of Sarov, Melengell. How might these fantastic stories move us to imagine closer and more attentive relationships with the creatures around us?

- Work toward the flourishing of all creatures, and God's ordering of creation. Not just protection or conservation. Celebrate fellow creatures for their goodness, and enable the fullness of their goodness.

- Aim for what is promised. Don't limit the goodness of creation to what seems realistic and cost-effective at the moment. Hope for the fulfilment of creation in the goodness of God. See *Revelation 21:1-5*, and *Isaiah 11:6-7*.

Questions to consider: What good relationships can we nurture with other creatures? How can we exercise more responsibility for God's gift of the goodness of creation?



Sunset above Drayton Road: Photo David Bevington

Sustainability and Computing

David Duce

This article is a light revision of an article the author published in the St Michael's Pew Leaflet on 13 September, during Creationtide. It was written before the risks and safety of AI became a news headline and those serious issues are beyond the scope of this article.

The diocese of Oxford prayer calendar for the Season of Creation for 13 September invited readers to “Join with our Link Diocese of Växjö praying for global climate justice; that the Holy Spirit may help us to make the world sustainable, fair and equal.”

I will pick one area of sustainability from the field I know a bit about – computing. An opinion piece article was published last month in one of the leading professional computing magazines entitled: [Balancing Sustainable Computing and Computing for Sustainability](#). Sustainable computing is about minimising the environmental impact of computing infrastructure. Computing for sustainability is applying computational tools to addressing sustainability challenges, be that climate change challenges or other environmental challenges. There is an argument that runs something like this: to understand climate change and develop mitigation strategies we need better and better computer models and the ‘better’ the models the more supercomputing power is needed to run them. But more supercomputer power generates more environmental impact which exacerbates the problem at hand. Hence the need for balance.

Two topics that frequently hit the news are the environmental impact of data centres and the environmental impact of Artificial Intelligence and Large Language Models (such as Chatgpt). Another recent article looked at the environmental implications of the world's largest data centre being built in Louisiana, USA. It is said that it will occupy an area of over 370,000 square meters of floor space, though not in one building and the chosen site has room for expansion. It is said that power consumption will be over 5 gigawatts, enough to power around 4.2 million homes in the USA, construction will need over 1 million tonnes of cement. In terms of computing it will eventually need more than 3 million computer chips (GPUs). The numbers are eye-watering and hard to comprehend, and that is just one large data centre. An even-more mind-blowing suggestion that has appeared recently is the idea of putting data centres into space, though I don't think it is unfair to say that this idea has been met with derision in many quarters. Leaving aside issues of filling up space with objects that are a serious danger to other objects in space it raises deep questions about who has the right to do what in space.

Artificial Intelligence or more specifically large language models, use vast computing resources to train the models from data scraped from across the internet and there are pertinent questions about the rights to use such data for these purposes without creators' consent and this in turn is a challenge to fairness and justice, amongst many other questions. There are examples of companies trying to buy up nuclear power stations (which has implications for the cost of power to other consumers) to meet their requirements though the more equality-minded companies are at least working with power-generation companies to scale back computations when power-generation companies are struggling to satisfy the needs of other customers. Some authors question the desirability and direction of Large Language Models and Artificial Intelligence in general, but one could say that once the genie is out of the bottle

...

One useful resource is <https://ourworldindata.org/>, which contains up-to-date data on a wide range of subjects. The web site is a collaborative effort between researchers at the University of Oxford and the non-profit organization Global Change Data Lab. It includes an extensive section on AI and data centres. It is worth mentioning that there are a lot of issues about data collection: what is being measured, how it is being measured, how relevant it is to a particular issue and reliability or veracity. Whilst some reporting legislation is already in place and more is emerging I believe it is still fair to say that many corporate organisations are reluctant to divulge what is regarded as commercially-sensitive information.

Another recent article noted issues around computer memory chips. Data centres use very specialised memory chips which take much more resource to make than the kind found in domestic or general-purpose computers. The side effect of this is that memory producers can charge a premium price for high-end chips, but making them takes resource away from normal chip production which is driving up the availability and price of regular memory chips.

Then there is the problem of what to do with broken or obsolete equipment – who has not had a perfectly good piece of equipment, mobile phone, home computer, ... rendered obsolete by a software upgrade in the interests of ‘improving the user-experience’ or whatever; or a device that has broken and is deemed irreparable? There is emerging legislation in some countries about reparability of devices and some manufacturers are offering factory-refurbished products, but the problem of e-waste remains and exporting the problem to other countries far from satisfies criteria of fairness, equality and justice.

To return to the start of this piece, the article *Balancing Sustainable Computing and Computing for Sustainability* concludes with a roadmap for action – not a set of solutions. Two of the items are:

- How can we make sustainability a first-class concern in the design, implementation, and deployment of the emerging High-Performance Computing (HPC) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) codes?
- Can we define a unified, globally scalable strategy to balance knowledge creation through AI, its associated computational loads on HPC systems, and the urgent need for sustainability?

The authors end on an optimistic note that whilst the issues are extremely challenging there are some signs that success is plausible. So we pray for ...



Look carefully at the small print! Photo: Rob Rutherford in the Borderland museum Kirkenes, Norway

The OCTober Quiz

The Hallas family

Oct.....

Eight sided
Lots of arms or legs?
Son of George III
F1 perhaps, High...
Venerable?
The eighth colour
Nine people, 16 oars
27 or 40 zeros?
Base 8
Eight distinct times
Founder of the NT
Iron from the sky?
Roger Moore or James Bond?
Coral
10 th Month
Genesis – Ruth

Why I like Norway

Rob Rutherford

The fjords - yes! Edvard Grieg – yes! Munch – not sure, but there is certainly more to him than ‘the Scream’! Fish? Certainly! Norwegian breakfast – definitely!
But here are a few other things:

Instead of using oil money to reduce taxes, they created a sovereign wealth fund to benefit future generations. The fund’s current value is about £2trillion. The population of Norway is less than 6 million. Do the maths!

Virtually all of Norway’s electricity comes from renewable, green resources – Hydroelectric power and wind power. The mountainous landscape allows even small settlements to make electricity from Hydropower. One consequence of this is that about 95% of new cars sold are electric. Because they have abundant electricity, they are beginning to generate ‘green hydrogen’. This is hydrogen generated by electrolysing water. It offers the possibility that ships could be powered by hydrogen – though the technology is still at the development stage. The significance of this is that when hydrogen is burnt, the only by-product is water.

Norway, like other Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Finland, invests a lot in the community. A small community at Sandnessjøen, population about 6000, had an attractive library and in the same building was a swimming pool, a concert hall, an art gallery, a cinema, meeting rooms and a science teaching room on the top floor! That’s probably not all.

Connectivity: Norway is fragmented with countless islands and the population is quite widespread but many of the islands are joined by bridges, where possible, and ferries where not and a 4G mobile signal almost everywhere.

Oh and they have created the Nansen fund to help Ukraine ([ref.](#)) and also crossing roads is a delight!

Events in October and November

Compiled by Louise Heffernan

Prayers and Bears



A short service suitable for young children,

with:

Bible story

Song

Prayers

Social time for children & adults

1st Tuesday of each month, 11–11.45am

Church of St Michael & All Angels

Faith Forum

Our Autumn Faith Forum continues in the autumn and ties-in with Creationtide, offering an exploration of what is often termed eco-theology, that is, the theology that provides the rationale for creation care and informs our approach towards environmental action. Faith Forum meets in the Parish Centre Hall, with lunch from 12.15pm and talks beginning at 12.45pm.

October 25th: Creation care as act of praise (Hannah Mann, Diocese of Oxford)

November 22: A new or a renewed earth? (Jen Brown)

Celebrating Black History Month Saturday 17 October, 2.30 pm to 6 pm, Trinity Church, Conduit Road

Bringing together voices from across the Methodist family and beyond, offering reflection, learning, worship, and shared fellowship:

- Talk: The History of Black History Month Mr Bevan Powell MBE
- Act of Worship: The Revd. Sonia Hicks, Chair of the Northampton Methodist District
- Storytelling: Mr Joseph Kingsley Nyinah • The Methodist Zimbabwe Fellowship Choir • In Conversation: A twenty minute dialogue with The Rt Hon. the Lord Boateng
- Ending with a shared faith meal, celebrating the rich culinary heritage of the African and Caribbean diaspora.

All welcome

Music at St. Michael's 2026



Sunday 18th October at 15.00

A MUSICAL TOUR OF EUROPE - AND BACH AGAIN!

Christopher Britton

Flute

Malcolm Pearce

Piano

Tickets £15.00

St Michael and All Angels' Church, Park Road,
Abingdon, OX14 1DS



<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/GYSS>

**Abingdon Artists Autumn
Exhibition**
**Tuesday 27th October - Saturday
31st October 2026**
**at Christchurch Barn, Northcourt
Road, Abingdon, OX14 1PL**

**Eating Well for the Planet: what
needs to change – and who has to
do what to make it happen.**

Wednesday 21 October Abingdon
Baptist Church, 7:30pm:

Talk by Dr John Ingram (specialist
in planning for food system
sustainability and reliance).
Organised by Abingdon Carbon
Cutters



**Gilmore and Roberts
+ Rob Clamp
Thursday 5th November**



Contemporary folk/acoustic duo Gilmore & Roberts combine
award-winning songwriting with astounding musicianship
and their trademark harmonies to create a powerful wall of
sound.



St Helen's Church, Abingdon, OX14 5BS
 Doors Open at 7:00pm , Music at 7:15pm
 Tickets: £15 from Frend and Co, 29 Broad St and online

80 YEARS ANNIVERSARY CONCERT
**Abingdon & District
Musical Society**
**SATURDAY 7TH NOV 2026
7.30PM**

BORODIN - POLOVTSIAN DANCES
 FRANCK - SYMPHONY IN D MINOR
 SHOSTAKOVICH - FESTIVE OVERTURE
 ELGAR - THE MUSIC MAKERS

ALEXANDER WALKER - CONDUCTOR
 KATE BAILEY - LEADER
 JOANNA HARRIES - MEZZO-SOPRANO

ST HELEN'S CHURCH
 ABINGDON
 OX14 5BS

TICKETS:
 WEGOTTICKETS.COM/ADMS
 £14 IN ADVANCE
 £16 ON THE DOOR
 UNDER 16'S £1
 WWW.ADMS.ORG.UK

**Abbey Chamber Concerts at St
Nicolas' Church**
 November 8th 3.00 – 4.00pm
[Mozart and Thuille – Quintets for
piano and winds](#)

Lynette Stulting piano, Pavlova
 Winds
 £13.00



**St Michael's Church
Christmas Fair**

**Saturday 14th November 2026
10 am – 2 pm**

Gift Stalls	Games
Tombola	Books
Cakes	Plants
Jewellery	Paintings
Prize Raffle	Bric-a-Brac
	Refreshments

Proceeds in aid of church funds and Sobell House Hospice Charity

Enquiries to lheff@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk
St Michael & All Angels' Church
Park Road, Abingdon OX14 1DS

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ADVENT LABYRINTH WALKS

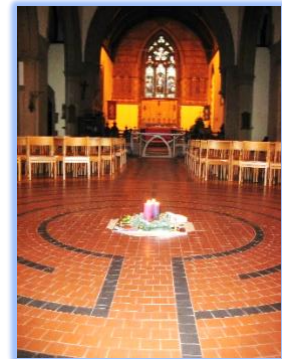
St Michael and All Angels' Church, Park Road, Abingdon, will be open

11 am – noon on

Tuesday 1, 8 and 15 December

Walk the labyrinth or simply enjoy the sacred space. Material for reflection will be available on a different Advent theme each week.

A short prayer will be said at the beginning and end of each session, but feel free to come and go as you please. Entry will be through the south porch.



Cafe@35: We are pleased to announce that our cafe in 35 Ock Street is serving food again. We are open from 10.30 am to 2 pm Monday to Thursday serving cakes, teacakes and toast with light lunches, freshly made, from 12 noon until 1.30 pm. On Fridays and Saturdays, we are open from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm serving cakes and snacks including bacon baps. Our volunteers are happy to welcome all.



And a date for your diary:

St Helen's Christmas Market will be on Saturday 28th November.

Parochial Church Council Meetings:

The next meeting of the PCC will be held on Wednesday 18 November at 7.30 pm. Provisional dates for subsequent meetings are Wednesday 27 January 7.30 pm via zoom and Tuesday 16 March 7.30 pm at St Nicolas Church.

All The Food Fun of the Fair

I really love Abingdon Fair,
The sights, the sounds, the smell,
The crowds of people all having fun
Especially at night when the numbers swell.

I like to watch others on the rides
But I don't want to have a go.
I prefer to eat my way through the fair
Which won't be a surprise I know.

I like a hot dog with a proper sausage,
It's no frankfurters for me.
With loads of onions and brown sauce,
It's the perfect thing for my tea.

I like watching the lady make candy floss
And taking mine home in a bag,
So I can sit watching the telly
Munching away on my swag.

I used to eat a toffee apple
But this I can no longer do,
Because my poor old teeth aren't up to it
And I might break one or two.

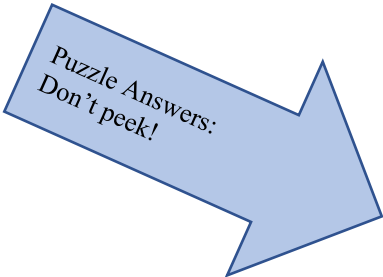
I will stick with the softer food
So I don't pay a large dental fee
And we will round off a lovely evening
With a bag of chips for hubby and me.

Eileen Duckett writes: Being born and bred in Abingdon the fair has always been a highlight of the year but now I am too old for the rides it's the food which is important!



Here's someone who is not too old for the rides!

Photo: Chris Brown



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_Octavius_of_Great_Britain ¹
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octahedrite ²
Any anthozoan coral of the former subclass Octactinia ³
Octateuch
October
Octactinian ³
Octopussy
Octahedrite ²
Octavia Hill
Octachronous
Octal
Octillion
Octuple / Octo
Octarine
Octogenarian
Octane
Prince Octavius ¹
Octopus
Octagon



Robin Day and family returning from their fundraising 'Ride and Stride'
Photo: David Bevington

Useful Weblinks:

Services: for the latest news see the Parish Website:

<https://abingdonparish.org.uk>

for Church of England links: services, daily readings etc

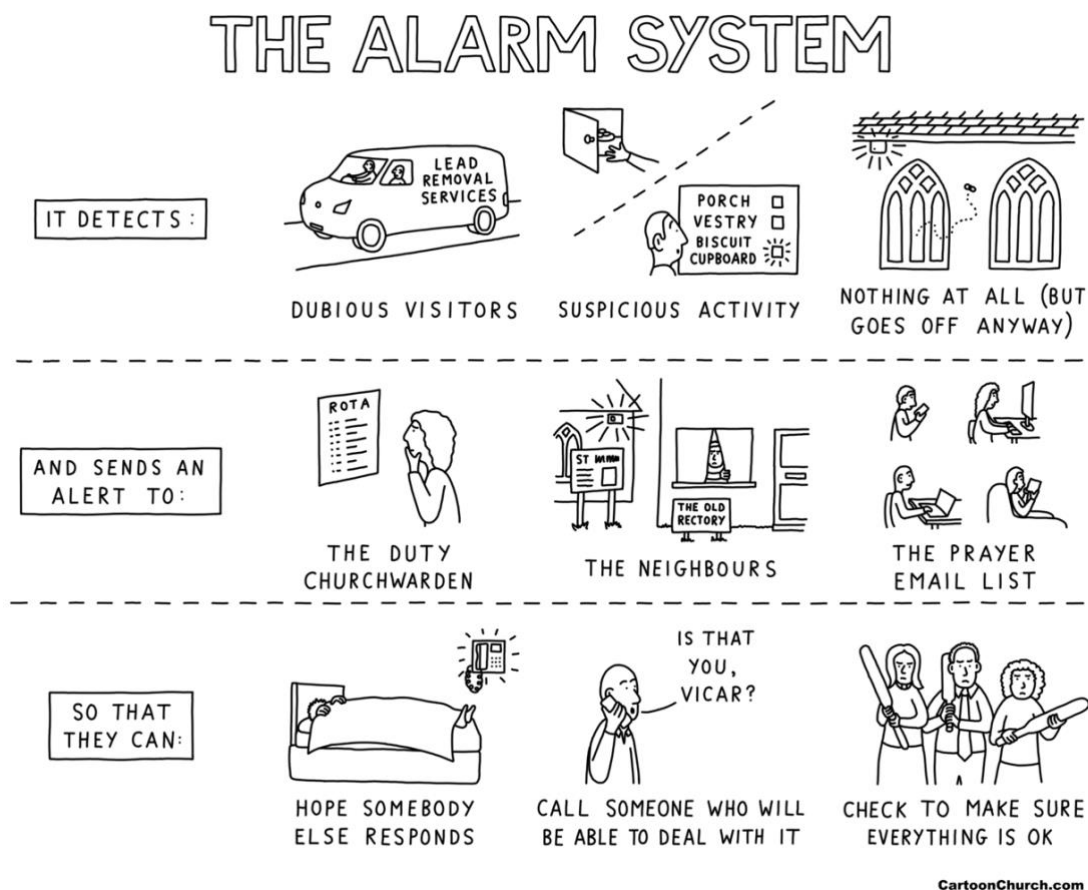
<https://www.churchofengland.org/>

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. **Abingdon Foodbank South** serves the people of South Abingdon on Wednesdays between 12.30 and 2pm and is based in Preston Road Community Centre. It is a full service – not just a distribution point. Any food donated in the marked boxes in Waitrose will go to the Foodbank. Any food donated at Tesco goes to the SOFEA run Community Larder based at Trinity Church centre on Fridays.

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 and all good wishes to all contributors and to you, the readers.

The next issue will be published on November 8th. Please help us by sending feedback, ideas and contributions to Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk