



St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

9th January 2022
Baptism of Christ

Regular Service Times

Sundays: Sung Mass, 9.30 am
Tuesdays: Silent Reflections, last Tuesday of the month (except December)
Thursdays: Said Mass, 12.30 pm

Contacts

Team Rector: The Revd Dr Charles Miller (520144)
Team Vicar: The Revd Paul Smith (534654)
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Churchwardens: Miss Joyce Kelly (533555)
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Bookings*: Miss Joyce Kelly (as above)

Parish Office: **Normal hours:** The Parish office is open **Mondays to Thursdays, 10 am-1 pm.**
Please observe COVID protocols and sign in when you visit.

Administrator: During normal working hours phone or leave a message on:
Telephone (520144) or
Mobile (07395 943957)
e-mail: administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk

Web site: <https://www.stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk>

If you would like to receive this pew leaflet electronically, please email pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk with the subject line SUBSCRIBE.

***Items for inclusion in the next Leaflet to be sent to
David Duce by midday on Tuesday. Telephone 522591
pewleaflet@stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk***

[*for Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals please contact the Parish Office]

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Dear Friends

Today we celebrate the Baptism of Christ. It is perhaps interesting to note that the gospel narratives give us very little insight into the childhood of Jesus. After the Epiphany (meaning 'showing' or 'revelation') and the visit of the wise men from the East we move quickly to Jesus' baptism. He is by now, an adult, and his baptism prepares him for his earthly ministry. We notice that something significant takes place when in Luke's narrative read in church today: 'The Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove' (Luke 3.22). At the same time a voice comes from heaven and declares that Jesus is the beloved Son of God in whom God is well pleased.

From this point on the dove would signify the Holy Spirit, silent, invisible, but always the powerful presence of God. The dove is a sign and symbol of the Spirit which now appears in stained glass, on banners, and in art. The Spirit comes at the Baptism of Christ in peace, but he would come again in wind and fire at Pentecost, in complete contrast and very much noticed. The Spirit comes to strengthen the Apostles and to drive away their doubts and empower them for their work for the Kingdom.

The Baptism of Christ has great significance for us then: urging us to reflect on our own baptism and its meaning and purpose. To be baptised is to be incorporated into Christ, to be made one with him. We receive the gift of the same Holy Spirit and are made children of God in whom God is well pleased. Our own baptism was undoubtedly many years ago, an event we were too small to remember. On this Feast Day, we should nevertheless, ponder the importance of the event for us as our entry into the Christian faith and the church. It is a further and clear reminder that we do not walk the road of discipleship alone. We are forever accompanied by the Spirit who in common with those first Apostles calls us to join in the great work of the Kingdom.

May we respond to this challenge in the power of that same Spirit to be agents of God's unconditional love, mercy and justice in a world which is in desperate need of the good news.

With love and blessings. *Fr Paul*

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT ST HELEN'S CHURCH

St Helen's will live-stream their 10.30 am Eucharist through Zoom. The Zoom link is available from the Parish Administrator. A recording of the sermon will be made available after the service on the Parish Resources page on the St Helen's web site https://www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/Parish/P_resources.html

CONCERT The East Oxford Community Choir and Orchestra will perform Beethoven's Mass in C, Coriolan Overture and Choral Fantasy at St Michael's on Sunday 9 January at 3pm. Tickets £13/£11 (under 18s £3) from Oxford Playhouse 01865 305305, Tickets Oxford <https://www.ticketsoxford.com/events/beethoven-concert> or at the door.

OPEN DISTRICT CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING (DCC) The DCC meets this coming **Thursday 13 January at 7pm in church**. This will be a single item Agenda meeting to discuss the charitable giving policy. The DCC would like to invite anyone who is interested in this topic to come to the meeting. Please do come along if you would like to. *Fr Paul*

DEDICATION FESTIVAL – Tuesday 25 January, Sung Mass, 7pm

We shall celebrate our Dedication Festival on the above date with a Sung Mass. Silent Reflections which would normally take place on this Tuesday in the month will be on-line and Sue Sheppy will be kindly producing material with some reflections on the Conversion of St Paul which also falls on this day. Paper copies will also be available.

INTER-CHURCH QUIZ AT PEACHCROFT CHRISTIAN CENTRE Friday 21 January 7.30 - 9 pm. Hilary Clare has registered a team for St Michael's with the organisers. If you would like to join the team, please contact her (525898).

NEW DAYLIGHT BOOKS It is time to re-subscribe for the year for these books of daily readings, comment and prayer which are edited by the Revd Sally Welch and published by the Bible Reading Fellowship. If you would like them in printed format please get in touch with Brenda on 01235 522881 **before the end of January**. The cost is £14.55 for the year, if we can order 5 or more sets. For more information see <https://www.brfonline.org.uk/collections/new-daylight> BRF also offer options to receive this publication by email or through an app.

CAPE TOWN CATHEDRAL The editor happened to look at the web site of St George's Cathedral, Cape Town, following the death of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Looking at one of their service books available on-line revealed an interesting feature. At the point of the Offertory, the service booklet includes a QR code that worshippers may scan in order to make a donation to the Cathedral via a contactless mobile payment system called SnapScan, South Africa's first such system set up in 2013 through Standard Bank. The SnapScan QR code is also shown on the Cathedral's web site.

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL OF ABINGDON is seeking to appoint a new Governor. Christ's Hospital is the oldest of Oxfordshire's charities and dates from 1553. It is controlled by The Master, twelve Governors and support staff managed by The Clerk to the Governors. For further details please follow the link on the home page of our web site. The closing date for applications is the end of February 2022.

A CANDLE IN THE WINDOW The next issue will be in February with the theme 'Awakening'. *Rob, Eluned and Louise*
CHRISTIAN AID NEW YEAR WALK 2022 1– 31 January: Following the success of last year's walk, the New Year Walk for Christian Aid in 2022 will again be a self-directed walk. Walkers will be able to complete the walk whenever they wish in January either on one day or spread across the month as convenient. Details of the challenge set for walkers, the destination points to be visited and how to make donations are now available from our web site. Printed copies are available, by request, from *David Duce* (contact details on first page), Adrienne's technology assistant. For any further more information about either of these events, please contact Cliff Marshall at candpmarshall@btinternet.com.

CHRISTIAN AID DONATIONS Alongside the walk, which will have its own particular online donation link, a Christmas Appeal donations link has been set up to use if you would like to support Christian Aid's work this year.
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/abingdon-christianaid2021-or838>

The funds go direct to Christian Aid. The advantage of using this Just Giving site is that the Abingdon Committee can identify what has been raised for the Charity in Abingdon.

TARIRO Fr Nicolas has written to our treasurer acknowledging the donation made to TARIRO following the Christmas Fair. He wrote: "Thank you so much for this good news. Please pass on our thanks to those responsible. I am in Zimbabwe at the moment and have had a great time seeing the young people." He was stranded in Zimbabwe by the Covid situation but has just this week returned to Mirfield.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

17 - 21 January: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Midday prayers at St Nicolas' Church, 12 – 1 pm

Worship

This Week The celebrants and preachers for the coming weeks are: Fr Paul/ Mrs Beryl Clements on 9 January The Revd Ros Rutherford on 16 January, Fr Paul on 23 and 30 January.

Festivals and commemorations include: the Baptism of Christ on Sunday, Monday: William Laud, archbishop, 1645; Tuesday: Mary Slessor, missionary, 1915; Wednesday: Aelred, abbot, 1167 and Benedict Biscop, scholar, 689; Thursday: Hilary, bishop, teacher of the faith, 367; Kentigern (Mungo) missionary bishop, 603 and George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends (Quakers), 1691. There are links on the Prayer and Worship resources page to learning resources about Mary Slessor and Kentigern.

Prayers during the Pandemic The web site of St George's Cathedral Cape Town has two prayers for use during the pandemic. The first a form of blessing for home worship during coronavirus lockdown by Archbishop Thabo Makgoba.

Lord God in this season of fear and uncertainty, grant us the wisdom and determination to walk in one another's shoes, the confidence and humility to draw closer to you and those affected. Empower us to pastor those who are ill, to weep for the dead, to support the healers and care for and love one another. The blessing ...

The second is an Angelus Prayer for the Coronavirus lockdown:

Take a pause daily, say the Angelus and pray together ...

God bless the world, give it wisdom at this time, grant us relieve [*sic*] and release, be with those who are ill and bless the carers fighting this pandemic, for Jesus Christ [*sic*] sake. Amen.

One doesn't have to be in lockdown to pray these prayers.

The Mirfield Crib A figure of the Christ Child is placed on the altar before the start of Mass. At the end of Mass the celebrant takes the figure then along with the Community processes to the Resurrection Chapel and places it in the crib. As Fr Crispin put it in a subsequent sermon, "we got quite a surprise when we reached the Resurrection Chapel". The crib scene was not their usual crib, but a (small) orange life raft set on a blue cloth, set on a sand-covered mat, surrounded on one side by a pile of large stones. The Holy Family were in the life raft. As Fr Crispin said, this evoked a number of images and memories. Clearly one was the current plight of refugees and asylum seekers, but also biblical images such as The Escape to Egypt (Matthew 2.13, 'Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt ...'), Jesus stills the storm (Matthew 8.23), and also a reference to church architecture, the church as a Ship, protecting those inside from the buffeting of the worldly waves on the journey through life. Perhaps a memory too of the part played by water in baptism. There was another surprise in store at First Evensong for the Epiphany. The life raft has now come to grief on the rocks and on the beach is a makeshift tent where the figure of the child has been placed. Mary and Joseph look on from behind a barbed wire fence. There are links on our *Prayer and Worship* resources page to pictures of the crib and to Fr Crispin's sermon.

The Baptism of Christ follows on from Epiphany. The gospel account in this year's lectionary is Luke, 3.15-17, 21-22. Readers might like to reflect on the parallels between Luke's accounts of the Annunciation (Luke 1.26-38), the Baptism of Christ and the Transfiguration (Luke 9.28-36). Dorothy Lee in her book *Transfiguration* (pp. 77-78) points

to the word ‘overshadow’ (NRSV translation of the same Greek word) in the account of the Annunciation and the Transfiguration:

If it is right to see a parallel between [the Annunciation scene] and the transfiguration, the cloud by association is linked to the enveloping presence of the Holy Spirit. Drawing the baptism into this circle, we see that there too the Spirit descends in tangible form to anoint Jesus – this time, as a dove – and the divine voice speaks, in similar wording to the transfiguration, confirming Jesus as the Son of God (Luke 3.21-22). In each case, there is a descending or overshadowing presence from heaven, associated explicitly in two of the three cases with the Spirit of God. ... To the attentive reader, the cloud [in the account of the transfiguration] signifies the descent and overshadowing of the Spirit.

In our Mass on Sunday the following prayer is said by Fr Paul at the Offertory:

Open the heavens, Lord our God, and send your transforming Spirit on us and on these gifts. May we who are baptized into Christ be ready to share his cup of suffering and strengthened to serve him for ever.

Please pray for:

- Steven and Gavin our bishops, Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury;
- our response of thanksgiving for our own baptisms and that we may be faithful to them;
- the will and courage to live out the values of the Kingdom of God;
- those suffering as a result of the winter months especially the homeless;
- all those suffering with Covid-19 throughout the world and all those affected by isolation or separation;
- our DCC meeting on Thursday and for our charitable giving as a congregation;
- people living in Dundas Close, East St. Helen Street, Edward Street and Elwes Close.

Eucharistic Lectionary

Sunday	Isaiah 43.1-7	Ps 29	Acts 8.14-17	Luke 3.15-17, 21-22
Mon	1 Samuel 1.1-8	Ps 116.10-15		Mark 1.14-20
Tues	1 Samuel 1.9-20	Canticle 1 Samuel 2.1, 4-8		Mark 1.21-28
Wed	1 Samuel 3.1-10, 19-20	Ps 40.1-4, 7-10		Mark 1.29-39
Thur	1 Samuel 4.1-11	Ps 44.10-15, 24-25		Mark 1.40-end
Fri	1 Samuel 8.4-7, 10-end	Ps 89.15-18		Mark 2.1-12
Saturday	1 Samuel 9.1-4, 17-19, 10.1a	Ps 21.1-6		Mark 2.13-17

Collect (Baptism of Christ)

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

Prayer after Communion (Baptism of Christ)

Lord of all time and eternity, you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son: by the power of your Spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Some On-line Resources for Worship

A Church Near You Live Streamed events

https://www.achurchnearyou.com/live-stream/?tags=Live_stream&diocese=27

Parish resources page

http://www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/Parish/P_resources.html.

St Michael’s Prayer and Worship resources page

https://www.stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk/worship_resources.htm

Oxford Cathedral: Livestream events will appear on the cathedral’s YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqz9I9-LbZJAPGtje0gQbbg/videos>

Community of the Resurrection: live streaming and recordings of the community’s daily round of prayer and praise

<https://www.facebook.com/Join-with-us-103095121647089>. Details of services at the facebook page and also at the

Community web site, <https://mirfield.org.uk/community-of-the-resurrection/our-life-and-work/worship/> On

Sundays Mass starts around 8.10 am, after Matins at 7.30 am.

Walsingham In addition to the daily live-streaming of Shrine Prayers at 6 pm (5pm on Fridays). the Sunday Mass is live-streamed (usually at 7.30 am, but check the web site), <https://www.walsinghamanglican.org.uk/>