



## TEAMword

7<sup>th</sup> June 2020

TRINITY SUNDAY

Dear Parishioners,

Although the lock-down is easing we remain excluded from our churches for public worship this Trinity Sunday. I remember writing in *TEAMword* at this season a few years ago about the notion, foundational to our liturgical life, of worship as the coming *together* of the faith community to do together what they cannot do alone. However, we remain alone, or in our families, on this festival, a fact which must diminish our full experience of its meaning. For the feast of the Holy Trinity is a celebration that there is a *togetherness in the life of God*. Our prayer on this festival should, then, include fervent hope that our mutual solidarity will soon take again its full form in shared worship.

In the meantime, I am pleased to underline what most of you know: good things have been happening in the parish during the months of lock-down and in many ways, planned and unplanned, we have been blessed. The Team, with the support of our honorary clergy, have done, and continue to do, a fine job in prompting reflections on Christian life and discipleship in Sunday sermons, in their 'Thoughts for the Day' and in the pewslips. Issues of the 'Candle in the Window' have circulated "something for everyone" with its fun, interesting, creative, insightful and historical information. All these efforts will continue, some indefinitely, some through June and into early July. August will give us 'down-time' to review the initiatives of the past few months and assess them in light of government and church guidance.

The CoE's guidance is picking-up pace again with the easing of the lock-down. Your clergy and wardens are tracking those developments week by week. None of us have reason to expect a sudden, soon return to our churches with familiar patterns restored. That won't happen. We will need to consider how we proceed as a parish and what movement towards a 'new normal' will mean for each church and congregation. In keeping with the spirit of this festival, *togetherness* should guide our approach.

While we will miss one another at our annual Corporate Communion on this special Sunday of the Church Year, let's bear one another all the more in mind and heart so that the spirit of the life of the Holy Trinity may inform our thinking, planning and actions in the weeks and months ahead.

*Revd Dr Charles Miller*, Team Rector

### **Tuning into On-line Worship**

Although we don't have figures from across the parish we have guide figures for the St Helen's website vis-à-vis accessing worship material. There are around 90 active users of the Parish Resources website on a typical Sunday, with over half viewing or downloading the service recordings in full. As a further note on this: when the Bp of Oxford held a Zoom meeting with the Deanery clergy recently he speculated that for the foreseeable future two streams of worship would be needed: public worship in smaller groups, and on-line worship. The "smaller groups" refers to gatherings that honour 'social distancing' rules; how churches will be expected to work with those remains to be seen. We will probably move into a phase with two 'economies' of worship. Another noteworthy point was made in that meeting, namely, how congregations' on-line presence was dependent on *very few people* in the congregation. Ease of access for the many has meant and still means a lot of work for a very few. Our parish is in that very situation, with Steve Thomas alone making our on-line presence possible. Going forward we will need to expand the pool of producers and technicians for the on-line presence. If that interests you (probably as a learning curve!), please make contact with the Parish Office.

### **Pastoral Offices**

As you would expect, over the past few months the celebration of pastoral offices (baptisms, wedding and funerals) have occurred not in our churches. All of the summer-time weddings have been re-scheduled for 2021; baptisms have been deferred to as-yet-unspecified dates; funerals we still conduct in crematoria, albeit under the Bishop's strict numerical guide-lines.

All of our congregations have experienced the loss of parishioners during this period, though none, it seems, owing to Covid-19. Still, those deaths, without the chance to say "farewell" and to commend our spiritual brothers or sisters to God, has been a grief to many. All of the Team are keen that families will want to arrange memorial services of thanksgiving when the time is right and when full participation is possible. In the meantime, it's important for us to hold the bereaved in our prayers as the limitations of our situation have added another layer of pain to their experience of loss.

### **The Parish Office**

For now, the Parish Office will remain closed to visitors. Jenny usually comes to the office on Wednesdays and otherwise continues to work from home. She can be contacted during normal office hours: Monday-Friday, 10am-1pm [office closed on Thursdays] by email: [administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk](mailto:administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk), or leave a message on the office phone 01235 520144 / 07395 943957.

### **Meetings by Skype**

During the lock-down the Team clergy have continued their weekly chapter meeting by Skype. This was a learning curve for most of us, but quickly we mastered the simple manoeuvres that make it possible, and have had productive occasions of prayer, mutual support and dealing with business. At St Helen's the Team Rector and wardens have met most weeks in a similar way; likewise at St Nicolas' and St Michael's.

Thanks to those who have promoted and prompted the weekly 'coffee hour' Zoom meetings for members of the three congregations, and who have steered the circulation of interesting photos of gardens, etc. All of this reminds us how 'life goes on'!

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 40.12-17; 27-31; 2 Cor 13.11-13; Matthew 28.16-20

**COLLECT:**

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity: keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all adversities; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**NOTICES**

**KEEPING IN TOUCH.** If you have access to the internet, please follow us on our website, where we will be posting material to help us spiritually while our churches are closed. There will be a short service available on the website each Sunday so please keep checking the websites

<https://www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/>; <https://www.stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk/>;  
<https://www.stnicolasabingdon.org.uk/>

**DAILY INSPIRATION!** Have a look on <https://www.abingdonblog.co.uk> at the *Thought for Today* section by Abingdon clergy. Their thoughts can also be found on the Parish websites.

**A CANDLE IN THE WINDOW** can be downloaded from the websites or by clicking on the following link on: [www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/DNR/window.php](http://www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/DNR/window.php).

**OTHER SERVICES.** Over the coming weeks, there will be a Diocesan service available online every Sunday at 10am. Details can be found here:

[oxford.anglican.org/livestream](http://oxford.anglican.org/livestream). The service is also available to people by phone by dialling **01865 920930** – press zero for the short service and 1 for the full service. It takes a few seconds to retrieve the recording then the service will start.

**CORPUS CHRISTI.** The annual Feast will take place this year on Thursday 11 June. There will be no Service but Fr Paul Smith will upload a reflection, so please check the Parish websites to find the material as we approach the Festival.

**FEELING ISOLATED?** If you are on your own, feel cut off and need a chat, or help with shopping, or for us to pray for you, get in touch with the Parish Office by email: [administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk](mailto:administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk), or leave a message on the office phone 01235 520144 or mobile 07395 943957. For urgent out of hours please contact: Fr Paul Smith 01235 534654; Canon Charles Mashedor 01235 520959.

**THE ABINDON FOOD BANK** (new website: <https://abingdon.foodbank.org.uk/>) is anxious to continue its work even though churches are closed. Northcourt Road (Christ Church) is open to receive donations on Tuesday & Friday mornings, 9.30am - 1pm. You can also donate online (CCA bank details available from the Parish office), send a cheque (payable to *North Abingdon PCC Christ Church*, clearly marked 'for Food Bank') to Abingdon Foodbank, Christ Church, Northcourt Road, Abingdon OX14 1PL or via the CCA website <https://cca.churchsuite.co.uk/donate/fund/njbejebi/foodbank>.

**THE ABINGDON BRIDGE (TAB)** In order to comply with the requirements of the Charity Commissioners, this is a formal notification to inform you that due to the restrictions arising from COVID19, the 2020 AGM of The Abingdon Bridge has been deferred from Tuesday 16th June 2020 until Tuesday 22nd September 2020 at 1900 at The Barn, Christ Church, Northcourt Road, Abingdon OX14 1PL. Christopher Bryan, Chair of the Trustees.

**A GOOD READ.** Thanks to Professor Keith Ward for sharing his 'Perspectives on the Parables' with us through Eastertide. His latest book *Confessions of a Recovering Fundamentalist* [ISBN: 978-1-5326-9671-8] is a witty, sometimes hilarious, yet serious potted theological autobiography. An engaging lock-down read!

Next week's readings: Exodus 19.2-8a; Romans 5.1-8; Matthew 9.35-10.23
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### The Parish Clergy

Team Rector	The Revd Dr Charles Miller
Team Vicar	The Revd Paul Smith
Associate Priests	The Revd Jennifer Brown
	The Revd Canon Charles Mashedor
LLM	Mrs Gwen Bevington
Authorized Preacher	Mrs Beryl Clements
Honorary Assistants	The Revd Prof John Barton,
	The Rt Revd Henry Scriven
	The Revd Christopher Seaman
	The Revd Pauline Seaman
	The Revd David Bevington
	The Revd Roger Williams
	The Revd Rosalind Rutherford
	The Revd Jane Baun
The Bowles Lecturer	The Revd Dr Emma Percy

### Ministry of Music

St Helen's	Dr Peter Foster, Director of Music
	Mr Andrew Shouler, Assistant Organist
St Michael & All Angels	Mrs Glynne Butt
	Mr Graham Howells
St Nicolas'	vacant

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### PCC Members 2019-20, including:

**Your Parish Wardens 2019-20:** Mrs Linda Hobbs & Mr Geoff Meen; Mr Peter Squire & Miss Joyce Kelly; Mr Paul Rast-Lindsell & Mr Andrew Coker

*Honorary Treasurer:* Dr Andrew Birks

*Honorary Secretary:* Mrs Eluned Hallas

*Ex-officio members:* Miss Alexandra Green (PCC Vice Chair), Dr Andrew Birks, (Mrs Eluned Hallas, Mr Peter Penfold, , Ms Sue Scott, Mrs Carol Worthington, Miss Alexandra Scott

*Elected members:* Dr Hugh Bishop, Mrs Hilary Clare, Mr John Clare, Mrs Jenni Collins, Dr Roger Cox, Miss Margaret Horton, Mrs Susan Scott