

St Mary - Ardley with Fewcott

St Olave - Fritwell

The Chapel - Heyford Park

St Mary - Lower Heyford & Caulcott

St James - Somerton

The Annunciation - Souldern

St Mary - Upper Heyford

# Cherwell Valley

# Catch-up

## September 2025



Dear Friends

What a fantastic Summer we've had this year! Across the Benefice we have had quite a round of community and family life events – see further on. Now we are moving on into Autumn and looking to the next cycle of events to come in our community life. Some of us, including myself, move on into the next decade of our God-given lives. The cycle of life starts to take on new challenges!

Sadly the sense of growing old(er) is not always valued and celebrated as it should be. Our Western culture focusses so heavily on youth and young, and ageing as a time of decline. Ointments and creams to smooth out the increasing wrinkles and countless treatments abound to reverse the appearance and effects of our advancing years. At least the ongoing national debate about our future care needs keeps the subject on our society's agenda.

All this is contrary to what the Christian faith has to say about ageing. Abraham and Sarah, and Moses, in the old Testament were called in their advancing years to profound life-changing events that have affected the course of our human history and destination. Youth and advancing years work together in God's plan. Luke records In the New Testament ageing Elizabeth and youthful Mary rejoicing and supporting each other in their pregnancies. Jesus on his first visit to the Jerusalem temple was most likely debating with the teachers of advanced years.

We cannot escape ageing, but we can grow older gracefully valuing it as a time of spiritual growth and development. Our relationship with God can continue to develop and mature. Jesus's death and resurrection bring us continued hope, meaning and purpose for our future however long that will be.

We are coming into the season of Harvest Festivals - look out for details elsewhere in this edition and on the weekly Pew Sheets. We give thanks to God and celebrate the abundance and richness and fullness of the fruits of the earth. Let us also give Him thanks and celebrate the harvest of our years, for the richness and fullness that our life-journeys have brought us so far. And let us look to God's future blessings.

Revd. Andrew

## Celebrations

It's been a huge privilege during the summer to officiate at my first weddings in this Benefice, it's very special to get to know couples beforehand as well as sharing in such a significant day. Across the Benefice in recent weeks we've also celebrated baptisms, significant birthdays and more poignant services remembering with thanksgiving those who have died. I've been really struck in all the churches how fantastic people are at preparing the buildings for these events – taking time to clean, tidy and put in fresh flowers. Not only that often church members will be in touch with visiting



families beforehand to help with arrangements and Barbara McGarry is wonderful at navigating all the paperwork whilst also answering questions & concerns with kindness & grace. On the day churchwardens, vergers & others are there to warmly welcome visitors, as well as clearing-up when everyone has gone home! One wedding couple recently emailed a



thank-you to the church office saying:

“We wanted to thank you and the entire church for helping make our wedding day such a beautiful and meaningful occasion. We're grateful for the time, effort, and thoughtfulness you put into every detail, from the preparation to the service itself.”

So, a huge thank-you to everyone who is involved in supporting the many different celebrations that take place in the churches. These life events are great opportunities to connect with people at significant moments in their lives and all the hard work makes a huge difference. It would be really good to keep praying for those who have attended these special services, that they would be aware of God's presence & love in their lives and may want to continue growing in their relationship with God.

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If you or anyone you know is considering celebrating a life event in church do get in touch with Barbara (barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org), or take a look at these Church of England resources which are full of practical help & advice:



[www.churchofengland.org/life-events/christenings](http://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/christenings)

[www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding](http://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding)

<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals>

Rev Kath



## To book a Wedding or a Baptism

Please contact the Benefice Office

572 Brice Road, Heyford Park OX25 5TE  
01869 233687

[barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk](mailto:barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk)  
[www.cherwellvalleychurch.org](http://www.cherwellvalleychurch.org)



## Bell Ringing – Why not give it a try!

Practice evenings are Thursdays between 7.30 – 9pm, typically Somerton at the beginning of the month, and Lower Heyford at the end of month. Come and join us you would be most welcome

Neil Clare

Somerton Tower Captain

[CherwellValleyBellRinging@gmail.com](mailto:CherwellValleyBellRinging@gmail.com)



## Cherwell Valley Benefice – September 2025

Sunday Worship	7th September	14 <sup>th</sup> September	21st September	28 <sup>th</sup> September
<b>Ardley w Fewcott</b>	9.30am Holy Communion BCP (1662)	9.30am Family Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	9.30am Family HARVEST Service
<b>Fritwell</b>		9.30am Holy Communion (1662)	9:30 Family Communion HARVEST Service	6pm Evensong
<b>Lower Heyford and Caulcott</b>	11am Holy Communion (1662)	11am Morning Prayer	11am Family Service	11am Family Communion HARVEST Service
<b>Somerton</b>	6pm Evensong	9.30am Sunday Club	11am Matins with Holy Communion (1662)	9.30am Family Communion
<b>Souldern</b>	10.30am Wild Worship	11am Holy Communion ( <i>with the choir</i> )		10:30am Family Church with HARVEST Service at 11
<b>Upper Heyford</b>	9.30am Family Communion Service			9.30am Holy Communion (1662)
<b>Heyford Park Chapel</b>	Mid-week Communion Services on Wednesdays 10 <sup>th</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup> September at 10am			

## Lighthouse Holiday Club

Lighthouse Holiday Clubs are run by volunteers from local churches in 15-20 locations spread over Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire so that children can encounter God in a fun-filled week with teaching, sport, craft, drama and music. The Shelswell Benefice (our next door group of churches) has run one for several years now, and Philip and I went along as volunteers for the 2025 Lighthouse at the end of July.



Some 60 children, aged 4-11 came to Finmere Primary School from 10:00 to 3:30 Monday to Friday and were divided into four groups according to age, there were also teenage helpers. The underpinning charity Lighthouse Central provides teaching materials (updated every year) as well as the software and admin framework to help with safeguarding and other policies. This really streamlines the effort needed from the sponsoring churches and the volunteers.

The 2025 theme was Daniel alongside outer space. This allowed for lots of fun activities related to the writing on the wall, walking in the furnace, and of course surviving in the lions' den. I had forgotten how action packed the first five chapters of Daniel are! As a helper alongside a team leader Philip and I helped the children filling in workbooks, doing secret writing, making astronaut back packs and supervising games like rounders. There was a piano in the school hall and Philip was called upon to play "the Lighthouse song" (with actions) that was a part of the closing session that brought everyone together at the end of each day. Very usefully, we were also given the chance to be part of daily registration and other admin tasks so that we had a taste of most aspects of running the club during the week.

A number of the children had been before, one little girl told me it was the best week of the summer holidays and I was touched during a teaching session to see a 4 year old physically budge up along his bench to "make space for Jesus".

Overall it was hard work but fun, and because of the template provided by Lighthouse, it didn't seem as daunting as putting on something like this from scratch. Shellswell started small with only 20 children, but now has a waiting list for parents who want to enrol their children. Perhaps over the next year or two we could consider a "Cherwell Lighthouse"?





Monday afternoons 1-3pm  
at The Chapel Heyford Park  
572 Brice Road, OX25 5TE

An informal group of like minded people getting together to  
express their faith through art and creativity

Barbara 07889 444 616 for more info

## Souldern Church Choir



All you need to join us is a passion for singing!  
We're a friendly group and you don't even need to audition  
Just come along and join in  
We sing both religious and secular music of all styles!



We rehearse most Wednesdays at 7:30pm in Souldern Church  
(although not during August!)

If you would like to join us please email for more information



and to confirm next date and time for rehearsal

Philip Boxall: [philipb013@outlook.com](mailto:philipb013@outlook.com)

Clive Smith: [clive.r.smith@icloud.com](mailto:clive.r.smith@icloud.com)

## OUR BENEFICE PRAYER

**Loving God, we thank-you for Your constant presence, especially in this time of change.**

**Grant us patience, wisdom and unity as we seek Your will for the future.**

**We pray for all who serve, please give them strength, energy and times of rest.**

**Bless our communities with Your peace, joy and love.**

**Help us to trust in Your perfect timing and that you are already preparing the right person to come here as team rector.**

**May we continue to grow in faith to serve one another and You with joy.**

**Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen**

We would love to hear what's going on in your church.

**The next deadline is 25<sup>th</sup> September**

Email: [barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org](mailto:barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org).

### **SPECIAL HARVEST & PET SERVICES**

coming soon during September  
& October!



### **Mid Week**

### **Services in Church**

Wednesdays

### **COMMUNION**

10:00am at Heyford Park Chapel  
(10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> September)

### **Recorded Services**

Tuesdays

### **MORNING PRAYER**

#### **The Cherwell Valley Benefice in the Diocese of Oxford**

Rev Kath Cooke	01869 872242	<a href="mailto:kath.cooke@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk">kath.cooke@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk</a>
Rev Andrew Foran	07753 677 470	<a href="mailto:andrew.foran@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk">andrew.foran@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk</a>
Administrator	01869 233687	<a href="mailto:barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk">barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk</a>

#### **Parish Churchwardens & Contacts**

Ardley	Rebecca Bazeley	07931 698 046
Fritwell	Jane White	01869 345396
Heyford Park	Cath Mullineux	01869 225764
Lower Heyford & Caulcott	Philip Boxall	07721 556 199
Somerton		
Souldern	Clive Smith	07783 367 258
Upper Heyford	Sally Anne Mildenhall	07778 431 165

