

Cherwell Valley **Catch-up**

October 2025

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**



Autumn Days

One of the songs I remember from primary-school is *Autumn Days* by Estelle White (first pub 1978). This jaunty hymn is still popular in schools & churches today, despite the occasion in 1996 when it became controversial with a choir in a small Norfolk church walking out and refusing to sing it! If you don't know it the first lines are below and if you do know it then you're already likely to be singing or humming the tune!

'Autumn days when the grass is jewelled

And the silk inside a chestnut shell,

Jet planes meeting in the air to be refuelled,

All these things I love so well.

Chorus So I mustn't forget, no, I mustn't forget. To say a great big thank you I mustn't forget.'

The chorus of this song reminds us of the great importance of saying 'thank-you.' Autumn is a time where we are thankful in many ways; gathering berries, fruits and conkers, watching leaves turning golden, russet and fiery orange. In churches and schools, we celebrate Harvest Festivals with thankfulness for the gathering-in of crops, God's faithful provision and the hard work of farmers throughout the world. Later in the autumn season we are also deeply thankful in more reflective ways for those we remember on All Souls Day and Remembrance Sunday.

Practising thankfulness and gratitude in everyday life has been found by researchers to have many benefits such as: enhancing mental & physical wellbeing; improving sleep; helping to reduce stress and anxiety; strengthening relationships. God, of course, knew this first and throughout the Bible God's people are encouraged to be thankful. But thankfulness doesn't always come easily, there is much in the world to concern us at this time and many who do not have enough food or even clean water. Gratitude isn't saying that these things don't matter, rather thankfulness begins to change our perspective as we open our eyes to all that God gives us and then our gratitude leads to generosity. In the Harvest services it is so good that we collect food and money to support others in need as we remember that "all things come from You, Lord, and of your own do we give you." (1 Chronicles 29:14)

So during these autumn days why not try practising thankfulness, perhaps saying a short prayer of thanks each morning, giving a thank-you card to someone you appreciate, or at the end of the day writing down 3 things you're grateful for. These can be small glimmers of light such as; feeling warm sunshine on your face; eating hot, buttered toast; a hug from a friend; listening to a favourite song. Let's pray together that this autumn season will be filled with gratitude, generosity and God's blessings in our communities.

Rev Kath

Celebrations!



A big 'Thank you' to all of you who sent me Birthday cards and for the very generous £70 voucher (how appropriate!) for my recent landmark Birthday. Thank you too for coming to the after Benefice Service lunch. With all the parishes represented we had a lovely enjoyable time, including skirting around the gusts and showers! I'm very grateful to Becci and her husband who opened

up their house and garden, and organised the sumptuous buffet lunch, and to Diana who organised the cake. It gives thought we should do a Benefice lunch after Service on one or two of the four fifth Sundays in the year— perhaps one in the summer and one in the winter?

Revd. Andrew"



Also, at the Benefice Service held at St. Mary's Church, Ardley on Andrew's birthday was the swearing in of Becci Bazely as churchwarden for Ardley – Welcome aboard Becci!

Lay Ministry Mornings

Following on from the first of our 'Lay Ministry Support' meetings in July when we ran through what we already have in place across the Benefice, our next get together, led by Philip, Kath and Andrew, focused on lay led services and laying out for communion. After a short reflective bible reading activity (which also served as an example of something that could be included in a service), we considered the way in which public worship together fitted into the bigger circle of worshipping in the way we live day by day and complemented private personal devotion. We reminded ourselves that during a service we are making connections with God, making connections with the others in the church that day, and making connections with the wider Christian family.

Philip took us through the way in which a typical service of the Word (i.e. non Communion) is constructed. An arc which started with gathering and welcome, moving through confession and praise, learning from the Word (bible), a statement of our beliefs, prayer and closing with blessing.

I think those of us who took part will not only be equipped to notice this arc in all the services we attend, but also feel a bit more confident leading a service if called upon to do so.

Finally Andrew took us through the best way to lay up the communion plate and chalice before the service. This is also available as a YouTube on the following link:

<https://youtu.be/kyaR5YPYezk>

Lay lead ministry more widely, not just leading services, is an important mainstay of living out Christian values and supporting the parish communities where we live. Lots of us are lay leaders in that sense. For example it can also include putting together a service or event, outreach, pastoral care and visiting and prayer.

The support sessions are open to everyone, not just churchwardens, if you would like the next session to cover a particular aspect, please talk to a member of the ministry team.

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

Harvest across the Benefice

St Olave's was the first of the benefice churches to celebrate harvest, on 21 September. There was also a baptism, which helped to swell the congregation. The church was beautifully decorated, some of the flowers being



generously donated in memory of former Fritwell residents. Any gifts of produce were subsequently donated to the Bicester Food Bank.

(Please see the poster promoting the fundraising event on 18 October, with proceeds jointly in aid of the Brodey Cancer Centre at the Horton Hospital and St Olave's Church roof repair.)



Elsewhere around the Benefice Harvest was

celebrated at Lower Heyford with a beautiful home baked Harvest Loaf and at Souldern there was a 'Churchyard Clean-up' on Saturday with a BBQ at lunchtime for all the helpers with a Family Church Harvest Celebration on Sunday with coffee and cake afterwards. *(All food donations from Souldern were given to Heyford Park Food Bank)*



Still to come, on Sunday 5th October, there will be a 9:30am Family Harvest Communion service at St. Mary's Upper Heyford and a 6pm Harvest Evensong at St James, Somerton



October Sunday Services

Sunday Worship	5 th October	12 th October	19 th October	26 th October
Ardley w Fewcott	9.30am BCP Holy Communion (1662)	9:30am Family Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	9.30am Family Service
Fritwell		8:30am 1662 HC	9.30am Family Communion Service	
Lower Heyford and Caulcott	11am BCP Holy Communion (1662)	11am Morning Prayer	11am Family Service	11am Family Communion Service
Somerton	6pm HARVEST Evensong	9.30am Sunday Club	11am Matins with BCP Holy Communion (1662)	9.30am Family Communion
Souldern	10.30am Wild Worship	11am Sung Communion (with the choir)		10.30am Family church
Upper Heyford	9.30am Family HARVEST Communion			9.30am BCP Holy Communion (1662)
Heyford Park Chapel	Mid-Week Holy Communion Services Wednesdays 8th & 22 nd October at 10am.			

Live Music on Stage!

Heyford Park welcomes
Finalists from
Britain's Got Talent



Saturday 6th December

At Heyford Park Chapel, 572 Brice Road OX25 5TE

SAVE THE DATE - Tickets available soon - £15



Join us for a cuppa (tea & coffee) and a slice of cake in aid of The Morton's Brodey Cancer Centre and the Fritwell Church roof fund. There will be a choice of cakes to suit all, the opportunity to socialise plus the opportunity to win on the raffle.



Hope to see you there!



Fritwell Village Hall

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

Clive Smith: clive.r.smith@icloud.com

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

The next deadline is 25th October

Email: barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org.

Bell Ringing – Why not give it a try!

Practice evenings

Thursdays 7.30 – 9pm

(Typically Somerton at the beginning of the month, and Lower Heyford at the end of each month)



Come and join us
you would be most welcome

Neil Clare

Somerton Tower Captain

CherwellValleyBellRinging@gmail.com

Mid Week

Services in Church

Wednesdays

COMMUNION

10:00am at Heyford Park Chapel

(8th & 22nd October)

Recorded Services

Tuesdays

MORNING PRAYER

The Cherwell Valley Benefice in the Diocese of Oxford

Rev Kath Cooke	01869 872242	kath.cooke@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk
Rev Andrew Foran	07753 677 470	andrew.foran@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk
Administrator	01869 233687	barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk

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

