

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

February 2026



Dear Friends,

## **Mind The Gap**

It's a familiar warning on the London Underground system where the train doors open on the sharp curve of the platform and there's yawning gap as you get on board. Mind the Gap!

It's not only on public transport systems. The natural environment is currently facing a gap too. The seeds have been sown and they are now waiting for the warm Spring sunshine to germinate. You may have a young person in your family 'doing a gap year' as between formal and further education.

We are in a gap year in the Benefice as we await the arrival of our new Team Rector in mid April (more on that later). Church-wise we are in a gap season too as we finish with Christmas and Jesus's infancy – Candlemas and the Presentation of the Christ child in the Temple on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February this year – and the arrival of Lent with Ash Wednesday on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

In the Bible we read of two gap years in Jesus's early life, firstly between his Presentation in the Temple as an infant and his own visit there as a 12yr old boy. Then we hear nothing until some 20 years later when he present himself to his cousin John for baptism by the River Jordan. In both gap years, St Luke records how Jesus grew and became strong, filled with wisdom in his growing years "in divine and human favour" (2:40,52). These gap years were important. They were a time of quiet formation and maturing, preparing Jesus for what was going to come.

We can find ourselves in gap times in our lives. A life-changing event totally unexpected – or even when expected – can dive us down into one. A dry time of emptiness and nothingness – even darkness – can take over completely.

It's important then to hold on and focus on something that gives us even just a tiny light of meaning. The Christian faith gives us God's offer of hope – something which we cannot see but are invited to believe in. God is ready to triumph with us over the gap of the nothingness darkness and all that would defeat life. Jesus's cross and resurrection is the expression of hope for us.

If you are in this situation you may find our extened Lent Course 'Come and See' of some help. It's an opportunity to find out more about the Christian faith or use it as a refresher and go deeper into the Christian faith – and start to close the gap! Details are elsewhere in this edition.

Every Blessing,  
Rev'd Andrew

## AROUND THE BENEFICE

### Fritwell

An encouraging number of parishioners attended our annual service of lessons and carols. The timing of the service meant that some children were able to join us on this occasion, which was pleasing to see. Children also attended church for the primary school Christmas service. We again hosted a 'midnight communion' on Christmas Eve.

Two days before Christmas, much needed remedial work to the tenor bell was carried out.

### Somerton

The festive period saw a dazzling array of community activities taking place in our historical church, to celebrate the season and strengthen connections amongst ourselves



while also raise funds for the upkeeping of the beautiful building and running of the services. One of the highlights has to be the traditional **nativity service** held on Christmas Eve. As in previous years, the Church was packed and all those in attendance (young and old, local and from further afield) thoroughly enjoyed the experience.



As we welcome 2026, a programme of special events and activities that will take place in our church are being discussed and planned, and details on which will be shared in due course through various channels. But for now, we would like to draw your attention to the **Sunday Club**, held at 9:30am on the 2<sup>nd</sup>



Sunday of each month. There is a short service followed by an activity or craft, ranging from building bird boxes and baking bread to the annual Christingle making. The Sunday Club is fun and informal with participation and engagement (of the young & not so young...) at the core. As the weather warms up, there will be more outdoor adventures. All welcome!





# COME AND SEE

Lent Course

Discovering Christian  
faith & spirituality  
through small group  
discussion,  
reading the bible, prayer,  
coffee & biscuits



Introduction (Coffee at 10:45 for 11am  
start) Jan 28<sup>th</sup> – Who is God?  
Feb, 4<sup>th</sup> – What about the Bible?  
11<sup>th</sup> Feb – Communicating with God  
Prayer & Worship

**Come & See course - Exploring Holy  
Communion starts Ash Wednesday  
18<sup>th</sup> Feb for 6 weeks**

At The Chapel, Heyford Park, 572 Brice  
Road, Heyford Park, OX25 5TE

## February Sunday Services

Sunday Worship	1 <sup>st</sup> February	8 <sup>th</sup> February	15 <sup>th</sup> February	22 <sup>nd</sup> February
<b>Ardley w Fewcott</b>	9.30am BCP Holy Communion (1662)	9:30am Family Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	9.30am Family Service
<b>Fritwell</b>	10:30am Wild Worship	8:30am 1662 HC	9.30am Family Communion Service	
<b>Lower Heyford and Caulcott</b>	11am BCP Holy Communion (1662)	11am Morning Prayer	11am Family Service	11am Family Communion Service
<b>Somerton</b>	6pm Evensong	9:30am Sunday Club	11am Matins with BCP Holy Communion (1662)	9.30am Family Service with Communion
<b>Souldern</b>	10.30am Wild Worship	11am Sung Communion		10.30am Family church with optional HC
<b>Upper Heyford</b>	9.30am Family Communion			9.30am BCP Holy Communion (1662)
<b>Heyford Park Chapel</b>	<b>Mid-Week Holy Communion Services</b> Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> February at 10am. <b>Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February at 10am</b> <b>Ash Wednesday Communion Service</b>			



## **Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers**

*Established 17th January 1881*

**Learning and Development Workgroup**

### **RADLEY ONE-DAY COURSE**

**SATURDAY 11<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

**Cost £30.00**

**Methods offered (subject to demand and capacity):**

**Plain bob doubles, Grandsire doubles, Plain bob minor,  
Grandsire triples, Plain bob major.**

These courses have been running for a number of years and are designed for learners of all ages and levels of competence who are members of the ODG. If you are unsure which group to apply for, the application form gives details of the requirements for each group.

We aim to improve your confidence as well as your ringing, with friendly support and tuition.

For an application form please contact: Lindsay Powell: [lpowell@talktalk.net](mailto:lpowell@talktalk.net)

**Closing date for applications is Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

# NEW!

## at St Olave's, Fritwell

### Church in the Churchyard



Bible Story, Songs & Prayers  
All Welcome

Beginning **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February at 10:30am**  
then continuing on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month

#### CHILDRENS WORSHIP AROUND THE BENEFICE

**Souldern**

Wild Worship – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday & Family Church – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday both at 10:30am

**Fritwell**

Wild Worship -3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month at 10:30am

**Somerton**

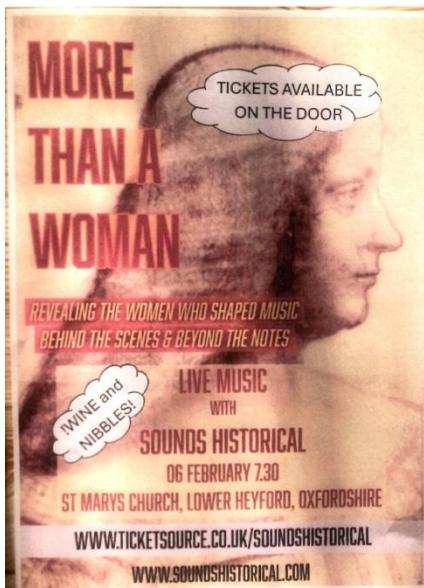
Sunday Club –2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month at 9:30am

# Souldern Church Choir

All you need to join us is a passion for singing!

We rehearse most Wednesdays at 7:30pm in Souldern Church

Philip Boxall: [philipb013@outlook.com](mailto:philipb013@outlook.com) Clive Smith: [clive.r.smith@icloud.com](mailto:clive.r.smith@icloud.com)



## Mid Week

### Services in Church

Wednesdays

### COMMUNION

10:00am at Heyford Park Chapel

(Wednesday 4th Feb &

**Ash Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February**)

### 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.mcgarry@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk">barbara.mcgarry@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

