

Cherwell Valley

Catch-up

February 2026

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**



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 1st February this year – and the arrival of Lent with Ash Wednesday on the 15th.

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 extended 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 upkeep 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 2nd



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 28th – Who is God?

Feb, 4th – What about the Bible?

11th Feb – Communicating with God
Prayer & Worship

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

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

February Sunday Services

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



Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Established 17th January 1881

Learning and Development Workgroup

RADLEY ONE-DAY COURSE

SATURDAY 11th 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

Closing date for applications is Friday 13th February 2026

NEW!
at St Olave's, Fritwell
Church in the Churchyard



Bible Story, Songs & Prayers
All Welcome

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

CHILDRENS WORSHIP AROUND THE BENEFICE

Souldern

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

Fritwell

Wild Worship -3rd Sunday of the month at 10:30am

Somerton

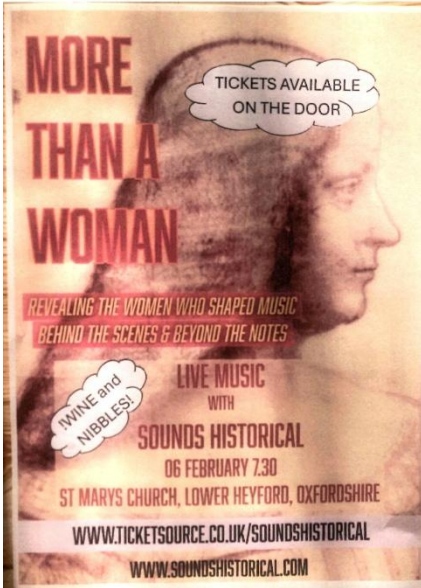
Sunday Club –2nd Sunday of the month at 9:30am

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



Mid Week

Services in Church

Wednesdays

COMMUNION

10:00am at Heyford Park Chapel

(Wednesday 4th Feb &

Ash Wednesday 18th February)

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

