

Cherwell Valley

Catch-up

APRIL 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

Easter eggs and all that (chocolate!)

Now that Easter has arrived, I can start eating again what I gave up for Lent: chocolate , now in the form of Easter eggs. My favourite is the crème egg, the one that looks like a hard-boiled egg with its yellow middle and white surround, coated with tasty chocolate for the eggshell and wrapped in colourful foil.

It is one of two types of Easter eggs. One has a 'goody' or sweets inside it, the other is just an empty chocolate egg.

Both help us understand Easter and Jesus's resurrection. The empty one reminds us how Jesus broke out of the eggshell-like feel of his tomb, freeing himself from all that had tried to close him in. The hollow chocolate egg echoes Jesus's empty tomb. By his resurrection Jesus overcame the powers that tried to shut him away. With faith and hope in Jesus we too can break out of all those things in life that would otherwise try to entomb us – disappointments and failures of all kinds. He is ready to work with us and lift us out of the shell and tomb that life can sometimes become.

The egg with the filling? Well, that tells us about Easter too. Jesus rising from the tomb offers us sweetness and joys of new life – not the old one carrying on from where it left off. It is a new fresh outlook on life for the wholeness of peace and its resulting joy. It is continuous and never gives up, always available to us. The Christian Faith describes and believes it as without end: 'life everlasting'. That offers us so much hope and confidence for the current extreme challenges and uncertainties we face in the world around us. And it encourages us too in the areas of our own lives where we may be struggling.

Have a wonderful, blessed and joyful Easter.

Revd. Andrew

An Easter Prayer for children (young ones and not so young!)

Jesus you died for me (*arms out like a cross*)

Jesus you rose again for me! (*arms and hands up*)

Jesus, you are alive for ever (*clap*) and ever (*clap*) and ever (*clap*)!

Amen! (altogether)

AROUND THE BENEFICE

Confirmation

At the Lent/Confirmation preparation group the *Come & See* material challenged us to reflect on joy & suffering, looking at Romans 12:9-21 - particularly "weeping with those who weep." Bishop Steven mentioned the work of the charity 'Embrace the Middle East' a Christian development charity tackling suffering poverty and injustice in the Middle East <https://embraceme.org/> , and the collection from the service raised £200 towards this good cause.

Lower Heyford



The church and churchyard working day at Lower Heyford included clearing a lot of dust and high-up cobwebs inside the church, and coppicing quite a substantial hazel by the church gate, as well as clearing the draining ditch around the church.



Somerton

To mark Mothering Sunday, a special Family Communion was held at St James Church. The congregation, aged between 3 and over 70, celebrated the occasion with readings, reflections, hymns, posies and, of course, friendly post service catch ups over refreshments.



Fund Raisers

To ensure that our beautiful historic church is well kept and open to all as a spiritual sanctuary, Somerton community is more determined than ever to step up our collective fund raising efforts. The PCC is in the process of confirming details of a programme of diverse fund raisers for the year which will be made available in due course. But in the meantime, please do come to our **Jigsaw Lino Cutting Craft event on Saturday, 11 April 2026**. Information on venue and time can be obtained by contacting Somerton PCC.

Souldern

Once again this year, on Palm Sunday Pilgrim Cross will be calling in at ABVM, Souldern for lunchtime refreshments on the Oxford leg of their walk to Walsingham during the course of the coming week – do look out for them.

Palm Sunday

Please join us at
St James Church, Somerton on
Sunday, 29th March at 11am

A special Family
Communion Service

(complete with a real donkey!)

Everyone welcome

...even if you don't usually come to church.

Refreshments available after the service



EVENING PRAYER (Compline) SERVICES during HOLY WEEK

Monday 30th March – 7pm at St Mary's Lower Heyford

Tuesday 31st March – 7pm at St Mary's Ardley

Wednesday 1st April - 7pm at ABVM Souldern

Maundy Thursday 2nd April - Communion 7pm at Fritwell

Good Friday 3 Apr - The Last Hour 2pm at Upper Heyford

Good Friday 10:30am
MUDDY CHURCH at ABVM Souldern
(All Welcome)

April Sunday Services

Sunday Worship	5 th April	12 th April	19 th April	26 th April
Ardley w Fewcott	9:30am Easter Celebration Communion	9:30am Family Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	9:30am Family Service
Fritwell	11:00am Easter Celebration Communion	8:30am 1662 HC	9.30am Communion Service 10:30am Wild Worship	6:00pm Evensong
Lower Heyford and Caulcott	11am Easter Celebration Communion	11am Morning Prayer	11am Family Worship	11am Family Communion
Somerton	9:30am Easter Celebration Communion	9:30am Sunday Club	11:00am Matins & HC	9:30am Family Service with Communion
Souldern	6:30am Sunrise Easter Celebration Service	11am Sung Communion		10:30am Family Church with optional Communion
Upper Heyford	11:00 Easter Celebration Communion with HPC			9:30am Family Communion
Heyford Park Chapel	Mid-Week Holy Communion Services Wednesdays 1 st , 15 th & 29 th April			

Children's Church Around the Benefice



Fritwell Wild Worship

3rd Sunday of the month at 9:30am

Outside (*weather permitting*)

Crafts for the children

*Coffee and a chat
for the adults*

Souldern

Wild Worship (Outside) – 1st Sunday

Family Church – 4th Sunday

both at 10:30am

Crafts for the children

*Coffee and a chat
for the adults*



Somerton Sunday Club

2nd Sunday of the month at 9:30am

Short Family Friendly Service

Followed by

Crafts for the children

*Coffee and a chat
for the adults*

Bicester and Islip Deanery

Pilgrim Paths

Islip Circular Walk



Sunday 17th May

Distance: 4.75 miles

You are warmly invited to join Bicester and Islip Deanery's ninth Pilgrim Paths walk.

Starting at St. Nicholas Church, Islip at **2.00pm**.

There will be refreshments and a short service at St. Nicholas Church at the end of the walk.

Further information from the Pilgrim Paths Team:

bicislip.pilgrimpaths@gmail.com

Follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1310223859871650>

A date for your diary: The next Pilgrim Paths Walk will be from Newton Purcell on Sunday 6th September, starting at 2pm.

Create
 faith in Art
 Mon 1-3pm
 The Chapel,
 Heyford Park
 OX25 5TE

No artistic or creative skills necessary, we're here for the fellowship as well as to experiment and learn from each other using different ideas, media and skills

Mid Week
Services in Church
 Wednesday
COMMUNION
(Fortnightly)
 10:00am at Heyford Park Chapel
(Wednesday 1st, 15th & 29th April)

Recorded Services
 Tuesdays
MORNING PRAYER
to receive the link email
barbara.mcgarry@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk

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

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.mcgarry@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

