

# Cherwell Valley Catch-up

## MARCH 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**



***'Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.'***  
**(Romans 12:12)**

"The opening weeks of 2026 have been exceptionally wet across the UK." This is a quote from a Met Office report on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026. The report continues: "Cornwall and County Down recorded their wettest January on record, while Northern Ireland saw its wettest January in 149 years." I'm sure we don't need a report to tell us that it has, at times, felt like the recent rain is never going to stop! During such rainy weather, as well as when looking at world events and challenges nearer to home it can feel like 'winter in my soul'. But since the beginning of 2026 I have been pondering one of the incredible gifts which Christians are given and that is **hope**.

We are currently in Lent, six weeks of preparation for the greatest Christian festival of hope – Easter when we remember the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ offering eternal hope for us all. So how do we hold onto this hope in the dark and difficult circumstances we sometimes find ourselves in? A recent reflection I received from the charity Tearfund ([www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org)) reminded me that: "Although we know that God can and sometimes does act in an instant, it can be hard to keep praying for a situation that we can't see is changing, whether it's something in our own lives or in the wider world. But the Bible calls us to be patient, to hold onto hope and to continue to be faithful in prayer." I asked the Cherwell Valley Benefice Facebook group for signs of hope across the Benefice for this article and one person replied; "You cannot see the power of prayer but you can certainly hope those prayers will be heard and see the results of it. Thank-you to everyone for your prayers." Let's continue to be a community who prays faithfully for those we know and the wider world. There is an opportunity to pause, breathe and re-ignite hope by joining in the Benefice Quiet Day on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March at St James' Church Somerton, more details in this Catch-up – all are welcome.

As well as through prayer I think signs of hope can be seen in the wonderful creation around us – as others from the CVB Facebook Group reflected: "The celandines in flower up against the wall of Souldern church. Beautiful!"; "The field next to our house has become very green with the sunshine & showers, not forgetting the longer days – it's a sign of hope, spring is on its way and hope of a good harvest for everyone this year." Every year I wonder at snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils – how do these bulbs, planted in darkness survive the winter weather and produce such beautiful flowers?! Take a look in our churchyards at the beautiful flowers, reminding us all that death is not the end.

As a Benefice there are many other signs of hope: The wonderful Lent group exploring the Eucharist through 'Come & See'; Wild Worship in Souldern & Fritwell; The Celebration for International Women's Day at Heyford Park Chapel on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March; Sunday Club in Somerton; The Benefice Confirmation Service coming up on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March in Lower Heyford; The arrival of Rob as team rector in April and much more (this article would be far too long if I list all the signs of hope!!) So, let's keep on being "joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." ...../cont.

/cont.....

This prayer concluded the Tear Fund reflection I mentioned earlier:

**Lord God,**

***As conflicts in many parts of the world continue,  
we pray for peace.***

***We pray that fighting will cease so people can return to their homes.***

***We pray that you will help those who have lost so much  
to experience your love around them.***

***We thank you that where loss feels like the end,  
hope and love wins.***

***When we find ourselves in situations of loss,  
help us to turn to you and trust that you are Lord.***

***Guide our steps, we pray.***

***Amen.***

## AROUND THE BENEFICE

### Ardley

We are holding the Springtime Churchyard tidy-up on Saturday 4th April meeting at the West Door at 10am till midday. Please bring as many garden tools as you can and wear Wellies. It would be lovely to see as many folk as possible to make the work easier. You only need to spend a part of the time there not all of it.

### Lower Heyford

#### **"More than a Woman" concert by Sounds Historical in February**

"Lower Heyford was delighted to welcome back Sounds Historical for a fascinating programme about women who have influenced the development of medieval, renaissance and baroque music. Not only composers but patrons and publishers amongst others. An audience of about 50 were entertained and educated about influential women, ranging from Isabella d'Este (a patron) in the 15th/ 16th century to the contemporary Althea Talbot Howard, an arranger of early music.

Thank you to those who donated food and wine to the evening, served behind the bar or helped in myriad other ways. Nearly £600 was raised to support the church.

### Heyford Park

Heyford Park Chapel has been hosting this years' Come and See Lent Course which has been very well attended. Heyford Park School asked if they could use the building for mock GCSE exams and for the actual GCSE's in late May and early June. It was a pleasure to be able to help out and we are looking forward to strengthening our relationship with Heyford Park School.

On Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March we celebrate International Women's Day in partnership with Clean Slate. The Chapel will be open from 10am; there will be a warm welcome and a light lunch before we end the celebration at 1pm.

# Children's Church Around the Benefice



## **Fritwell** Wild Worship

3<sup>rd</sup> 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) – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday**

**Family Church – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

**both at 10:30am**

Crafts for the children

*Coffee and a chat  
for the adults*



## **Somerton** Sunday Club

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

Short Family Friendly Service

Followed by

Crafts for the children

*Coffee and a chat  
for the adults*

## March Sunday Services

Sunday Worship	1 <sup>st</sup> March	8 <sup>th</sup> March	15 <sup>th</sup> March	22 <sup>nd</sup> March
<b>Ardley w Fewcott</b>	9.30am BCP Holy Communion (1662)	9:30am Family Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	
<b>Fritwell</b>		8:30am 1662 HC	9.30am Communion Service 10:00am Wild Worship	
<b>Lower Heyford and Caulcott</b>	11am BCP Holy Communion (1662)	11am Morning Prayer	11am Family Service	11am CONFIRMATION SERVICE
<b>Somerton</b>	6pm Evensong	9:30am Sunday Club	9:30am Mothering Sunday Family Communion	
<b>Souldern</b>	10.30am Wild Worship			
<b>Upper Heyford</b>	9.30am Family Communion			
<b>Heyford Park Chapel</b>	<b>Mid-Week Holy Communion Services</b> Wednesdays 4 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> March at 10am.			



# COME AND SEE

Lent Course

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

Wednesdays 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> March  
(Coffee at 10:45 for 11am)

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

All Welcome

## Mid Week Services in Church

Wednesday  
**COMMUNION**

(Fortnightly)

10:00am at Heyford Park Chapel  
(Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> March)

## Recorded Services

Tuesdays

**MORNING PRAYER**

to receive the link email

[barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvaleychurch.org.uk](mailto:barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvaleychurch.org.uk)



### Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

*Established 17th January 1887*

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):

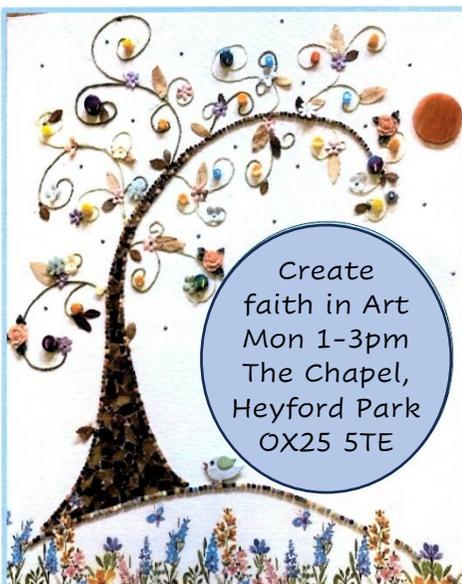
Plain bob doubles, Grandsire doubles, Plain bob minor, Grandsire triples, Plain bob major.

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: [lm Powell@talktalk.net](mailto:lm Powell@talktalk.net)

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



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

Clean Slate & The Chapel, Heyford Park

INTERNATIONAL  
**WOMENS**  
*Day*  
— —  
CELEBRATION

ALL WOMEN FREE ENTRY

**MARCH 8TH**

**10AM TO 1PM**

"Give to Gain"

The Woman at the Well (John 4:5–42)

Refreshments - Worship - Activities - Prayer - Lunch

For more information email: [barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk](mailto:barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk)

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### The Power of Prayer

Thank you so much to everyone who has been praying for my mum who had a very nasty fall recently for which the options of a full recovery were very bleak at the time. The love and warmth of your prayers have been almost tangible and I'm thrilled to say that she is making a remarkable recovery and will hopefully be home in the next few weeks. Thank you all so much.

### Holy Week Compline services

Mon 30<sup>th</sup> March – 7pm Lower Heyford

Tues 31<sup>st</sup> March - 7pm Ardley

Weds 1<sup>st</sup> April – 7pm Souldern

**Maudy Thurs** Service – 7pm Fritwell

**Good Friday** – 2pm Upper Heyford  
*(The Last Hour)*

## Benefice Quiet Day

**Saturday 14th March**

**10am-3pm St James, Somerton**

**'Into the House of the Lord'**

**led by Rev Ros Steel**

*Our church buildings are important to us both in the life of our community and in our worship. The idea of the 'House of the Lord' is one that recurs throughout Scripture.*

*In this Quiet Day we will explore more deeply what the invitation to go into the 'House of the Lord' means in terms of worship, sanctuary and hope, equipping us to live as the people of God in our world today.*

## 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)

### 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

