

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

MAY 2026



One of the things I love at this time of year is how, in the weeks following Easter, we have readings set that keep reminding us of the resurrection of Jesus which we first celebrate on Easter Day.

This regular, liturgical repetition – which we also enjoy around Jesus's birth after Christmas – of the same points, again and again, helps us to live, as it were, alongside the first apostles, experiencing in a symbolic way, but a way that speaks powerfully to us, the transition they went from being completely at a loss to meeting their Risen Lord. Meeting their Risen Lord and learning from him that God has conquered sin and death with love and God's own everlasting life. We meet Jesus Christ for ourselves once again in the ways in which we celebrate Easter, embracing for ourselves this astonishing and overwhelming revelation, totally unexpected and so hard to take in. But when accepted, the basis for a new way of life, now and always.

In this beautiful place the breaking out of new life on trees that looked dead only weeks ago – leaves and especially blossom – helps us in our celebration and in knowing our Risen Lord for ourselves, who has come from God and gone to God, and in going to God has shared his joy with us and taken us with him. (That, after all, is what celebration of the Ascension of Jesus is saying.) This year I am especially enjoying the hawthorn blossom across the Benefice, which the artist David Hockney says is "like champagne poured all over everything": it is so celebratory, as are the horse chestnuts in flower.

I want to thank you for the welcome you have been giving me in the last few weeks. It is such a happy time to be getting to know the different parishes and Heyford Park for myself – with celebration in the Churches and in the countryside around, and with new life in the fields as well. I am looking forward to doing what I can to further the work of God in this place, and alongside each and all of you.

With love and prayers,

Revd. Rob

AROUND THE BENEFICE

The Chapel, Heyford Park



On April 16th we were thrilled to welcome Rob as Rector of our Churches here in the Cherwell Valley Benefice



Lower Heyford

Church music isn't just tradition – it's the future – Hugh Morris, RSCM Director

The Royal School of Church music was formed in 1945. It is the largest church music organisation in Britain with 8,500 members worldwide. Since 2006 its centre has been located within Sarum College, a Christian ecumenical college in Salisbury's cathedral close.



At the recent conference there were sessions on, for example, linking with your community, developing children's choirs, looking after your voice and filling in the gaps or improvising when playing the organ. There were some keynote speeches as well. After hearing about a lot of churches with big choirs and lots going on musically it was encouraging to hear Hugh Morris say that the RSCM was also there for small parish churches with few resources.

Diana Boxall



OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS
RINGING DAY – BICESTER BRANCH – MONDAY, 4th MAY 2026

As participating towers, Fritwell and Souldern will be open

to visiting ringers at the following times:

Fritwell	17.15 – 18.15
Souldern	17.45 – 18.45

May Sunday Services

Sunday Worship	3 rd May	10 th May	17 th May	24 th May	31 st May
Ardley w Fewcott	9.30am BCP Holy Communion (1662)	9:30am Family Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	9.30am Family Service	11am Benefice Service at Souldern
Fritwell		8:30am 1662 HC	9.30am Family Communion 10:30am Wild Worship	6pm Evensong	
Lower Heyford and Caulcott	11am BCP Holy Communion (1662)	11am Rogation Walk	11am Family Worship	11am Family Communion	
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	
Upper Heyford	9.30am Family Communion			9.30am BCP Holy Communion (1662)	
Heyford Park Chapel	Mid-Week Holy Communion Services Wednesday 13 (venue tbc) & 27 th May at 10am. Thursday 14th May Ascension Day Service – 10am St James, Somerton				

Loving Our Landscape

Rogation Walk & Community Gathering

Sunday 10th May

**11:00am – Beating of the Bounds Walk (Meet at St Mary’s
Church, Lower Heyford)**

1:00pm – Free Shared Lunch at St Mary’s Church

The Rogation Walk is a chance to:
Reconnect with the landscape beneath our feet.
Honour the fields, paths, and waterways that sustain us.
Walk together in a spirit of gratitude, reflection, and community.

All are warmly welcome

Whether you come from a faith, no faith, or simply a love of the land,
this is an open invitation to walk side by side.

What to expect:

A guided walk around the parish boundaries. (Two routes depending on ability)

Moments to pause, notice, and reflect.

A free shared lunch at St Mary’s Church following the walk.

Please email Diana your favourite photos of Lower Heyford to be displayed in the church on the day. dianab013@outlook.com

This event was made possible by a grant
from the British Pilgrimage Trust
Hosted by LHPCC



**Step into an ancient tradition of walking the land,
marking its boundaries, and offering care for the place we call home.**

**Please let us know
what's happening
in your Church!**

If you have
had an event recently

or

If you have
any events planned

We would love to hear about them

Email:

barbara.mcgarry@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk

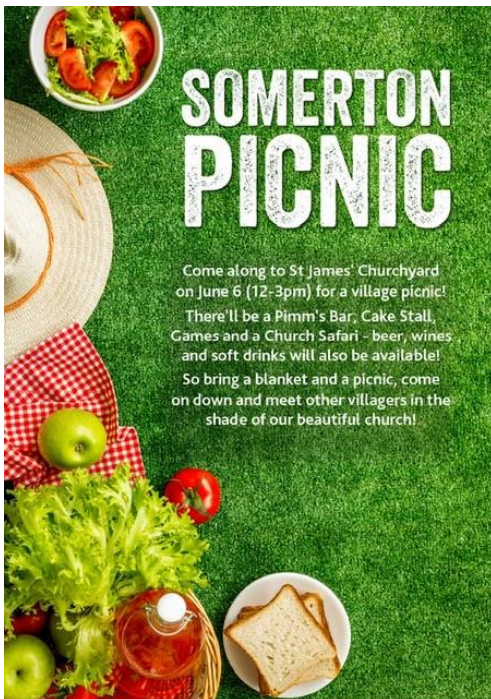
Coming Soon!

**Daily Morning
Prayer Services**

*Watch out for
further details!*

(If you are not on our regular
emailing list please contact)

barbara.mcgarry@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk

A vibrant green background with various picnic items: a bowl of salad, a woven hat, a red and white checkered picnic blanket, a basket of fresh vegetables (lettuce, tomatoes, apples), a glass of iced tea, and a plate of bread. The text is overlaid on the right side.

**SOMERTON
PICNIC**

Come along to St James' Churchyard on June 6 (12-3pm) for a village picnic! There'll be a Pimm's Bar, Cake Stall, Games and a Church Safari - beer, wines and soft drinks will also be available! So bring a blanket and a picnic, come on down and meet other villagers in the shade of our beautiful church!

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:
bicester.pilgrimpaths@gmail.com

Follow us at:
<https://www.facebook.com/gro-1131022385197165/>

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

Children's Church Around the Benefice



Fritwell Wild Worship

3rd Sunday of the month at 10:30am

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*



**Mid Week
Services in Church**

Wednesday
COMMUNION

(Fortnightly)

10:00am

*Wednesday 13th & 27th May
(Venue tbc while the Chapel is being
used for GCSE exams)*

Recorded Services

Tuesdays

MORNING PRAYER

*to receive the link email
barbara.mcgarra@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk*

The Cherwell Valley Benefice in the Diocese of Oxford

Rev Rob Gilbert	01869 222625	rob.gibert@cherwellvalleychurch.org.uk
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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

