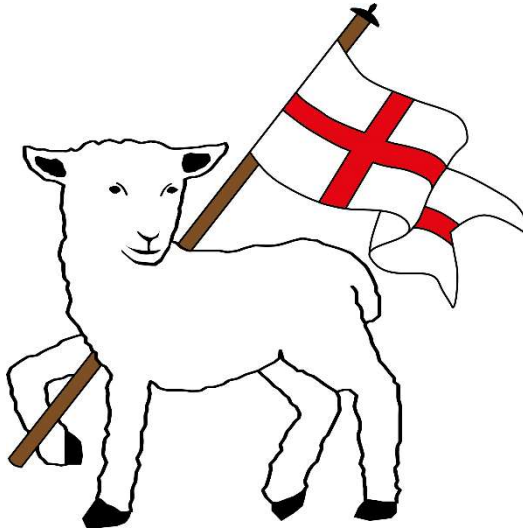


OCTOBER 2025

**The Parish of Kidmore End
& Sonning Common**

The Lamb and Flag



The parish magazine of

**St John the Baptist Church, Kidmore End
and
Christ the King Church, Sonning Common**

70p

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The parish website can be found on <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/166>

FROM THE RECTORY

Dear Friends

If you're anything like me, the summer now seems a distant memory! Yet autumn has its own beauty, and even though for many of us October brings tasks and deadlines galore - whether in the context of church, family, school, university or work - we can take moments to enjoy it. After the expansiveness of summer, autumn is a chance to take a lead from nature and 'draw in' a bit, perhaps taking some time for reflection. In a certain sense this ties in with the Church's liturgical year, as we are still in Ordinary Time, the period after Trinity Sunday when we are encouraged to meditate on what the great cycle of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and Pentecost means for us as Christians and for the world that God so loved that he gave his only son.

The importance of reflecting on our faith leads me on to highlight an important initiative in the Benefice: the Alpha Youth Course which begins this month. Many of you may have heard of Alpha as a course which introduces the Christian faith to adults. As its name suggests, Alpha Youth is a version of this, but aimed at 11-20 year olds. It will be an informal, fun, interactive, and interesting course, delivered over 8 weeks at Christ the King. It will start on Tuesday 14 October, and each session will begin at 5pm. Please can I commend this to your prayers, and if you know anyone who may be interested, do pass on Sarah's contact details: revsvdwatt@gmail.com.

God bless

James

WHERE TO JOIN A SERVICE IN OCTOBER

Date	CTK	SJB	All Saints
5 October	09.30 Eucharist	18.00 Evensong	10.30 Sung Eucharist
12 October	09.30 Eucharist	11.15 Sung Eucharist	10.30 Sung Eucharist
	17.00 Second Sundays		
19 October	09.30 Service of the Word	11.15 Sung Eucharist	09.00 Holy Communion
			10.30 Peppard Praise
26 October	09.30 Eucharist	11.15 Sung Eucharist	10.30 Family Communion
			18.30 Evensong

Please check the weekly bulletins in case any of the planned arrangements are changed.

All Saints' celebrates Harvest Thanksgiving on Sunday 12 October.

WHAT IS IN THE LECTIONARY FOR NOVEMBER?

All Saints' Day is Saturday 1 November and the Feast can be celebrated on Sunday 2 November – All Saints' Sunday. The Feast of Christ the King is celebrated on Sunday 23 November. The First Sunday of Advent falls on Sunday 30 November and St Andrew the Apostle is transferred to Monday 1 December. Remembrance Sunday is observed on Sunday 9 November. The next liturgical year is Year A in the three-year cycle and the featured Gospel is Matthew.

Other lesser feasts and commemorations include the Saints and Martyrs of England on 8 November, Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome, Teacher, 461 on 10 November, Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, 1200 on 17 November, Hilda, Abbess of Whitby, 680 on 19 November, and Issac Watts, hymnwriter, 1748, on 25 November.

THE BISHOP OF OXFORD'S OPEN LETTER TO NIGEL FARAGE, MP, FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REFORM PARTY'S NEW MIGRATION POLICY

Dear Mr Farage



The Rt Revd Steven Croft

I was sorry not to meet you on your visit to Oxford this week to announce your party's new policy on migration.

As Bishop of Oxford, I know that Oxford is one of the kindest and most welcoming cities in the country and one of the greatest cultural crossroads in the world. I'm honoured to be one of the patrons of *Asylum Welcome* which offers information, advice and practical support to asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants living in Oxfordshire.

Our city seemed a strange choice for your press conference. Perhaps you had in mind that you were near the site of Campsfield House, opposite the airport in Kidlington. Campsfield House was an Immigration Removal Centre operated by Group 4 which closed in 2018. I remember vividly going to visit and meeting those detained in my early years as Bishop. The government plans to re-build and re-open the site as part of its long-term plans.

I agree with some of what you said in the press conference. Immigration questions and border security are vital. The flow of migrants across the Channel in small boats is perilous and heartbreaking to watch. There are real challenges to community cohesion if these issues are not addressed.

But I disagree (profoundly) with your proposed policy in the following ways: I heard no compassion in what you said for those who are at risk from people traffickers; those who fled for their lives; those who long for sanctuary and safety; the vulnerable who would be forcibly deported. The British people, as I understand them, want public policies founded on the deeply British and Christian values of compassion and care for those in need.

I heard nothing at all about the complexity of the problem. Migration is a global issue - not a local issue. Migration into Europe affects our neighbours. International co-operation is key to resolving and improving the situation. International development in rebuilding countries of origin is vital. The biggest driver of global migration now, and in the future is, climate change. International agreements on combatting climate change and mitigation are a vital part of the solution. I heard nothing about international collaboration other than attempting to negotiate bilateral agreements to return those who enter the country illegally.

You published broad brush intentions with insufficient attention to detail. As you are well aware, there have been numerous attempts to address the question of migration, but all have faltered for lack of compassion, attention to complexity, collaboration or attention to granular challenges of law and resources. I cannot see that the proposals you outlined yesterday will be any different. You are raising hopes for some without the means of delivery.

In order to achieve your aims, you set out your intention to dismantle key legal frameworks: the European Convention on Human Rights; the UN Treaty against torture and the Refugee Convention. These frameworks give protection to us all; they are built on key principles of justice and democracy; they are fundamental to the world order Britain helped to build in the 20th Century.

Most of all, I disagree profoundly with your attempts to politicise the questions of migration and asylum by deliberately increasing fear of the stranger in our communities. Community cohesion and mutual respect are vital assets in any local community. There are many, many forces which seek to separate good neighbours and sow distrust. We have seen an increase in hate crime in recent months, even in this kindest and most international of cities. To see any politician with a public platform seeking to play on these fears and stoke division for political advantage is deeply disturbing.

Oxford's cohesion is built on complex networks of strong relationships between different faith and civic groups. My colleagues and I see and work with similar initiatives in Milton Keynes, Reading, Slough, Banbury and the other diverse communities which fall within the Diocese of Oxford. We are not helped by politicians who seek to stoke division for their own political ends.

I agree with the need to focus energy and leadership on the questions you are highlighting. However, for the sake of our local communities, I would appeal to every party to depoliticise this most toxic of issues and seek cross party agreement on solutions wherever possible.

I would be very happy to engage in further conversation on all of this. I hope next time you are able to visit Oxford it will be possible to meet.

With kind regards and prayers that wisdom and compassion will shape your political agenda,

+Steven

WHERE DID THE HYMN *JUST AS I AM, WITHOUT ONE PLEA* COME FROM?

The Gospel reading in the Lectionary for the Last Sunday after Trinity is Luke 18. 9 – 14. In the relevant Bible references in the appendix to the parish hymnal there are two hymns suggested, *King of Glory*, *King of Peace* and *Just as I am*. The latter hymn is often sung as a Communion hymn. The lyrics were written by Charlotte Elliott (1789 – 1871). Charlotte lived in Clapham, London, for 32 years but she was struck with a crippling illness, and as a result she moved to Brighton to live with her brother, who was an evangelical minister.

This hymn was written by Charlotte in 1834, and one can easily sense from the lyrics that Charlotte was giving voice to the many struggles with which she was wrestling. Yet Charlotte has written what is probably the finest of her hymns. She had a great love of poetry and music, and the hymn is a remarkable testimony of faith. Charlotte uses powerful phrases, “tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt.” And “Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind, sight, riches, healing of the mind, yea, all I need, in thee the find. O Lamb of God, I come.” The hymn grew in popularity and by 1906 it found a deserved place in both the latest version of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and the newly published *English Hymnal*.

The parish hymnal provides two music settings. The first is *Saffron Walden* composed by Arthur Henry Brown (1830 – 1926), and an older tune, *Misericordia*, composed by Henry Smart (1813 – 1879). The *English Hymnal* 1906 and the recently published *Revised English Hymnal* offers *Saffron Walden*.

Allen Harris

PARISH SHARE AT ARCHDEACONRY LEVEL AT 31 AUGUST 2025

Archdeaconry	Amount paid	Outstanding	% Paid
Berkshire	£ 3,785,808	£ 2,129,375	64.0
Buckingham	£ 3,945,535	£ 2,881,319	57.8
Dorchester	£ 3,888,259	£ 2,337,524	62.5
Oxford	£ 1,035,580	£ 769,565	57.4
Totals	£12,655,182	£ 8,117,783	60.9

The summary table above shows how each of the four archdeaconries have contributed to their assigned parish share amounts at 31 August 2025. At this stage last year the aggregate contributions totalled £12,381,911. Henley Deanery has contributed £371,115 which is 54.3% of the assigned amount. By 31 August 2024 Henley Deanery had contributed 48.0% of the 2024 assignment.

THE CHILDREN’S SOCIETY CAMPAIGNS ON THE SOARING COST OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS

The BBC One’s *The One Show* recently interviewed Children’s Society’s CEO Mark Russell, on a growing crisis affecting families across the UK: the soaring cost of school uniforms.

Russell reported that a new poll by The Children’s Society has found that more than two in five children (44%) have experienced negative consequences due to school uniforms that their parents found to be “unaffordable”. Russell said: “That included being placed in detention, isolation, or even excluded from school—simply because their families couldn’t afford expensive branded items. And nearly 40% of families said that prices haven’t improved, despite efforts to make more second-hand items available.” And so now The Children’s Society is campaigning to cut the costs of school uniform. “We want to see a limit on the number of branded uniform items per school, and for schools to do all they can to reduce costs for parents and carers.”

But Russell says: “Here at the Children’s Society we can’t do it alone. We need parents across the country to help us. How? By donating their children’s outgrown school uniforms to our Give Hope Shop. (<https://givehope.uk/shop>) “Every purchase of a school uniform item goes directly to families who need it the most—giving hope when so many are struggling with high costs.”

THE DEATH OF HRH DUCHESS OF KENT

The Archbishop of York issued the following statement, and the Church of England published a prayer on the death of HRH The Duchess of Kent on 4 September.



"Today, we mourn the death of Katharine, HRH The Duchess of Kent, who was born here in Yorkshire, and whose Royal Wedding was held at York Minster in the city whose freedom she held. Katharine was an advocate for children and young people's welfare throughout her life. She taught and encouraged generations of young musicians. Millions will remember her comfort and kindness exemplified in her embrace of Jana Novotna in the final at Wimbledon whose Patron she was for many years. In 1994 her own deep and profound faith led her from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism a

moment the then Archbishop of Canterbury described as a 'personal decision of a devout Christian on a spiritual journey'. She was held in high esteem by all who met her and knew her. I pray for the repose of her soul, and that HRH The Duke of Kent, their children and all the Royal Family may know the consolation and comfort that comes from our common Christian faith. May she Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory."

Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York

A prayer following the death of HRH Duchess of York

Almighty and Eternal God,
Lord of life, and conqueror of death,
receive, we pray, your servant Katharine,
whom you have called from this life.
Grant her a share in the inheritance
of the saints in light,
and comfort us who mourn her passing,
that, strengthened by your grace,
we may trust in your Son,
who is the resurrection and the life;
through the same, Jesus Christ, our Lord Amen.

THE REVD CANON LIZ HASSALL, ACTING ARCHDEACON OF YORK, REFLECTS ON LUKE 14.25-33 FOR THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 7 SEPTEMBER.



Revd Canon Liz Hassall

Have you ever seen those old-fashioned kitchen scales, where you had a pile of little brass weights to put on one side and weigh against the ingredients? You put your brass weights on one side, then add ingredients to the other to try and make it balance. It's easy to see which side is heavier, as it plummets to the worktop.

Weighing things out and figuring out the cost is the picture that Jesus gives us in the gospel reading this week from the end of chapter 14 of Luke. Jesus talks about different situations when

you count the cost: in a building project, you work out if you can finish it before you start. In a war, you research your enemy's strength and decide whether you can live with the outcome. If not, you come to terms. It's easy to understand those situations, but Jesus is not giving advice on building projects or warfare, he is giving a warning over the cost of following him.

Jesus is giving these teachings while surrounded by large crowds. He's the next big thing – popular, but do these crowds really know what they are getting into? Are they prepared for the potential cost of following Jesus, or are they just along for a good time? They need a challenge, and Jesus gives it to them.

He said, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple." That is a terrifying statement, because we are all dependant at different times in our lives on our families to a greater or lesser extent. Jesus is telling the people listening to him to count the cost of following him. Can they live with the possibility of losing their families? It probably won't come to that, but they need to consider the possibility that it will. Making the decision to follow Jesus is, in effect, saying you are ok with losing your family.

When I made that decision, I was 15. Being free of the ties of family was something I was aiming for, counting the years until I could leave home and to take charge of my own life. It wasn't actually a big sacrifice to make; it was an exciting adventure; and I was ready for anything. Could I make that same decision now? It would be much harder, but the reality is that at any time in our discipleship there is a chance that we might be called to give up everything for the sake of following Jesus.

When you walk out of the door to go to church, do you consider what you are giving up? Other than a restful Sunday morning in bed? Are you prepared for a walk of discipleship, where sacrifices may be asked of you? Are you prepared to give up your safety, your financial security, your family, your standing in the community? Are you ready to be known as a disciple of Jesus and to be mocked for it by those who are not?

When you put all that on the scales, it looks quite unbalanced. Why would anyone choose that life? Why would anyone risk losing so much? Because there's something really important that has been missing so far and it's this: God loves us. He knows us intimately and loves us more dearly than any human can. When he asks us to give up things for his sake, he does not do it to be awkward, or to hurt us. He does it because of the depth of the love he feels for each of us. He knows what we need to follow him.

If you are counting the cost of following Jesus, make sure you know what is on 'the other side of the scales'. Choosing to follow Jesus means choosing to live with God's love. Greater than we can imagine and it outweighs anything that you could put on the other side.

CATHEDRALS EXPERIENCE CONTINUED GROWTH STATISTICS IN 2024

The Church of England's latest cathedral statistics show continued growth in 2024, with weekly attendance rising to 31,900, an increase of eleven per cent compared to 2023. The rise was driven particularly by midweek services, which saw a 15 per cent increase in adult attendance and a 16 per cent increase in child attendance, although still lower than the pre-pandemic figure.

Easter services attracted 50,200 worshippers, a 12 per cent increase year-on-year, while Holy Week attendance reached 90,200. However, Christmas attendance

dipped slightly to 121,100, down three per cent from 2023, and Advent services saw a similar decline.

Visitor numbers continued to climb, reaching 9.87 million in 2024 - surpassing pre-pandemic levels for the first time. Cathedrals also hosted 6,000 public and civic events, including 370 graduation ceremonies, with a total attendance of 1.74 million.

Musical life in cathedrals flourished, with 2,120 choristers and lay clerks (adult professional singers), and 2,070 voluntary choir members meaning figures are now above pre-pandemic levels. The total number of cathedral choirs also reached a record high of 207.

Cathedrals also reported growth in baptisms (up 8 per cent) and maintained stable numbers in marriages and funerals. Educational engagement remained strong, with over 203,000 children and young people attending cathedral-led educational events.

The report highlights the enduring role of cathedrals in civic, cultural, and spiritual life, with nearly 13,000 volunteers supporting their work and 95 per cent of cathedrals continuing to offer Church at Home services.

The Dean of Canterbury, David Monteith, who Chairs the Church of England's College of Deans, said: "This year's statistics reflect a Church that is alive with possibility. We continue to see a significant revival in cathedral worship since the depths of the pandemic, with renewed energy in midweek services, music, and community engagement. Cathedrals continue to be places of welcome, joy, and reflection - where ancient rhythms meet contemporary needs. Whether through worship, education, or civic life, our cathedrals are helping people reconnect with faith, with one another, and with hope. I am deeply grateful to all who minister, volunteer, and serve in our cathedrals. Their imaginative dedication is helping to shape a Church that is resilient, responsive, and determinately rooted in the life of the nation."

CONSERVATION PROJECT LAUNCHES TO HELP PRESERVE 'TABLE-TOP' TOMBS IN CHURCHYARDS

There are believed to be more than 4,000 'table-top' tombs, many ornately carved, dating from the 17th to the 19th century in Diocese of Gloucester churchyards alone, and many thousands more in churchyards across the country. The tombs are distinctive for their flat slab (the 'table-top') supported by sides or upright legs.



A collaborative project based in the Diocese of Gloucester and supported by the Church of England's Cathedral and Church Buildings team, with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is assessing the conservation needs of the tombs. The project will contribute to new national guidance on the care and maintenance of the tombs. The scheme is also providing vital fieldwork experience for students in conservation through work in St George's Church in Cam, in the Diocese of Gloucester. Eight other churchyards, including one in the Diocese of Oxford - St James the Great, Fulbrook - are taking part.

A table-top tomb in the All Saints' Churchyard

Adam Klups, Care of Churches and Diocesan Advisory Committee Team Leader at the Diocese of Gloucester, said a combination of factors including access to good quality limestone meant that the diocese had the highest concentration of the tombs in the country. "Parochial Church Councils and other stakeholders responsible for the maintenance of our churchyards often struggle to find the resources to support the conservation of these tombs although they form a key part of our social history and are works of art in themselves," he said. "This project aims to document local collections of table-top tombs, identify conservation needs, and promote awareness of this unique art form, with a view to drawing up national guidance and providing a training opportunity for the next generation of conservators."

Tracy Manning, Senior Conservation Officer for the Cathedral and Church Buildings Department of the Church of England, said: "It can be difficult for

students to access hands-on fieldwork experience, and one of the most exciting things for us about the project is that it has enabled conservation students to learn from an expert practitioner, Graham O'Hare, about these unique objects that were made for, and belong in, a rural parish church setting. Sparking the interest of a new generation of conservators in the wonders of working in our churches is one of our primary aims and we are grateful to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for enabling the project."



Tombs in the north side of All Saints' Churchyard illustrating the variety of early tombs.

Graham O'Hare, Architectural Stone Conservator, O'Hare Stone Conservation, said: "I am glad to have this opportunity to share some of my experience in assessing and conserving these monuments. They are a typical feature of Gloucestershire churchyards, with a variety of different types in different parts of the county. Each one is unique, with its own conservation issues, and they all deserve to be preserved for the future."

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION (CWGC)



Whilst we're thinking about memorials in churchyards it's worth mentioning the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. As you walk into the churchyard at St John's, Kidmore End, or the new churchyard at All Saints' Rotherfield Peppard you'll see a small sign by the gate. This indicates the presence in these churchyards of graves and memorials to those who lost their

lives in World War 1 or World War 2 as recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The CWGC has its office not far from us in Maidenhead which prompted me to discover more about the CWGC. The organisation has a comprehensive website which is worth reviewing. Among other things they have an online enquiry feature that provides access to the details of the thousands of service personnel in the CWGC' records. One search facility provides details of CWGC recorded war dead grave locations. So, for Kidmore End, St John's Churchyard the four identified graves are listed, Private Harry G L Leach, Lance Corporal Harvey George Old, Driver Charles Edward Payne, and Lieutenant Walter James Ward.

The CWGC promises to honour the memory of those who died in the two World Wars by maintaining their graves and memorials at some 23,000 locations in over 150 countries and territories. Their website, <https://www.cwgc.org/>, has lots of information about their work and the records which they maintain. It is worth a review.

Allen Harris

ASSISTED SUICIDE LAW WOULD MAKE THIS A COUNTRY THAT SAYS 'SOME LIVES ARE NOT WORTH LIVING' – BISHOP OF LONDON



As the Church of England's lead bishop for health and social care, the Bishop of London was speaking as the House of Lords began its first day of debate on the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill. The Private Member's Bill, brought by the MP Kim Leadbeater, completed its Third Reading in the Commons in June with a reduced majority of just 23 votes amid mounting concerns about its safety.

Bishop Sarah Mullally, the former Chief Nursing Officer for England, said she was concerned about those who could face

internal and subtle pressures to end their lives if assisted suicide were introduced – particularly in the absence of adequate palliative or social care, or out of fear of

becoming a burden on their families. “I understand the fear of many that they may be offered free assisted death before they are offered the care and equipment that they may live,” she said.

Bishop Sarah said it is right for peers now to scrutinise the Bill but argued that no amendments could ultimately make it entirely safe from the negative effects such as people being pressured to end their lives. “I am concerned that the Bill is unequal to the task of preventing avoidable deaths due to the existing problems of discrimination, inequality and abuse. I am deeply concerned that so many in this Parliament are not heeding the voices of professional and representative bodies that are raising the alarm.”

She also rejected the central claim that the Bill would offer people choice at the end of their lives. “A meaningful choice would see the measures in this Bill set alongside equally available, fully funded, palliative and social care services,” she said. Without the choice offered this choice is an illusion.”

She spoke about her personal experience, including as a nurse, priest, and bishop, of spending time with people as they died and said the introduction of assisted dying within the health system would fundamentally alter the role of health professionals. “To change the law is to change society,” she added. “Any law that introduces choice for a few is not limited in its effect to only that few. If passed, this Bill will signal that we are a society that believes that some lives are not worth living. This Bill would become our State-endorsed position, and our NHS would be active in its delivery.”

Bishop Sarah also voiced hopes the Lords would have an opportunity to vote on the principle of the Bill at Third Reading – and indicated that she would be prepared to put an amendment at that stage to enable that to happen. “It may not be the will of the House to take the decision on the principle of this Bill today, but I firmly hope that we will do that in the Third Reading. If it is necessary, I, myself, will table the amendment so that this House is given the same opportunity as the other place to decide. Until then, I have no doubt that the scrutiny given to this Bill in the coming stages will make plainer its inadequacies,” she said.

Speaking personally she concluded: “As we have heard, much of the debate is about fear. Fear of pain, of illness, of dependency, of loss of control, being somehow unrecognisable to yourself and to others. But the challenge is that life is not

something to be managed or limited when it becomes difficult. Life is often more than we can ever understand it to be. I believe in a God who's very being is life, and, in that gift, we can discover meaning, dignity and innate worth, even if we are dying. "To speak of God is to speak of one who is never indifferent to human fragility, but who holds it and tends it. That is why I believe that there is always hope: hope that what looks like an ending is not the last word. Hope that with proper care, support and research, dignity and compassion is still possible. It is this firm belief that compels me to resist this bill."

WHICH BISHOPS ARE THE LORDS SPIRITUAL?

Diocese	Name	Date
Canterbury (ex officio)	Vacant	
York (ex officio)	Stephen Cottrell	10/02/2014
London (ex officio)	Sarah Mullally	10/04/2018
Durham (ex officio)	Vacant	
Winchester (ex officio)	Philip Mounstephen	15/11/2023
Chelmsford	Guli Francis-Dehqani	25/06/2021
Chester	Mark Tanner	19/06/2025
Chichester	David Warner	03/01/2018
Coventry	Sophie Jelley	18/03/2025
Derby	Libby Lane	28/03/2019
Gloucester	Rachel Treweek	07/09/2015
Guildford	Andrew Watson	16/12/2021
Hereford	Richard Jackson	15/11/2023
Leeds	Nick Baines	03/12/2014
Leicester	Martyn Snow	06/12/2022
Lichfield	Michael Ipgrave	25.10/2022
Lincoln	Stephen Conway	15/11/2023
Manchester	David Walker	28/07/2020
Newcastle	Helen-Ann Hartley	21/09/2023
Norwich	Graham Usher	17/10/2023
Oxford	Steven Croft	15/07/2016
Peterborough	Debbie Sellin	18/10/2024
Portsmouth	Jonathan Frost	08/09/2025
Sheffield	Pete Wilcox	17/01/2023
Southwark	Christopher Chessun	11/11/2014
Southwell & Nottingham	Paul Williams	19/04/2022

CHRIST THE KING CHURCH

At the time of writing, the regular congregation of Christ the King has been back in their home church just for three services, and I think I speak for everyone when I say that it's wonderful to be back!

After eight long months, the first service to be conducted in the church was held on Sunday 31 August. The church was full, with many spilling out into the hall, most staying for coffee and a chat after the service, to look around and take in all the improvements.

The completed works include a full replacement of the flat roof, with insulation; installation of solar panels and associated power bank; front extension to provide a separate entrance into the church; interior decoration throughout and replacement flooring in the hall and coffee rooms; reordering of the church layout, including the removal of the existing font and reorientation of the central altar; a widened opening between the church and the hall with new soundproof bifold doors; energy-efficient lighting and heating. To the front of the building, a replacement fence and gate have been constructed, new signage and cladding added to the face of the building, and new signage and flower bed adjacent to the public path. There is still work to do to improve the grounds (after many months of building!) and plans to resurface the car park, with installation of an EV charging point.

Thanks must be extended to Nick Room, who has skillfully managed the entire project with great patience and tenacity in the face of several delays, unexpected discoveries and added expense. Nick worked tirelessly to ensure that the building work and interior modifications were carried out to the highest standard. Thanks are also due to the St John's churchyard tidy group, who kindly gave up a St John's Wednesday to tidy the grounds of Christ the King instead. Sian Lovett has also worked hard to create a beautiful welcoming plant border at the entrance to the car park, which complements the shiny new church sign and noticeboard. And of course, the project would not have been possible at all without the generous legacy bequeathed by Mrs Jill Scraggs, a faithful and long-standing member of the Christ the King Church community. A plaque to honour her has been placed on the wall in the new church entrance.

If you haven't yet visited the church, we have resumed the usual pattern of services with 9.30am Sunday Eucharist on first, second and fourth Sundays, and a Service of the Word on third Sundays at 9.30am. Everyone is welcome! We are also

looking forward to welcoming back those local groups and societies who have hired the hall for activities in the past: we hope they will find the new building warmer, brighter and even more welcoming than before!

Karen Broadbent



Smart new sign



New roof with solar panels



Newly configured church interior



*Plaques recording past dedications
and generous legacy from Jill Scraggs*



Newly renovated exterior

LLM-IN-TRAINING

Having successfully completed two years of study, I am very pleased to be able to report that I have been recommended for licensing as a Lay Minister. Bishop Gavin has written to me to say that he is happy to accept the recommendation. The LLM Licensing Service will be held at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, on Saturday 1 November (All Saints' Day) at 11am. This is a public service, and everyone is very welcome to attend.

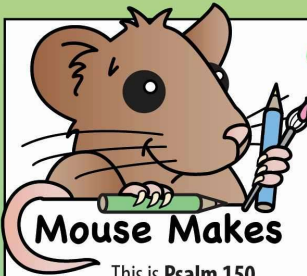
Along with the five others who are to be licensed alongside me, this initial licence will be for a two-year period, during which time we will undertake further study and training. If we complete this post-licensing phase of training satisfactorily, we will then be able to ask for a renewal of our licences and, all being well, this will be granted for a period of five years.

The past two years have gone by very quickly, despite the many hours of the tutorials, essay writing and placement activities that I have had to complete. The experience has been extremely rewarding, both intellectually and spiritually. I feel blessed to have been supported and encouraged, not only by my fantastic fellow trainees (now friends for life!), but also by the ministers, teachers and staff who have prepared tutorials, marked assignments and managed all the behind-the-scenes work. And of course, I would never have even considered following this path in the first place if I hadn't been strongly encouraged by my incumbent! Thank you, Revd James and Revd Sarah, for listening to me and inspiring me, and thank you to everyone in the Benefice – I have been touched by your interest in my learning and by the sincere encouragement I have always received along the way.

As I start the next phase of my ministry within the Benefice I pray for God's guidance and trust that I can continue to follow His call for many years to come.

Karen Broadbent

Ed – warmest congratulations to Karen on this splendid achievement and thanks to everyone who has cheered her on her way.



Mouse Makes

This is **Psalm 150**,
a song of praise to God,
it tells us why and how
to worship God.
*How do you praise and
worship God?*

Praise God in His Temple,
Praise Him in His mighty heavens.
Praise Him for His acts of power,
Praise Him for his surpassing greatness.

Praise Him
with the sounding trumpet,
Praise Him
with the harp and lyre,
Praise Him
with tambourine and dancing,
Praise Him
with the clash of cymbals,
Praise Him
with the resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath
PRaise THE LORD!

P	K	G	C	Y	M	B	A	L	S	A
O	L	R	H	E	A	V	E	N	S	B
W	T	E	M	P	L	E	T	U	A	R
E	T	A	M	B	O	U	R	I	N	E
R	H	T	L	U	T	E	U	A	C	A
D	A	N	C	I	N	G	M	P	T	T
R	R	E	P	I	P	E	P	R	U	H
U	P	S	F	L	U	T	E	A	A	H
M	D	S	G	O	D	E	T	I	R	O
S	T	S	T	R	I	N	G	S	Y	R
O	Y	L	E	D	L	Y	R	E	Y	N

PRaise • GOD • TEMPLE • HEAVENS • SANCTUARY • POWER • GREATNESS
TRUMPET • HORN • PIPE • FLUTE • HARP • LYRE • LUTE • STRINGS
TAMBOURINE • DANCING • CYMBALS • DRUMS • BREATH • LORD

The tale of the Tower Builder



JESUS OFTEN TOLD
STORIES WITH
HIDDEN MEANINGS



ON ONE OCCASION JESUS
EXPLAINED HOW IT WOULDN'T
ALWAYS BE EASY TO FOLLOW HIM.



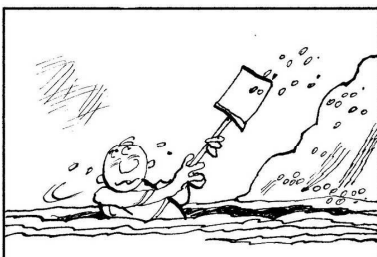
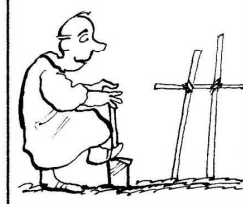
JESUS BEGAN, IF ONE OF YOU
PLANS TO BUILD A TOWER....

...YOU'LL FIRST NEED TO
WORK HOW MUCH IT WILL
COST.



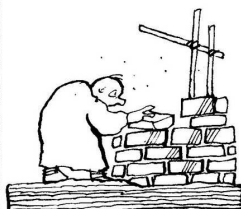
IF YOU DON'T DO THE SUMS....

...YOU MIGHT MAKE A
START,

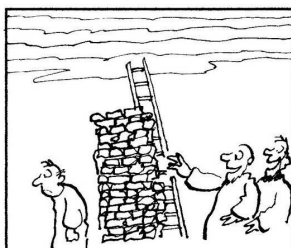


....WORK VERY HARD ON THE
FOUNDATIONS.

...THEN START TO LAY
THE BRICKS,....



...BUT SUDDENLY RUN OUT
OF MONEY!!



THEN PEOPLE WILL LAUGH
AT YOU!



WE NEED TO REALISE THAT
ALTHOUGH FOLLOWING
JESUS IS THE RIGHT THING
TO DO, IT'S ALSO A GREAT
CHALLENGE.

RIDE AND STRIDE: SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2025

The 'Ride and Stride for Churches' fundraising event took place on Saturday 13 September. This annual event is organised by the Oxfordshire Historical Churches Trust (OHCT) to raise funds to support historic churches throughout Oxfordshire. Both St John's and Christ the King have benefitted from OHCT grants in the past which have enabled us to carry out essential repair work and to fund much-needed improvements to both churches.

OHCT is an entirely volunteer-led organisation which aims to provide funding to help local communities repair, maintain and improve Oxfordshire's historic churches. Money raised through sponsors is paid to OHCT; they will rebate up to half of the total raised to a nominated church. OHCT reclaims Gift Aid and uses this to cover its administrative costs. OHCT awarded over £560,000 in grants in 2023-2024, which included £35,000 to St John's towards the plan to create a servery and WC in the church.

This year, Nick Room and David and Rosemary Doidge took part, riding and striding to churches in the area. Nick, (who actually took part on the 11 September owing to prior commitments on the 13th) cycled to 20, visiting churches in Harpsden, Wallingford, Stoke Row, Ipsden, and many other places in between – well done Nick! David and Rosemary drove to Wallingford and then walked around the town, calling into all the churches they passed – a surprising number for a small town! They also visited St John's and Christ the King, 14 churches in total.

Thank you to those volunteers who 'manned' our own parish churches on the day, ready to welcome riders and striders. Sian Lovett, who welcomed visitors to Christ the King; Sue Jones, Shirley Henderson and Peter Blake, who welcomed visitors to St John's. Not many found their way to our churches, but those that did received a warm welcome and the offer of excellent refreshments (especially Sue's homemade biscuits!).

Karen Broadbent



SEASON OF CREATION

The Church has been working its way through Creationtide. Also known as the Season of Creation, this is a period in the annual church calendar, from 1 September to 4 October, when Christians celebrate God as the Creator and Sustainer of all life, reflecting on humanity's responsibility to care for the Earth. Starting on the first day of the Orthodox ecclesiastical year and ending on the Feast of St. Francis, it offers churches an opportunity to engage in prayer, worship, reflection, and action on environmental issues, often incorporating traditional harvest festivals into a broader theological and ecological context.

The concept was introduced by the Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios I in 1989 and has since been adopted by various denominations and Christian organizations globally, including the Church of England and Catholic Church.

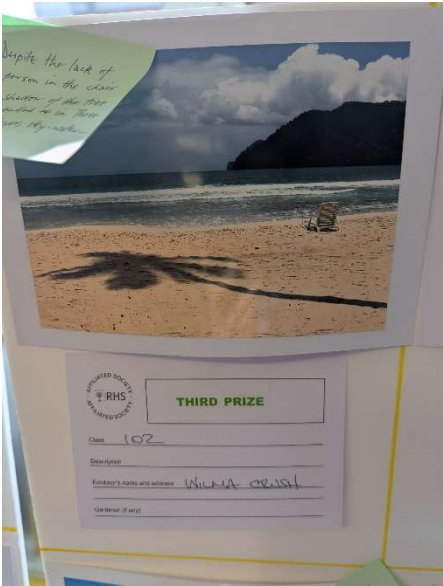
The theme for the Season of Creation 2025 has been peace with creation, based on Isaiah 32:14-18. The prophet Isaiah envisaged the desolated Creation without peace because of the lack of justice and the broken relationship between people and God. This description of devastated cities and wastelands reveals how human destructive behaviours have a negative impact on the Earth.

The Christian hope: Creation will find peace when justice is restored. There is still hope and the expectation for a peaceful Earth. To hope does not mean to stand still and quiet, but to act, pray, change, and reconcile with Creation and the Creator in unity, repentance and solidarity.

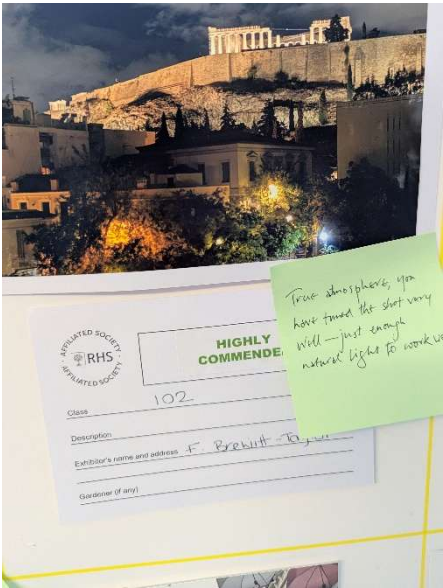
For those who are interested, there is a dedicated website for the Season of Creation, <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

CHILTERN EDGE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY FLOWER AND PRODUCE SHOW 2025

The show was held on Saturday 6 September in Sonning Common Village Hall. Several parishioners from St John's are members and Shirley Horne has very kindly provided us with some photos from the event. Thank you Shirley!



Wilma Crush's photo wins 3rd prize



Highly commended photo - Frances Brewitt-Taylor



Sue's garden party exhibit



Wilma and Sarah in discussion



The orange bird



Wilma's prize entry



Frances' rose

BASINGSTOKE, IN THE WINCHESTER DIOCESE, HAS ITS FIRST FEMALE BISHOP AND IT'S...



The Venerable Kelly Betteridge

..... the Venerable Kelly Betteridge, currently Archdeacon of Bodmin in the Diocese of Truro. As Bishop of Basingstoke, Kelly will have a key leadership role across the Diocese of Winchester, especially in ministry development, as well having a particular pastoral care for parishes, chaplaincies and schools across the seven deaneries of Basingstoke, Alton, Alresford, Andover, Odiham, Winchester and Whitchurch.

On the announcement day (28 August) Kelly was introduced to representatives from across the region, first spending time at a community café at the Church of the Ascension, Burghclere, then travelling to meet local

young people taking part in a holiday club at St John's Hartley Wintney, and then on to meet the team at Basingstoke Church in their newly reordered Grade I building, and members of the Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy who took the new bishop on a walk around the town centre. The final stop on the tour was Evensong at Winchester Cathedral where all in its diocesan community were invited to come and pray with the new bishop and join in a celebratory reception afterwards.

Kelly will be the 7th bishop of Basingstoke, following the Rt Revd David Williams who became the Bishop of Truro earlier this year. She will be the first female bishop of Basingstoke. She will be consecrated as a bishop on Wednesday 15 October at Southwark Cathedral and welcomed formally at a service at St Mary's Andover on Saturday 15 November. Kelly is originally from Wiltshire, the daughter of a farm foreman – she says she “grew up with a strong connection to the countryside.” After graduating in 1992 with a degree in education and theology, Kelly began her ministry as a youth and children's worker before becoming an All-Age Advisor for the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS), delivering training, creating resources and shaping policy relating to children's ministry. Kelly then completed her MA in

contextual theology in 2010 at Queens College Birmingham and was ordained at Coventry Cathedral the same year. She served as a curate at St Nicolas Nuneaton, and, in 2014, she became the vicar of St Nicolas and priest-in-charge of Weddington and Caldecote, before moving to become the Archdeacon of Bodmin.

Kelly is married to Simon, who is the National Director of *Linking Lives* and is also head of community development for *Compassionate Communities UK*. Together they share a passion for building intergenerational communities of blessing. She also has two stepchildren – “with their partners, our granddaughter, parents, siblings and cats, we have our own growing community of blessedness!” she says.

She enjoys being creative, as well as reading, baking, live music & theatre, and walking, saying: “We've done several distance walks and a Mont Blanc charity trek in 2022. But most of the time though I'm happy just pottering in a local wood, examining moss and lichen!” She also loves travelling and has had the opportunity to lead groups on trips to the Dominican Republic, Ghana, and to visit Tanzania with Tearfund.

In response to her appointment as bishop, Kelly said, “It is an amazing privilege and I am so looking forward to being able to engage in the life of the diocese, to meet people, to hear their stories, to pray and plan, discover and discern, and most of all to enable others in the mission and ministry of God in the Diocese of Winchester. Whenever anyone has offered to pray for me in this new role I have asked for wisdom, kindness and courage. I'd like these qualities to be hallmarks of this new phase of ministry for me.”

Ed – all change in Winchester in a relatively short space of time. Bishop Philip Mountstephen became Bishop in October 2023. Rhiannon King became Bishop of Southampton in October 2024 and now, Kelly Betteridge moves to Basingstoke. There is also a vacant position of Dean of Winchester Cathedral as Catherine Ogle retired in May 2025.

ELIZABETH FRY, PRISON REFORMER - COMMEMORATED ON 12 OCTOBER

Elizabeth Fry had endless compassion and endless energy – and together with a steadfast determination to do God’s work, this outstanding philanthropist became one of the foremost promoters of prison reform – not just in Britain, but in all of Europe.

Elizabeth was born in 1780, far from any prison. The family lived in Norwich, where her father was a wealthy Quaker banker and merchant. In 1800 she married a London merchant, Joseph Fry. Elizabeth could have spent her life safely at home, raising her many children. But instead, she felt compelled to help the desperate social needs of the time. There was a good reason for this. Back in 1798, when she had been attending a Quaker meeting in Norwich, someone had spoken what Elizabeth felt was a prophetic word for her life. As she noted in her diary at the time: ‘Deborah Darby then spoke... she addressed part of it to me; I only fear she says too much of what I am to be. A light to the blind; speech to the dumb; and feet to the lame; can it be? She seems as if she thought I was to be a minister of Christ. Can I ever be one? If I am obedient, I believe I shall.’

And she was. Elizabeth was accepted as a Quaker ‘minister’, and her good works in London began. But it was not until one day in 1813, when she visited Newgate Prison in London, that Elizabeth’s life changed forever. That day she witnessed such horrors of the circumstances in which women and children were kept, that she knew she had found the focus for her life’s work.

Soon her daily visits to the prison, where she read the Bible and taught the women to sew, grew into a campaign to achieve basic rights for the women prisoners. She fought for the classification of criminals, the segregation of the sexes, female supervision of women, and some provision for education.

In 1817 she created the Association for the Improvement of Female Prisoners and then lobbied Parliament. By 1818 Elizabeth had raised such a storm that she was called to give evidence to a Parliamentary Select Committee who was examining conditions in prison. They accepted many of her proposed reforms.

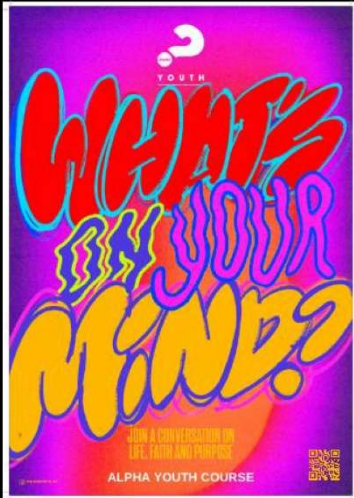
In 1820 Elizabeth tackled the huge problem of destitution in London. She opened a ‘Nightly Shelter for the Homeless in London’, which became the first of many. She founded a society to help released prisoners with rehabilitation. And she was certainly a ‘hands-on’ sort of lady; it was said that for the next 20 years she personally inspected every single ship containing women convicts before it sailed to Australia.

Between 1838 and 1842 Elizabeth visited all the prisons in France, reporting to the Interior Minister. She then inspected prisons in Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Scotland and Ireland.

Elizabeth also founded schools for poor girls, soup kitchens for the hungry, better housing for the poor, and also investigated mental asylums. She even established a nursing school, which influenced her distant relative, Florence Nightingale.

By the time Elizabeth died in 1845, she had helped tens of thousands of helpless people to find some relief from their suffering. She had indeed lived her life as a ‘minister of Christ’.

THE ALPHA YOUTH COURSE



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14th October
For ages: 11-20

More info?
Sarah @ 07508898515
revsvdwatt@gmail.com

Would you like to find out more about what you believe? Do you have children or grandchildren who might like to join this course in preparation for Confirmation?

The Alpha Youth Course is a great opportunity to look at what you believe. We watch a fun video together, followed by a chat. It's a space to ask questions, wonder out loud, make friends and connect with your faith. We're meeting at 5pm on Tuesdays from the 14 October at Christ the

King in Sedgewell Road, Sonning Common. The course lasts 8 weeks. All 11 - 20 year-olds welcome! Get in touch with Sarah @ revsvdwatt@gmail.com

HALLOWEEN

It may not come as a surprise (and perhaps disturbing) that retail spending on Halloween in the UK is estimated to have surpassed £1bn in 2023, a four-times increase in 10 years. *You Gov* published data last year among which reported that 2 in 5 people in the UK now regard Halloween as important to them with strong support in the 25 – 34 age group. In the 55+ age group, 75% say that Halloween is not important to them.

The most popular activities are pumpkin carving, decorating at home or watching Halloween themed movies. Items bought for Halloween include: sweets, pumpkins, and decorations. For those who purchase Halloween items over 75% prefer the superstores such as Tesco and Asda. Younger people – in the 18 – 24, and 25 – 34 age groups prefer high street stores.

THE FESTIVAL OF ST CECILIA – 19 NOVEMBER 2025

We have featured this annual music celebration in past editions of this magazine. The Charity, *Help Musicians*, works in partnership with the musical directors and choirs of Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral, and Westminster Cathedral to hold a celebration that honours St Cecilia, the patroness of music and musicians. This year's event (by rotation) will be held at Westminster Abbey under the direction of Andrew Nethsingha, Director of Music at the Abbey. He will conduct the combined choirs of the Abbey and the two Cathedrals. You can book tickets for this event on the Help Musicians website, <https://www.helpmusicians.org.uk/get-involved/festival-of-st-cecilia>. Entry to this splendid occasion is free.

SEND YOUR LOVE WITH THESE FLOWERS

A flower used by Victorians when they wanted to send a 'hidden message' of love is making a big comeback. It is the aster. It's popularity in bouquets has quadrupled in two years. Sales at Tesco alone have soared by nearly 350 per cent.

And no wonder: asters are vivid, fast-growing British flowers with a good vase life. They come in blue, purple, pink, dark pink, red and white – all with a bright yellow centre. They originally came from Japan and are related to dahlias and chrysanthemums. The Victorians believed that asters symbolised love, patience, wisdom, elegance and grace. That made asters a sure winner for bearing discreet messages of affection. More than five million were grown in the UK this year, so there must be a lot of love about!

GOD IN THE SCIENCES – CONTINUING THE CELEBRATION!

Another reflection from Dr Ruth Bancewicz at the Faraday Institute of Science and Religion in Cambridge.

On 6– 13 October this year many people around the world will be celebrating the Jewish festival of Tabernacles, or Sukkot. They will celebrate the Harvest and remember also God bringing the Israelites out of Egypt and through 40 years in the desert.

The biblical book of Deuteronomy contains a description of what Tabernacles should have been like back then. “Celebrate... for seven days. Be joyful... you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites, the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns.”

These festivals were not just a celebration, but also an expression of gratitude to God: “celebrate the festival to the Lord your God...For the Lord your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.” Tabernacles was a proper holiday, with two whole days off normal work and seven days of feasting.

Farming looks very different today. Very few of us have had to sweat long hours over crops, so we’re not as ready for (or deserving of) a rest and a party as our ancestors were at this time of year. That might be even more the case in future, as the agri-tech revolution unfolds. For example, small autonomous tractors are already becoming available that do less damage to the soil and make better use of steep or oddly shaped fields.

Many arable farms already hire contractors to do the routine work with large specialist GPS-equipped machinery. In future years those people might find themselves using very different kinds of high-tech kit, acting more as land-management advisors, helping farmers to gather data and to find ways of improving soil quality, biodiversity and the water cycle.

I’m very grateful for the food that arrives on my shelves. Instead of worrying about whether or not we earned it, our modern-day Tabernacles or Harvest celebrations could include ways of encouraging those involved in agriculture and developing new agricultural technologies, as well as enjoying how we can learn about and benefit from God’s creation through science.

So, after you celebrate Harvest at church, why not follow it up with a trip to a local farm this year? Why not learn from the ancient Israelites, and follow it up with a meal together? It stands to reason that those of us who live in countries where food is plentiful and cheap could do with being proportionately more generous in our gratitude and giving. Should we throw better parties? Probably!

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Contact the Churchwarden and PCC Treasurer

Nick Room – 07973 513883

PARISH GUIDE

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Church Fabric Funds	Help preserve our churches for future generations	Nick Room – 07973 513883
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Magazine articles	Please send to Allen Harris - the deadline is 22nd monthly or a little before if the magazine is full.	AHa3588066@aol.com
Magazine delivery	To arrange delivery of this magazine to your home	Please contact Nick Room

PARISH DIRECTORY

The Directory is omitted from this online accessible version of the magazine. This is to comply with General Data Protections Regulations.

Kidmore End & Sonning Common Parochial Church Council is a registered charity. The Charity Commission registration number is 120977.

SERVICES AND PRINCIPAL SERVICE LECTIONARY

Date	St John's	Lessons	Christ the King
5 October – Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity	18.00 Evensong	2 Timothy 1. 1 – 14 Luke 17. 5 – 10	09.30 Eucharist
		Nehemiah 5. 1 – 13 John 9.	
12 October – Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity	11.15 Sung Eucharist	2 Timothy 2. 8 – 15 Luke 17. 11 - 19	09.30 Eucharist
		Special readings	17.00 Second Sundays
19 October – Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity	11.15 Sung Eucharist	2 Timothy 3. 14 – 4.5 Luke 18. 1 - 8	09.30 Service of the Word
26 October – Last Sunday after Trinity *	11.15 Sung Eucharist	2 Timothy 4. 6 – 8 & 16 – 18 Luke 18. 9 - 14	09.30 Eucharist

* In the Book of Common Prayer Lectionary this Sunday is the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity, and the Sundays after Trinity continue until the Sunday next before Advent on 23 November.

Please check the weekly bulletin in case there is a need for any of the above arrangements to be varied at short notice.

The lessons are those recommended in the Common Worship Lectionary for the Sunday principal service, and in the case of the Evensong service, the lessons are those recommended in Common Worship Second service (Evening Prayer). Lessons may be varied for special services or at the discretion of the Minister.

Services at All Saints

5 October – 10.30 Sung Eucharist

12 October – 10.30 Sung Eucharist celebrating Harvest Thanksgiving

19 October – 09.00 Holy Communion, 10.30 Peppard Praise

26 October – 10.30 Family Communion, 18.30 Evensong