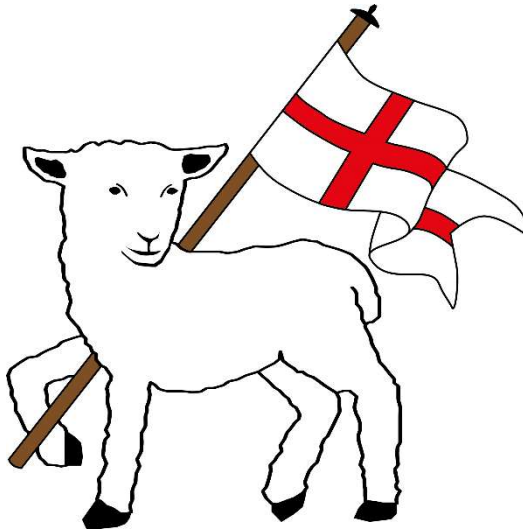


FEBRUARY 2026

**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**

90p

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

FROM THE RECTORY

Dear Friends

This year Lent begins on Wednesday 18 February. To mark the beginning of this important season, the ministry team (Sarah, Karen, and I) will be making pancakes on Shrove Tuesday at Christ the King, starting at 6.30pm. Do come along with some of your favourite toppings to share. Then, on Ash Wednesday itself, we will be celebrating a Benefice Eucharist with the imposition of ashes at All Saints, beginning at 7pm. We will all have the sign of the cross traced on our foreheads using ash made from the burning of last year's palm crosses - this symbolises our very human sinfulness and mortality. From feasting on Tuesday to fasting on Wednesday - what better way to start Lent?

It's a bit unpopular nowadays to emphasise these two human qualities of sinfulness and mortality. We are tempted to domesticate the former (as in calling a triple chocolate cookie 'sinfully delicious') and to deny the latter (as if we're all going to live forever). But I want to emphasise that there will be little depth to our Easter celebrations if we do not first acknowledge the many ways in which each of us falls short of the love that God has created us to embody. And this is not meant to freeze us in paralysing guilt, but rather to create the space for God's Spirit to work in us. Stirring us up, recalling us, restoring us, the Spirit moves us in the direction of St Paul's mystical words in Romans: 'For none of us lives, and equally none of us dies, for himself alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.' (Romans 14.7-8, *Revised English Bible*)

So, as ever, Lent is a spiritually rich time for those who respond to the invitation. As well as the service on Ash Wednesday (and the pancakes the day before!), can I encourage you to consider joining this year's Lent Study Group. We shall be meeting on five consecutive Wednesday evenings in Lent, beginning in the week following Ash Wednesday at 7.30pm at Christ the King. For inspiration we'll be following *Lentwise* by the renowned author Paula Gooder. We have some copies available at a reduced price of £7.20. If you'd like one, please let me know by email.

God bless - and have a good Lent!

James

CHRISTINGLE AT CHRIST THE KING

The Christingle service, held at Christ the King on Christmas Eve, has been a staple of Christmas worship in the parish for many years. I remember taking my two young daughters to the event for the first time, probably in the late 1990's, and enjoying the accessibility of a family-friendly service with Christmas carols and an activity (devised in those days by Ros Jennings) which required audience participation, usually from the children, but adults were encouraged too! Behind



The late, much loved and much missed Joan Lamprell

the scenes, a small and dedicated group of church ladies worked hard in the days leading up to Christmas Eve preparing the 60 or so individual Christingles.

I'm told that these were always prepared at the home of our late dear friend, Joan Lamprell, and her daughter, Katherine, says the smell of oranges still evokes strong memories of laughter and industry in the kitchen around 23 December!

Some years ago, following Ros's move away from the area, Joan persuaded me to join the team and we worked together for many years devising new activities and planning

the order of service. The inclusion of music, particularly recorder playing, was very important to Joan – her daughter, Katherine, Ginny and John Merricks' daughter, Sarah, my daughter, Charlotte, were all recruited over the years to accompany the carols. Now these young ladies have grown up and moved away, so I am left to play the recorder on my own, but any recorder players who would like to join me (please!) would be most welcome.

Sadly, we lost Joan in 2022, and I wondered whether Christingle - so much "Joan's service" - could survive. Happily, it has, and I feel it has become, as well as a joyous festive celebration, an annual tribute to Joan who did so much to encourage people to attend and to promote the work of The Children's Society, the charity behind the

modern Christingle, to which the proceeds of the retiring collection are donated. In fact, many friends of Joan still attend Christingle every year and it's wonderful to think that this simple service has become a staple of Christmas for so many local families.

We welcomed around seventy children and adults to Christingle on Christmas Eve 2025. The service was led for the first time by Revd Sarah – I'm not sure if she knew what to expect, but she took everything in her stride and joined in with much enthusiasm! I devised an activity based around the nativity stable and the children were brilliant as always, helping to decide which characters and objects belonged in the stable and which did not. As ever, I was impressed by the children's knowledge when it came to identifying the parts of the Christingle and, once these had been handed out, the lights were switched off and the congregation joined in singing, "Away in a Manger" by candlelight, accompanied by the recorder. The service ended with prayers and a Christmas blessing. £160 has been donated to The Children's Society who work to support vulnerable children and young people in the UK.



Christingles r us 2025!

why not make a note in your 2026 diary now to come along to Christ the King on Christmas Eve at 4.30pm? It's a wonderful way to mark the start of the Christmas celebrations.

Thank you to this year's Christingle-assembly team (Penny and Graham, Val and Alison, Rosemary, Charlotte and Elliott), to those involved with the service (Revd Sarah for leading, David for musical accompaniment, Freya for reading, Jocelyn, Sian, Yvonne for lighting and distributing the Christingles) and, of course, to everyone who attended. I am sure that Joan would be very happy to know that the Christingle service, which she loved so much, is still going strong. If you have never been,

Karen Broadbent

CHRISTMAS FESTIVE SEASON CONCERT AT ST JOHN'S

Towards the end of the Christmas season, with its joy and festivities, one was feeling in danger of sinking into something of a jaded torpor. Fortunately, on the Tenth Day, this Festive Concert came along to raise the spirits again and to rekindle the flame of celebration at St. John's Church on Saturday 3 January. The concert's eclectic programme was researched and compiled by choir director, Frances Brewitt-Taylor. As usual, Frances's musical choices displayed freshness and inventiveness.

The proceedings started with the choir making a candlelit processional entrance while singing four songs about the Christmas Event. Everyone then joined in an enthusiastic rendering of "God rest you merry gentlemen". This, and all the other congregational carols, were enhanced by David Gray's trumpet.

"A Wassail Song" was sung by James Stickings, with piano accompaniment by Linda Scottorn. This traditional seasonal song, collected by Cecil Sharp in 1917, was given appropriate richness by James' baritone voice. By contrast, two delicate pieces, "Mary's boy child" and "Mele Kalilimaka" were sung by Janet Hallett and Linda Scottorn. Their two alto voices harmonised beautifully, producing a soft, almost ethereal sound which was very pleasing. Linda's restrained ukulele accompaniment provided a discreet rhythmic drive.

Two more choral pieces from New Zealand followed. The Kiwi carol "Te harinui" with music by Katherine ("Willow") Macky, was followed by "Open, open, open the stable door" with humorous words by another New Zealander, Colin Gibson. Everyone then joined in two more Gibson pieces.

After this singing, came an ambitious instrumental item: Alessandro Marcello's oboe concerto in D minor. Two movements of the concerto were performed by Elizabeth Chandler (oboe) and Frances Brewitt-Taylor (organ). Both movements, though no doubt challenging, were performed with accomplishment and aplomb. The choir returned to sing three varied pieces. First, an arranged Moravian melody encouraged us to "Listen to the message that the angels bring". This was followed by "We three kings" who were represented in solos by Brian Gardener, Jonty Chandler and James Stickings. A medley of traditional carols in the Christmas Jig jingle completed this choral set.

As a finale, everyone joined in the rousing Calypso carol, “See him lying on a bed of straw”. This came as a fitting climax to a hugely enjoyable programme. Overall, the concert served as a reminder of how fortunate we are to live amid such an abundance of musical talent.

Robin Horne

p.s. We were delighted that the happy event raised £655 towards the Fundraising Appeal and Parish Funds. Many thanks to the 'behind the scene' teams, especially those who organised and delivered the refreshments after the concert.

Frances

AND CONCERT PHOTOS FROM CAROLINE MCASLAN AND PETER BLAKE

We are very grateful to Caroline and Peter for the following photographs from the concert.



James performing his solo piece.



Procession with candles



Singing a piece with candles



Sarah enchanted by the choir's singing



Frances conducting the choir

WHERE TO JOIN A SERVICE IN FEBRUARY

Ash Wednesday falls on 18 February marking the start of the Lenten Season. The table below shows the service pattern for February.

| Date | CTK | SJB | All Saints |
|-------------|----------------------|-----|--|
| 1 February | 09.30 Eucharist | | 09.00 Holy Communion BCP said |
| | | | 18.30 Evensong |
| 8 February | 09.30 Eucharist | | 10.30 Sung Eucharist |
| | 17.00 Second Sundays | | |
| 15 February | 09.30 Eucharist | | 10.30 Peppard Praise Communion Service |
| 18 February | | | 19.00 Sung Eucharist with ashing |
| 22 February | 09.30 Eucharist | | 10.30 Family Communion |

Please check the weekly bulletins in case any of the planned arrangements are changed. St John's Church will be closed until the completion of Phase 1 Project work later in the Spring.

You'll note the Ash Wednesday Sung Eucharist with ashing on 18 February at All Saints' Church. The reflective path through Lent takes us to Palm Sunday on 29 March, Maundy Thursday on 2 April, Good Friday on 3 April and Easter Eve on 4 April.

THE LATE HELEN SCOTT

My family and I were so pleased that, despite the inclement weather, such a large number of parishioners came to All Saints' Church, on 9 January, to remember Helen and give thanks for her life. We thank them for the many expressions of sympathy we received. We are also most grateful for the donations in Helen's memory that have been given to the Alzheimer's Society.

Neil

WHAT'S COMING UP IN THE LECTIONARY IN MARCH?

The Annunciation of our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated on Wednesday 25 March. Palm Sunday falls on Sunday 29 March which is the start of Holy Week. Earlier in the month, Mothering Sunday may be celebrated on 15 March which is the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

Other commemorations and lesser feasts include, Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, Missionary, 672 on 2 March, Patrick, Bishop, Missionary, Patron of Ireland c 460 on 17 March, Joseph of Nazareth on 19 March, Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne, Missionary, 687 on 20 March, and Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Reformation Martyr, 1556, on 21 March,

Chad may be celebrated with Cedd on 26 October, and Cuthbert may be celebrated on 4 September. In the BCP Lectionary Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, 604 may be celebrated on 12 March, Edward, King of the West Saxons is commemorated on 18 March, and Benedict, Abbot of Monte Cassino, c 550 is commemorated on 21 March.

And, in case you're wondering, David, Bishop of Menevia, Patron of Wales c 601, who would normally be commemorated in the Common Worship and BCP Lectionaries on 1 March, is not observed this year as 1 March is a Sunday.

OXFORD DIOCESE – VACANCY IN SEE CONSULTATION

There is an opportunity for anyone living in the Diocese to respond to consultation which is part of the process leading to the nomination of a new Bishop of Oxford. The easiest way to take part is to access the online consultation form. Here is the link, <https://oxford.anglican.org/who-we-are/how-we-are-governed/diocesan-synod/vacancy-in-see/consultation.php>. Responses are due by 4 February. The online form is easy to complete and only takes a few minutes.

ST JOHN'S AT THE TURN OF THE YEAR AND NOW CLOSED FOR SEVERAL WEEKS

Peter Blake captured some interesting photos to remind us how St John's looked in the Christmas season.



The illuminated Christmas tree



A cheery glow from the heaters in the church



Decorations and welcome light outside the porch



Decorations on the font



The altar and chancel decorated



The view from the font to the chancel



Christmas decorations by the window

Our thanks again to all those who helped to decorate St John's for Christmas Day and the Christmas season.

St John's is now closed for several weeks to enable the contractors to carry out planned improvements especially to the lighting and heating.

We hope and pray for a trouble-free programme of works and look forward to returning to regular worship services once the works have been completed. The new lighting and heating should provide a more comfortable church interior.

THE BISHOP OF OXFORD'S CHRISTMAS SERMON

The Rt Revd Steven Croft gave this sermon at Christ Church Cathedral on Christmas Day at Choral Mattins.

A very happy Christmas to you and yours.

Tens of thousands of people will have gathered last night and this morning in hundreds of parish churches across the Diocese of Oxford and across the world. The whole earth is focussed now on the message of this one day. For us all who gather here and elsewhere there is one key question. That question is not whether there is a God. Creation declares God's glory. We know we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Our souls long for eternity. Our conscience understands right and wrong. The footprints of God are visible in the sand.

Whether or not there is a God is not the key question. The key question is what this God is like. What is the nature and character of our maker? What are our lives for? How do we know what God is like? This is the key question and always has been. How do we discover the God who made us?

St John writes this at the very beginning of his gospel: "No one has ever seen God. It is God, the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known" - John 1.18. The words are worth pondering in the wonder of this Christmas morning. No one has ever seen God. We cannot work out the character and nature of God by ourselves, or from the study of the world, or by looking inwards or in a mirror. We will always reflect back a distorted image.

But we celebrate this truth at the centre of our faith this day. The only begotten God, the Son, who is close to the Father's heart, has made him known. In one short sentence, John unveils three profound truths about Jesus which he will go on to demonstrate in the gospel: That this Jesus is both human and divine: the only begotten God, the Word made flesh; That this Jesus is close to the Father's heart, in the bosom of the Father; and That this Jesus has made God known. The phrase "made known" is translated in many different ways. Jesus has told God's story. Jesus has revealed God's nature. Jesus has told us what God is like. The root word is exegesis, the word we use of a preacher exploring a text and drawing out the meaning. The only begotten Son of God is the exegete of what God is like. And so we see who God is in Jesus.

In his humility, in his compassion, in his kindness, in his mercy, in his patience; in his miracles of healing; in his stories. Jesus knows the Father's heart, and he has made him known. Christmas is the celebration of God's kindness and mercy and patience and love and God's purpose for the world.

Matthew's story of the nativity, read on Christmas morning, draws out for us the patience of God across the ages. We live now in a very impatient world which expects instant results, rapid change and is of course deeply deceived. God works across generations, not days or weeks. Matthew begins his story not with the nativity, but with the genealogy, tracing the line of Jesus. Fourteen generations from Abraham to David. Fourteen generations from David to the Exile in Babylon. Fourteen generations from the Exile to Joseph. Every name, every link in the chain is vital. Fifteen hundred years of calling and waiting and building. Patience. Isaiah's prophecy promises restoration and rebuilding. The very pattern of Jesus' birth demonstrates patience and perseverance through difficulty: Joseph's patience when he discovers that Mary is with child. The long journey of the magi, who see the star in the East and travel for months and years to greet the Messiah. Joseph's perseverance in taking his young family to Egypt to escape Herod and fulfil the prophecy.

We so need this patience and endurance in our public life today, in our Church life, in our families, in our rebuilding. We need to remember this morning that good things take time. The world is facing such significant, complex problems in our natural environment, in regions of conflict, in our economy, in our relationship with technology, in global migration. But our democracy and our culture veers always towards instant solutions. Those who are called to lead us of whatever party face continual scrutiny. But good change takes time.

In the ten years since my appointment as Bishop of Oxford, the United Kingdom has had no fewer than six Prime Ministers. The same is true for the other great offices of state. There is a real need for stability and patience in our public life, to come together as a nation, to be at peace, to find our place in a new world order.

We need this patience and endurance in our rebuilding in this generation in Gaza, in Ukraine, in community relationships here as we face the rise of antisemitism and racial hatred. This year, we marked 80 years since the end of the second World War. The post-war generation, my parents' generation, was remarkable for their patient rebuilding in devastation.

We need this patience and endurance in our personal lives as well: to understand this day, because of Jesus, that God is for us, not against us. That God is a God of love and kindness and mercy and understanding whatever challenges we face in the coming year. Jesus is close to the Father's heart, in the bosom of the Father, and Jesus has made God known.

For my Christmas card this year, I chose a detail from the beautiful new window in Christ Church Cathedral by Thomas Denny with the kind permission of the Dean. The window tells the story Jesus told of the Prodigal Son. It's very beautiful. In the centre of the window is a profound picture of an embrace between the father and the son in the story. The son is in the bosom of the father.

Jesus shows us and tells us what God is like. God is patient, watching year after year for his children to come home. Running to meet us when we appear over the horizon. Folding us in his arms, whatever we have done, wherever we have been, however long we have been away. God is patient with his children. God is patient with his Church. God is patient with God's world. This is the very nature of the God we worship this day in this place. The God who forgives. The God who calls us to lives of patience and kindness and compassion. The God who loves for ever and who calls us back to life. No one has ever seen God. It is God, the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. Thanks be to God. Amen.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

As I look to the new year and my forthcoming role as Archbishop of Canterbury, I draw upon my experience as a nurse working in the NHS. In this same spirit of service, both these callings are shaped by my desire to uphold and support those in need, from all walks of life.

Good health care is incredibly important to me. It goes hand in hand with my Christian faith, inspired by Jesus' call for us to love and care deeply for one another. At St Thomas' Hospital, where I first trained, the chapel is a place of sanctuary for staff and patients, away from the busy wards. The multifaith chaplaincy team is on hand to listen, pray, or simply sit with those going through life's most difficult and painful moments. On the wall is a memorial to Florence Nightingale, who established the Nightingale School of Nursing here in 1860, driven by her deep Christian faith and commitment to care.

More than 160 years on, I see that same care for patients in the porters, nurses, doctors, healthcare assistants and many others who work in our hospitals. At bedsides, in wards and theatres across our country, they work to bring healing, alongside countless other acts of kindness.

At the Children's Hospital, there are staff here who specialise in play therapy, softening the anxiety of a hospital stay and speeding up recovery. While places like this provide excellent care, we know that our hospitals are under increasing pressure, with social and palliative care services stretched, long waiting times, and severe strain on dedicated NHS staff.

But this can be eased. Community support can help deal with the root causes of many admissions. I see this in my own diocese in London, where people are delivering holistic support in different settings. Churches like SAINT in Hackney hold regular lunches, understanding that for many of us, a place to go where food is provided and there are people to talk to, can be as important as medical intervention for our physical and mental health.

Here, people from all over the world, from many different backgrounds, experience a warm welcome, a health check-up if they need it, and importantly, the love of Jesus Christ, who showed us how to wash the feet of others.

In my calling now, I strive to carry the care and compassion that shaped my vocation as a nurse into everything that I do. The role of the church should be a healing presence in our nation, bringing people together at times of often intense division, caring deeply for those who need our help.

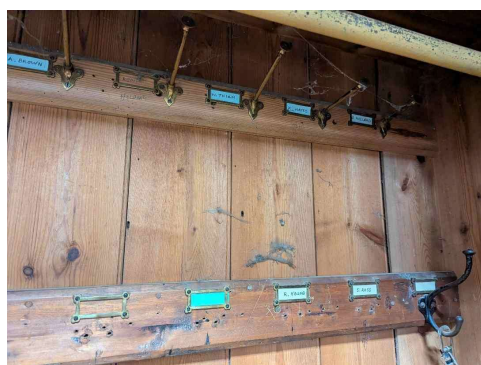
Happy New Year.

ANCIENT VESTMENTS AT ST JOHN'S

While clearing out the albs from the vestry at St. John's recently, in preparation for the closure of the church, I came across some very old vestments at the back of the cupboard. I had certainly never seen them before and neither, it seems, had anyone else who was present, including the daughter of the man who was organist at St. John's in the 1980's and who used to sing in the choir there herself.



There were two full length black robes and four waist length surplices, examples of which are shown in the attached photograph. In addition, on the wall at the back of the cupboard, there were name plaques by each chorister's gown hook, as shown in the photograph.



Those named are as follows: P. Spring; D. Young; C. Waugh; D. Brown; W. Thiam; K. Hayes; D. Holland; S. Ross; R. Young; C. Macdonald Smith; J. Scott. Does anybody know any of the those named on these plaques? I would be interested to hear from anybody who has any information about these vestments or the people named.

Shirley Horne

DIOCESAN APPORTIONMENT ENDS, IN FIRST STEPS TO SIMPLIFY FINANCES ACROSS THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

As of January 2026, diocesan apportionment has ended, meaning dioceses will no longer make financial contributions to cover costs of centralised services managed by the National Church Institutions. Most of these costs will now be covered by distributions from the Church of England's national endowment fund (managed by the Church Commissioners), in an effort to help dioceses to become more financially sustainable long-term, and to enable available diocesan funds to be spent on local parish ministry.

The apportionment contribution, which stood at a total of £32m in 2025, was made under the five 'votes' of General Synod, meaning it supported ministry training, Archbishops' Council National Church responsibilities, grants (largely referring to ecumenical matters and the Anglican Communion Office), mission agency pensions and clergy retirement housing.

However, due to financial pressures on dioceses leading to capping or freezing of apportionment, by 2025, diocesan contributions were only covering 50% of these costs, down from 75% in 2019.

Therefore, to reduce complexity and ease financial pressure on dioceses the Diocesan Finances Review undertaken in 2023/24 recommended the abolition of diocesan apportionment in 2026. This means that four of the five 'votes' will now be financed by the Church Commissioners' investments, including Archbishops' Council National Church responsibilities, grants, mission agency pensions and clergy retirement housing, resulting in reduced annualised costs to dioceses of £20m. This ongoing saving will help dioceses to cover the £18m estimated annualised costs of increasing stipends from April 2026 to catch up with historic inflation.

Changes to simplify contributions to ministry training, both training costs and ordinand maintenance costs, have also been agreed and will take place during 2026. 28 dioceses will benefit from a £10m increase in Lowest Income Communities Funding, which supports around 2,000 of the most deprived parishes in 28 dioceses. Short-term financial support of £200m will be distributed to dioceses over nine years from 2026 to ease pressures. In 2026, the first £25m will be distributed formulaically to dioceses. A further £11m will be available to be awarded as additional time-limited support through the Diocesan Investment Programme to

help dioceses to sustain ministry whilst waiting for their longer-term plans to develop missional health and financial sustainability to bear fruit.

Carl Hughes, Chairman of the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee, said: "I am delighted to mark the end of diocesan apportionment, following recommendations in the Diocesan Finance Review and consultation with all dioceses. Whilst we know that these new mechanisms will not automatically solve dioceses' financial challenges, this is an important step in simplification of financial structures and in ensuring more diocesan funds are spent on local ministry. We expect that the total net benefit to dioceses in 2026 will be over £50m, which we hope will both ease financial pressures and support the stipend increase."

p.s.

Following this press release we received a comment from the Diocesan Finance team. Their view is that these new arrangements simplify finance flows between the National Church and the Oxford Diocese. However, they are unlikely to reduce Diocesan expenditure. Clergy stipends will continue to increase this year onwards to catch up with historic inflation. Within the new arrangements is some welcome transitional relief to help the Diocese accommodate the new arrangements. Parish share is likely to continue to move with inflation.

AN ANTHEM BASED ON WORDS BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Sarah Macdonald (b. 1968) Selwyn College, Cambridge, has recently produced an anthem for SATB which is based on words by the Archbishop of Canterbury - Steadfast in love. The anthem is published by Encore Publications. Sarah is a Canadian born organist, conductor and composer living in the UK. At Selwyn College she is Fellow and Director of Music and at Ely Cathedral, Director of the Girl Choristers. She is also currently President of the Royal College of Organists

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2026 – FRIDAY 6 MARCH

As mentioned last month, the World Day of Prayer will be celebrated on Friday 6 March. This year the service comes from the Christian women of Nigeria. The theme is "I will give you rest. Come!", taken from Matthew 11. 28 – 30. In and around the Sonning Common area an ecumenical group from 6 churches, unites joyfully to bring this service to you.

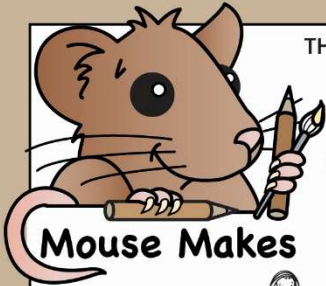
So, a very warm welcome awaits everyone at the 2026 service at Christ the King Church, Sonning Common at 6.30pm. Another reminder comes next month, but meanwhile please pray for the people of Nigeria and the challenges faced in their country. These include, insecurity from Islamist insurgencies in the Northeast, banditry and kidnapping in the Northwest, farmer – herder clashes in the Middle Belt and significant poverty, corruption and human rights issues.

LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

The House of Bishops met on 14 January and issued a letter to the Church of England in the form of a statement as the LLF process moves to a Synodical conclusion. The House confirmed the decision taken at its meeting in October that, based on legal advice, new special or ‘bespoke’ services using Prayers of Love and Faith would need full formal authorisation under canon law. They also acknowledged that general permission for clergy to be in a same-sex civil marriage would require a formal legislative process and agreed to explore what legislation would be needed. And they made clear they could not agree to placing some parishes under the care of bishops with “separate and independent jurisdiction” as a result of the Prayers of Love and Faith at this stage.

The bishops’ letter details how a new working group would carry out the theological and legislative preparatory work needed and report back to the new General Synod – which will be elected later this year – with recommendations within the first two years after the election. The House recognised and regretted the deep hurt, particularly to LGBTQI+ people, caused by the decisions. Following a General Synod vote in February 2023, same-sex couples can receive public prayers of dedication, thanksgiving and asking for God’s blessing – known as the Prayers of Love and Faith (or PLF) – as part of a regular church service.

A Relationships, Sexuality and Gender Working Group will now support the Bishops who will enable it to engage in preparatory work and explore the approval process under Canon B2 that would be necessary for bespoke services of Prayers of Love and Faith; explore what legislative changes would be required to enable clergy to enter same-sex marriage; continue to explore what pastoral episcopal provision and reassurance would be required, proportionate to any further proposed changes; report back to General Synod with recommendations within the first two years following the upcoming elections



Read the story in
Luke 4:1-13



THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

After Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan where did the Holy Spirit lead him to? v1

How many days was Jesus being tempted by the devil? v2

What did Jesus eat? v2

What did the devil tempt Jesus to turn a stone into? What did Jesus say? v3-4

What did the devil offer Jesus if He worshipped him? What did Jesus say? v7-8

What did the devil ask Jesus to do? What did Jesus say? v9

FIRST TEMPTATION

THE DEVIL SAID:

"If you are God's Son order this stone to turn into bread."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Man shall not live on bread alone."

Read Deuteronomy 8:3

WE LEARN:

Read the Bible
Learn God's word.



SECOND TEMPTATION

THE DEVIL SAID:

"I will give you power and wealth if you worship me."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him."

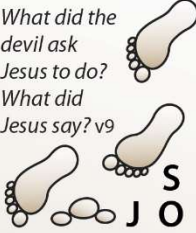
Read Deuteronomy 6:13

WE LEARN:

Put God first
Worship only Him.



What did the devil ask Jesus to do? What did Jesus say? v9



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

JESUS • BAPTISED • RIVER • JORDAN • HOLY SPIRIT • LED
WILDERNESS • DESERT • FORTY DAYS • HUNGRY • DEVIL
TEMPTATION • STONE • BREAD • WRITTEN • SON • WORLD
KINGDOMS • GLORY • WORSHIP • SERVE • GOD • HIGH
JERUSALEM • TEMPLE • SON • JUMP • DOWN • LIFT • FOOT • LORD • TEST • LENT

THIRD TEMPTATION

THE DEVIL SAID:

"If you are God's Son throw yourself down, the scriptures say God will take care of you."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Read Deuteronomy 6:16

WE LEARN:

God cares, trust
Him do not test Him.



Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
1 Samuel 2:11-17, 22-25, 3:1-21

As soon as he was old enough to leave his parents, Samuel went to live at God's temple in Shiloh, with the priest, Eli..

Eli's sons were also priests, but they helped themselves to what people had brought to give to God.



Eli talked to them about it. They ignored him.



But Samuel did all the work he was given well.

One night, after everyone had gone to bed, Samuel heard someone calling him.



He thought it was Eli, so he ran to him.



No, I didn't call you

It happened again.



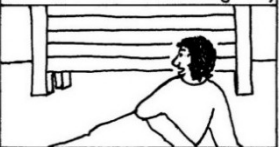
I didn't call. Go back to bed.

The third time, Eli knew it must be God calling Samuel.



You must say, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'

God called Samuel again,



and Samuel answered as he had been told.

I told Eli his sons had done bad things, but he has not stopped them. Now, even being sorry will not make up for what has happened.



The next morning, Eli demanded to be told what God had said.



Samuel was afraid, but he told him.

He is God. He will deal with us as is right.



God continued to talk to Samuel. He became known throughout Israel.



A KIDMORE END SCHOOL UPDATE FROM CLAIRE SPANKIE, HEADTEACHER

After a busy, learning-filled Autumn term at Kidmore End CE Primary School the pupils and staff enjoyed a well-earned rest. This was time to spend with family and loved ones and a time to reflect on all that we had experienced and achieved over the term.

Our new foundation pupils settled into school life so wonderfully in September; it has been wonderful to watch their confidence grow over the term, culminating in their fabulous nativity performance. The year 1 and foundation pupils recited their lines, followed the stage directions and sang their hearts out with such confidence and pride throughout all their performances. Our school value of independence is important from the day pupils start at school through to their final day in year 6 and beyond. Equipping the pupils with the skills to overcome nerves and to step out of their comfort zone is a valuable skill for life.

As a school, we celebrated Christmas in many ways. We had the joy of being entertained by our fabulous year 2 class, who put on a Christmas performance. They performed many songs and shared facts about Christmas. Towards the end of term, the whole school were joined by the parents out on the playground for a festive Christmas sing-a-long, followed by some Christmas stalls and mulled wine. It had a wonderful community feel to the afternoon.

Reverend James led two Christmas carol services at St. John the Baptist Church for our pupils and their parents. Our relationship with the church is very special to us and we really value the opportunities to spend time in the church and work alongside Reverend James.

Kidmore End School Association (KESA) introduced a new community fundraiser in December. Our Santa Dash was an amazing morning, filled with Christmas cheer, lots of running, dancing and wonderful stalls. This event not only raised money for the school but also brought the wider community together. We are very grateful to Kidmore End War Memorial Hall and to Memorial Park in Sonning Common for enabling us to stage this event. A huge thank you to the entire KESA team and volunteers who make events like this possible.

The pupils went on many trips and experiences last term. These are designed to enhance their learning in the classroom, to bring their learning to life. Our year 4, 5

and 6 pupils visited Hampton Court palace to discover more about the Tudors. Our year 6 pupils had a wonderful week away at Woodlands residential centre in Wales, where they participated in a range of new and adventurous activities. Cedar class went on a local walk around the village as part of their Year 1 geography curriculum. Along with sports competitions, church visits and visitors coming into school – it was a very busy term!

Our school choir performed at the Kenton Theatre as part of a schools Christmas show. The pupils stood so courageously on stage in front of a large audience with bright, warm lights shining directly at them. The pupils, from year 3 - 6, performed two Christmas songs and recited 'Twas the night before Christmas'. We were all so proud of the children who were awarded the 'Spirit of Christmas' award for the smiles, energy and enthusiasm they put into their performance. In mid-January, we received a letter from our local MP, Freddie van Mierlo, congratulating the pupils for their hard work and success. It was very exciting to receive post from the House of Commons.

The term ahead looks set to be another learning-filled few weeks. We have trips and visits planned and a range of curriculum enrichment days and weeks.

If you are interested or know someone interested in joining our school please do look on our website for details of our open afternoons, where you will meet me and the team and see the school in action. Our social media pages are also a great way to learn more about what is happening at school.



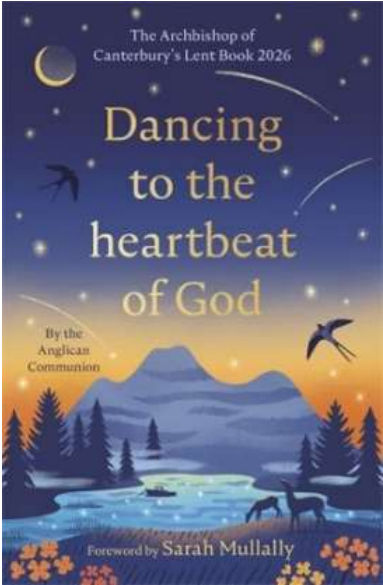


PARISH SHARE AT ARCHDEACONRY LEVEL AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

| Archdeaconry | Amount paid | Outstanding | % Paid |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Berkshire | £ 5,681,525 | £ 233,658 | 96.0 |
| Buckingham | £ 6,209,731 | £ 617,123 | 91.0 |
| Dorchester | £ 5,959,666 | £ 266,117 | 95.7 |
| Oxford | £ 1,638,648 | £ 166,497 | 90.8 |
| Totals | £19,489,570 | £ 1,283,395 | 93.8 |

The summary table above shows how each of the four archdeaconries have contributed to their assigned parish share amounts at 31 December 2025. At this stage last year the aggregate contributions totalled £19,231,691. Henley Deanery has contributed £599,465 which is 87.8% of the assigned amount and there is £83,380 outstanding. By 31 December 2024 Henley Deanery had contributed 82.8% of the 2024 assignment.

BOOK REVIEW – DANCING TO THE HEARTBEAT OF GOD – THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY’S LENT BOOK 2026



With a foreword and an afterword by the Archbishop of Canterbury designate, an introduction by the Archbishop of York, and chapters by around thirty authors drawn from across the globe, the volume creates a sense of excitement, dynamism and faithful witness in its gloriously diverse writers and readers alike.

Its testimonies and stories aim to encourage people in the Church of England and across the Anglican Communion to share their faith with others.

SPCK - £11.99

ST JOHN'S RENOVATION PROJECT – PHASE 1: UPDATE

The Diocesan Faculty was granted on 15 January to permit us to proceed with Phase 1, which is a significant milestone for the St John's project.

During January, a team of parishioners helped to clear the church of several items, held for safekeeping ahead of the contractor's start date. Other large items, including the organ, have been shrouded.

A meeting was held on 17 January between our architects, E W Beard (our contractor), James and me to establish the finer points around the contract which we will have now signed. An anticipated commencement date was set for 9 February, but this may be brought forward to w/c 2nd. The works are scheduled to take 13 weeks.

Access to St John's is now prohibited as Beard's prepared to begin the job. The pathways are still operational, though, but we advise care around the church itself. The site will be fenced off and suitable notices erected to draw attention to principal personnel and safety regulations.

Readers will not notice too much disruption because most of the work is internal, but for the stained-glass repairs, windows will be removed (and temporary boarding inserted in their place) by the conservator, and there will be some mobile scaffolding in use at certain times over the duration.

PCC have been discussing regular updates and publicity directed towards the community through the Spring, and we are looking forward to reopening the building, all being well, in May.

If there are any questions, please address them to me or James.

Nick Room – Churchwarden

SNIPPETS FROM THE PCC MEETING ON 13 JANUARY

- CTK - the bi-fold doors are due to be fitted this month. Nick Room has been authorised to investigate the installation of electric vehicle chargers.
- CTK – there is a need for someone to take on the role of server at Communion services.
- SJB – PCC approved the budget for phase 1 work. Redundant organ pipes are to be disposed.

- Benefice prayer group – James would like to re-establish this event.
- Lent – there is insufficient time to plan and deliver Benefice Lent lunches; study group sessions – dates to be advised – will use Paula Gooder’s book Journey to the Empty tomb.
- Publicity – PCC thanked Sue Jones for publicising events and services.

DATES FOR DIARIES

| Date | Event |
|-------------|--|
| 18 February | Ash Wednesday Benefice Eucharist with ashing at All Saints’ at 19.00 |
| 6 March | World Day of Prayer service at CTK at 18.30 |
| 17 May | Annual Parochial Church Meeting at 11.00 at CTK |
| 21 November | Wine and Song evening at Kidmore End School; time to be advised |
| 22 December | Parish Carol Service at SJB |

THE COLLECT FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Almighty and everlasting God,
 you hate nothing that you have made
 and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:
 create and make in us new and contrite hearts
 that we, worthily lamenting our sins
 and acknowledging our wretchedness,
 may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
 perfect remission and forgiveness;
 through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
 who is alive and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

WHERE DID THE HYMN, O GOD OF EARTH AND ALTAR COME FROM?

This short hymn, (3 verses) can be found in the parish hymnal as 582. It embraces several themes and although it’s not found in the Lent hymns section it may be viewed as very suitable, particularly now in an ever changing world scene. It seeks justice and reminds us that earthly leaders falter.

The lyrics were written by Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874 – 1936). Chesterton's talents in journalism, and literary works were so broad and deep that there is a Chesterton Society that celebrates his works and achievements. The website is worth a review. Among other things, it suggests that despite several biographies, authors have found it difficult to adequately summarise the man. Instead the website summary says, "G.K. Chesterton was the best writer of the 20th century. He said something about everything, and he said it better than anybody else. But he was no mere wordsmith. He was very good at expressing himself, but more importantly, he had something very good to express. The reason he was the greatest writer of the 20th century was because he was also the greatest thinker of the 20th century."

His excellence in writing is all the more surprising in that he spent 3 years at the Slade School of Fine Art from 1892. He started writing about art but with encouragement from friends he moved into journalism. During his adult years, he went on to write many books, poems, plays, novels and short stories. One of his more familiar works is a series of books about a detective priest, Father Brown which have found expression in television. Born in Kensington, London, Chesterton lived in Beaconsfield. He was a Christian and eventually joined the Roman Catholic Church. Although not a politician, he drew attention to the bad effects of socialism and capitalism. He argued for justice for the 'common man' and encouraged common sense. He defended the poor and family values.

This hymn featured in the 1906 *English Hymnal* and finds inspiration in Proverbs 14. 34, and Jeremiah 6. 13 – 14. The musical editor for the hymnal, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958) set the hymn lyrics to the stirring English folk melody tune, *King's Lynn* which is the most usual musical setting. It can also be sung to the traditional Welsh melody tune, *Llangloffan*. Vaughan Williams first heard the folk melody tune in King's Lynn in 1905. It was sung by a local fisherman to lyrics for *Young Henry, the poacher*. It was the lament of a man from Warwickshire who was transported to Tasmania.

EATING DISORDERS WEEK – 23 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH

Do you suffer from an eating disorder? Or are you close to someone who struggles with one? If so, then you will know the long battle that sufferers can wage with anorexia, bulimia, binge eating and EDNOS (or 'eating disorder not otherwise specified'.)

Eating disorders ruin lives. They ruin relationships. They also ruin careers. They are estimated to cost the UK economy about £9.5 billion a year.

This year the annual Eating Disorders Awareness Week website says: “An eating disorder can be isolating, making people feel alone, whether someone has an eating disorder themselves or whether they are supporting someone.

And so it is that “We’re celebrating the power of community and the vital role family, friends, and other support networks play in helping someone feel supported, understood, and never alone on their journey from seeking help, undergoing treatment and beyond. How can people with eating disorders be best supported by their employer and colleagues? Visit <https://edaw.beateatingdisorders.org.uk> for details.

Please remember those with eating disorders (it’s a horrible affliction), and the medical workers who seek to help them in your thoughts and prayers in Eating Disorders Week.

GREEK YOGHURT IS GOOD FOR US

Real live Greek yoghurt is seriously good for us. Its protein and live bacteria have been linked to stronger muscles, boosted gut microbiome, and better heart, bone and brain health. Greek yoghurt:-

- is high in protein, with up to 10g of protein per 100g. That’s about double the protein of low-fat yogurt or Greek-style yogurts. What’s more, it is a ‘complete’ source of protein, with all nine of the essential amino acids that our bodies can’t make by themselves.
- boosts your gut health. Its natural probiotics encourage a wider array of beneficial bugs to live in your gut. That means less inflammation, and probably fewer cancer-causing chemicals.
- contains the minerals potassium and magnesium, which can help to both support and regulate blood pressure.
- provides calcium. This can contribute to greater bone density and even rebuild bone tissue if we are older or have been injured.
- includes the B vitamins – thiamine (B1), riboflavin (B2) and cobalamin (B12). These help support memory, critical thinking, and our problem-solving skills.

REMEMBERING L S LOWRY

Fifty years ago, on 23 February 1976, the artist L S Lowry died of pneumonia. He was known primarily for his bleak industrial landscapes of north-west England, populated with matchstick men, but he also painted original and striking seascapes and impressive portraits.

Laurence Stephen Lowry was born on 1st November 1887 in Stretford. His father worked for an estate agent and his mother was an organist, playing at the local church. Laurence went to Sunday school, but as life later turned difficult, his faith became shadowy. After leaving school he became a rent collector for the Pall Mall Property Company and stayed there until his retirement in 1952. This led to some dismissing him as a ‘Sunday painter’.

Lowry’s life was restricted by his family debts and his mother, for whom he took responsibility after his father died. He tried hard to please her, but she showed no appreciation for the quality of his art, looking instead for a middle-class respectable life. He became a solitary figure and never married.

Lowry remains popular as an artist, with many imitators, but he never formally taught or gathered a group of followers around him. He holds the record for rejecting British honours—five, including a knighthood (1968). A collection of his work is on display in The Lowry, an impressive purpose-built art gallery on Salford Quays.

During his life he made about 1,000 paintings and over 8,000 drawings. His works often sell for millions of pounds. Buried in Manchester next to his parents, he left an estate valued at £298,459, plus artwork, to Carol Ann Lowry (no relation), whose family he befriended when she was 13, after she asked for help with her own development as an artist.

TIME TICKS BY IN FEBRUARY

125 years ago, on 2 Feb 1901 the funeral of Queen Victoria took place.

80 years ago, on 11 Feb 1946, the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament was published. It was the first major English-language update of the Bible since the King James version was published in 1611.

Also 80 years ago, on 14 Feb 1946 the Bank of England was nationalised.

Also 80 years ago, on 19 Feb 1946 the mathematician and cryptanalyst Alan Turing presented a detailed paper for the national Physical Laboratory that gave the first reasonably complete design of a stored-programme computer.

70 years ago, on 11 Feb 1956 two members of the Cambridge spy ring, British diplomats Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, announced that they had defected to the Soviet Union. They had both vanished in mysterious circumstances in 1951.

65 years ago, on 9 Feb 1961 the Beatles played at the Cavern Club in Liverpool for the first time. (*Ed – crumbs – that makes me feel very old!*)

50 years ago, on 11 Feb 1976 John Curry won Britain's first-ever Olympic gold medal in figure skating.

40 years ago, on 12 Feb 1986 the Treaty of Canterbury was signed by Britain and France. It was the agreement to construct the Channel Tunnel linking the two countries. The tunnel opened in 1994.

30 years ago, on 1 Feb 1996 former US President Bill Clinton met Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams at the White House, to discuss the Northern Ireland Peace Process.

Also 30 years ago, on 15 Feb 1996 the oil tanker Sea Empress ran aground near Milford Haven in Wales, causing a major oil spill along the coastlines of Wales and Ireland.

25 years ago, on 12 Feb 2001 the Human Genome Project announced the publication of the first complete working draft of the human genome.

Also 25 years ago, on 19 Feb 2001 the first case of foot-and-mouth disease in the 2001 UK outbreak was detected at an abattoir in Essex.

20 years ago, on 18 Feb 2006 the Rolling Stones played the world's largest free rock concert on Copacabana beach, Rio de Janeiro. An estimated 2 million people attended.

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Want to see the church building preserved?
Or just feeling generous?

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Your money will be used **ONLY** for the preservation of the buildings.
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 |

WALKING YOUR DOG IN THE CHURCHYARD

We ask you politely to:

PLEASE keep your dog on the lead or under control

AND clear up any mess it makes.

Children walk through the Churchyard to and from School;
and a working party tends the Churchyard every Wednesday.

PARISH DIRECTORY

The Parish Directory is omitted from this online accessible edition of the magazine to comply with General Data Protection Regulations.

Kidmore End & Sonning Common Parochial Church Council is a registered charity. The Charity Commission registration number is 1209778.

SERVICES AND PRINCIPAL SERVICE LECTIONARY

| Date | St John's | Lessons | Christ the King |
|---|-----------|---|----------------------|
| 1 February – The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (observed) | | Malachi 3. 1 – 5 Luke 2. 22 - 40 | 09.30 Eucharist |
| 8 February – Second Sunday before Lent | | Romans 8. 18 – 25 Matthew 6. 25 - end | 09.30 Eucharist |
| | | Special lessons | 17.00 Second Sundays |
| 15 February – Sunday next before Lent | | 2 Peter 1. 16 – end Matthew 17. 1- 9 | 09.30 Eucharist |
| 18 February – Ash Wednesday (Benefice Sung Eucharist at All Saints' at 19.00) | | Joel 2. 1 – 2 & 12 = 17 Matthew 6. 1 – 6 & 16 – 21 | |
| 22 February – First Sunday of Lent | | Genesis 2. 15 – 16 & 3. 1 – 7 Matthew 4. 1 - 11 | 09.30 Eucharist |

St John's Church is undergoing project works and as a result, the church building will remain closed until the work is completed in the Spring.

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'

- 1 February – 09.00 Holy Communion (BCP said), 18.30 Evensong
- 8 February – 10.30 Sung Eucharist
- 15 February – 10.30 Peppard Praise Communion Service
- 18 February – 19.00 Benefice Sung Eucharist with ashing
- 22 February – 10.30 Family Communion