



CiA News – September 2024

This news sheet is available on the CiA website at www.church-in-abingdon.org.uk. Please take a look.

WHAT'S COMING UP

Faith Forum

This begins again on Sunday 1 September 2024 in St Helen's Parish Centre with a buffet lunch at 12.30 pm followed by a talk at 12.45. The autumn series will look at different ways of engaging with scripture. Those unable to attend in person will be able to join via Zoom.

The first talk of the series, by John Barton, will be on 'Understanding the Bible.' Other talks in the series will be on 4 October and 1 December.

Abingdon Progressive Christianity Network Group

This group meets on the first Tuesday of each month. The meeting is held on Zoom and the link for joining the meeting is available from the convenor, Cliff Marshall, at cliff.marshall@pcnbritain.org.uk.

The Abingdon PCN Group is holding an open event on 8 October 2024, 7.30 pm, at All Saints Methodist Church, when Revd Dave Tomlinson will be speaking about his new book: *OMG! A Bad Christian's Book of Prayers*. This is an open meeting and all are welcome. Contact Cliff Marshall for more details at cliff.marshall@pcnbritain.org.uk.

Before retirement, Dave was vicar of St Luke's in N. London Parish Church North London and he now provides a weekly 'Holy Shed' podcast. In his latest book, for those he celebrates as 'bad Christians', Dave explores the idea that prayer is not so much a religious activity as a universal human instinct, something we all do, one way or another, whether we realise it or not. As he says, it isn't necessary to believe in God to pray.

St Helen's Church – Taize Prayer

You are welcome to join us at St Helen's Church for Taize Prayer - usually on the second Sunday in the month at 5.30 pm: 8 September, 13 October, 8 December. About 45 minutes of prayers, readings, singing and silence.

Lunchtime music hour at Abingdon Baptist Church

Abingdon Baptist Church invite you to a free hour of music on Monday 9 September 2024 from 12.30 to 1.30 pm in the church. This month Linda King will be playing the piano with a selection of music. Why not buy your light lunch from our Cafe@35 to eat while you listen, or bring your own. Next month we welcome the group Old Gold to entertain us.



Long Alley Almshouses Hall - Stained glass window restored

Come and see the newly restored stained glass window. The Hall will be open on Saturday 14 September 2024 during Abingdon's Heritage Weekend.



Long Alley almshouses date from the 15th century and are Grade 1 listed. They form part of the beautiful churchyard group around St Helen's Church. Christ's Hospital of Abingdon recently commissioned Cliveden Conservation to strengthen the stone mullioned bay window of the central Hall and to restore the armorial stained glass. The window dates back to 1605, though the glass is more recent (mostly



made by Russell of Oxford in 1829). The shields depicted are from historic benefactors to the charity including Sir John Mason, the first Master who was appointed in 1553.

Quiet Garden Day

This quiet day will take place at Aston Tirrold Centre for Reflection on Saturday 21 September 2024, 10 am - 4 pm. Leader: Josie Midwinter. Theme: *Landscape of Hope* based on Heather Holdsworth's thoughts on Psalms 1 and 8. Refreshments are provided, but please bring a packed lunch. A donation of £10 would be welcome. If you plan on attending, please email atquietgardendays@gmail.com in advance so we can estimate numbers. All are welcome.

Alpha courses

Two Alpha courses will be starting in September: one at St Edmunds Roman Catholic Church and one at Christ Church, Abingdon. You are warmly invited to come along to the launch night on 24 September 2024 at 7 pm (St Edmunds) or 25 September 2024 at 7.30 pm (Christ Church) for dinner and a taste of what Alpha is like. Both of these courses will run on Wednesday evenings until the first week of December.

Alpha is a series of group conversations that freely explore the basics of the Christian faith in an open, friendly environment. Alpha is free of charge, and we begin every evening with a wonderful two-course dinner. We then hear a short talk before breaking into groups for a discussion time over tea and coffee. For more information about Alpha at St Edmunds or Christ Church, please feel free to get in touch with Andrew Gilmour (andrew.gilmour@cca.uk.net).

Messy Church Goes Wild Roadshow



Thanks to some generous funding from the Vale of White Horse District Council, we are able to invite anyone interested in forest/outdoor intergenerational church to a free Messy Church Goes Wild Roadshow at St Swithun's Church, Kennington, OX1 5PL on Sunday 29 September 2024, 2 - 4 pm.

Messy Church Goes Wild is the movement within Messy Church that aims to encourage people of all ages to meet God outdoors, love the natural world and to be more eco-aware in all we do. Over the past couple of years, we have been working on some new session material called the 'Messy Adventures', which is now available and free to download from the Messy Church website or to buy as a book from brfonline.

Come along and get hands on with the new Messy Adventures resources: you'll get to experience the different delivery styles (on the move and activity-based) and we'll round off the afternoon with a short outdoor celebration. For further information and to book your free place, check out the event listing here: <https://www.messychurch.brf.org.uk/latest/events/messy-church-goes-wild-roadshow/>

Abingdon Food Bank

Abingdon Food Bank needs your support more than ever now, with the increasing cost of living adversely affecting those already struggling to make ends meet. A typical food parcel might contain: cereal, soup, pasta, rice, tinned tomatoes/pasta sauce, lentils, beans and pulses, tinned meat, tinned vegetables, tea/coffee, tinned fruit, biscuits, UHT milk, fruit juice. Also toiletries, nappies and household cleaning items. Food can be taken to either Preston Road Food Bank or Christ Church Food Bank. Some supermarkets also have collection baskets. Financial donations are also welcome.

Abingdon Community Fridge

Abingdon Community Fridge exists to prevent food waste and is open to everyone. It collects surplus food from local businesses and distributes to the community. Help to stop excess food being thrown out by coming to Hadland Road Community Centre, Abingdon OX14 3YH:

Mondays: 4 - 4.30 pm
Thursdays: 1 - 2 pm
Saturdays: 10.30 - 11.30 am

The Community Fridge is in need of funding to continue its work (hire of hall, insurance, food safety training for volunteers, etc.). To donate, go to <https://chuffed.org/project/abingdon-community-fridge> or contact margaretdhancox@gmail.com. For more information, go to www.facebook.com/abingdoncommunityfridge.

Abingdon's International Welcome Café – Fridays, 1 – 2.30 pm, The Barn, Christ Church, Northcourt Road, OX14 1PL

This café was set up in response to the Homes for Ukraine scheme and to provide wider support of refugees through a collaborative partnership of Christ Church and Host Abingdon, the main partners, as well as many other churches in Abingdon as well as local groups and organisations, including the Food Bank. The café offers friendship, support, refreshments, toys and help with English run by a qualified TEFL teacher. For further information, please contact hello@hostabingdon.org.

Archway

The Archway Foundation, a locally founded registered charity 'serving those hurt by loneliness', offers a pathway of support including individual support via telephone or face-to-face, and small supportive social groups. By volunteering for an hour a fortnight as an Individual Support or once a month as a small group volunteer, or as a volunteer driver, you can make a huge difference to someone's week. We are especially keen to find volunteers to support our monthly Abingdon group. Excellent training and support is given and any travel expenses reimbursed. If you think you could help, please get in touch. An application form can be found at www.archwayfoundation.org.uk, or a hard copy is available by calling 01865 790552.



Christian cards and books

Cards covering all events, birthdays, anniversaries, get well, thinking of you, etc., which are regularly topped up, are available for purchase from 35 Ock Street, Abingdon Baptist Church. There is also a range of books for sale, regularly updated; books can also be ordered. Do come along and see what we have. Our stock is sourced from St Andrew's Christian Bookshop whose nearest outlet is Witney since they closed their shop in Oxford.

Moving into Stillness: Taizé circle dancing and stillness

Circle dancing takes place on the first Thursday of the month 9.45 - 10.45 am at St Michael and All Angels Church, before the regular circle dancing session, which is held on the first and third Thursdays of the month from 11 am to 12 noon. Contact Sue Sheppy (susan.sheppy@btinternet.com) for further information.

Silent Reflections

This will be held on the last Tuesday of every month (except for December) at St Michael and All Angels Church from 7.30 to 8.30 pm. Material will be available to support your prayer in the quiet of the sanctuary, and the opportunity is always available to walk the labyrinth. We begin in the church room, so please enter through the door on the south side of the church. If you park in Park Road or Crescent, come in to get a parking permit, otherwise the parking is free in the surrounding streets.

Christ Church – Job vacancies

We are looking to appoint a highly organised and efficient part-time Administrator to join our team. The

ideal candidate will have a strong attention to detail and be able to handle multiple tasks simultaneously.
Closing date: 13 September 2024

We are also looking to appoint a part-time Foodbank Manager with a passion for tackling poverty to lead and develop the team, and oversee all operational responsibilities. Closing date: 20 September 2024.

For more information please go to www.cca.uk.net/vacancies or contact Phil Adams our operations manager at phil@cca.uk.net.

Upcoming free eco events

See www.oneplanetabingdon.org for full details

Volunteering Opportunities

Are you looking to give a few hours of help? If so, here are some ways of volunteering for local community groups.

Abingdon Baptist Church, 35 Ock Street



Looking for something new? Like meeting people? Have you considered volunteering?

Research shows that being a volunteer has lots of benefits. It can bring meaning and purpose to your life, while increasing your self-esteem and wellbeing. Volunteering can also relieve stress, and alleviate symptoms of depression, as well as having a positive impact on your community.

35 Ock Street and Café is a hugely valuable and important resource for the church in its mission to the community. Our team is made up of volunteers who have a passion for serving our community.

We are looking for new people to join our friendly team as our volunteer numbers have dropped due to changes in circumstances.



If you think you could take on a **catering role** or **reception duties** and you want to learn more, why not drop us an email at office@35ockst.org.uk. We'd love to hear from you! Give as much time as you feel able - once a week, once a fortnight or even once a month. Training is given.

Current opening times: Monday – Thursday 10.30 am - 2.00 pm with light tasty lunches served between 12.00 pm and 1.30 pm; Fridays and Saturdays 10.30 am – 12.30 pm with refreshments only but, as a special, bacon baps are available.

The Abingdon Bridge



The Abingdon Bridge is a well-regarded registered Abingdon charity supported by both the National Lottery Community Fund and the BBC's Children in Need Fund, as well as funding from the CiA. TAB provides support to young people (aged 13-25 years) to enable them to have the resilience to help overcome life's challenges (<https://www.theabingdonbridge.org.uk>). TAB

has a bank of volunteers that perform a vital role, often doing a slot once a week or fortnight or monthly. If you are interested or would like further information, please contact Sandy Kruger at sandy@theabingdonbridge.org.uk. Volunteers will be DBS checked.

TAB are looking for the following personnel:

- Trustees to join the board

- Volunteer data manager

Trustees: We are keen to diversify the current Board as we celebrate over 30 years of providing support to the young people of Abingdon, the Vale and South Oxfordshire District Council areas. It is an exciting time to be joining TAB as a Trustee to help us shape our future to ensure that we can continue to provide support for those that need us.

Previous board experience is not necessary, and we welcome applications from all ages aged 18 and over and from all backgrounds, including:

- Finance
- Education
- Health & safety
- Safeguarding
- Fundraising
- Law

Please be in touch if you are:

- A person who would like to learn how a charity is run.
- A person who has a passion to make a difference to the lives of young people and their future.

For further information, please contact Luke Mattam, Chair at Luke@theabingdonbridge.org.uk

Volunteer Data Manager: to work alongside our current data manager with a view to taking over the role towards the end of 2025. We are looking for someone with: an IT background, an analytical mind, good with Excel, committed to helping TAB in their support of young people. Other personal qualities needed: integrity, team worker, discretion, curious, some leadership skills, approachable and available, can meet deadlines.

The volunteer could expect to spend about 12 hours preparing the data for the TAB quarterly meeting; answering occasional e-mails from staff; meeting with the CEO monthly; plus attending occasional staff meetings.

If you are interested in this role please e-mail Gill Dean at gill@theabingdonbridge.org.uk.

Abingdon Street Pastors – helping to make the community a safe place

Street Pastors is a worldwide network of Christian volunteers from local churches who have concern for the community and provide help as needed in neutral and reassuring ways at the point of need. Abingdon Street Pastors has been part of the night-time economy in the town centre on Saturday nights since 2011, going out from about 10 pm till everyone is safely on their way home. We work in close collaboration with the police, the local council and other local groups and bodies. We would love to have more volunteers working with us – either as Street Pastors out on the street or as Prayer Pastors who stay and pray at our base during a shift. If you feel that this is something close to your heart and would like to give it a try, please contact the Coordinator Debra Mcknight at abingdon@streetpastors.org.uk.

Christian Forum

This Christian witness continues to be published monthly in the Abingdon Round & About magazine, distributed around Abingdon residents. If you would like to submit an article (300 words max) on any subject with a Christian message, please send to the CiA Administrator at debra.mcknight@aol.com.

Church Twinning

Our committee would welcome new members from any of the interdenominational churches of the Church in Abingdon. Committee members enjoy meeting Christians from other countries as well as discussing ecumenism. We plan visits to Abingdon from a twin town annually, as well as arrange and take part in these visits. We also organize an away visit to a twin town each year. The twin towns are Argentan

and Colmar (France), Lucca (Italy), Sint Niklaas (Belgium) and Schongau (Germany). There are only four committee meetings a year, plus an informal planning meeting for any visit here. If you are interested in this outreach, contact Eileen Bontempelli on 01235 526331 or at epkbontempelli@gmail.com.

To read more about the twinning visits, see the reports posted on the CiA website under 'CiA-supported task groups: additional information' (<https://www.church-in-abingdon.org.uk/>).

LAMPS Collective

LAMPS is a collective of Christian artists that produce fabulous live theatre and creative resources for the church (www.lampscollective.com). We are based in Abingdon and are thankful for the support of many local churches. Our aim is to create work that will inspire, challenge, entertain and provoke thought about the nature of God, life and the universe. LAMPS is an acronym which stands for Love, Action, Music, Poetry and Stories – all things close to our hearts! If you appreciate the Christian arts and have some time available we'd love to have you join our volunteer team. There are many ways to help, ranging from sharing skills like marketing, admin, IT, front of house, to helping steer the charity by sitting on our Board of Trustees. To find out more, contact Sam Pullen-Campbell on pullencampbells@outlook.com.

The Sanctuary

'The Sanctuary' is a weekly community day at the Salvation Army which is open to all every Wednesday from 10 am to 2 pm. 'The Sanctuary' will be a place where anyone can come for support and friendship, and there will be activities for all to share– crafts, puzzles, gardening to name a few. If you would like to be involved in some way, please contact Alexandra Devine on 01235 523568.

Trinity Learning



TrinityLearning is a tiny, church-funded Abingdon charity that aims to improve wellbeing in Abingdon's school communities. TrinityLearning works with volunteers from across Abingdon's church communities providing a wide range of volunteering opportunities.

Thinking Books: Could you spare an afternoon per week to work with children to improve their understanding of others' emotions? Thinking Books is Trinity Learning's volunteer mentoring project. Trained volunteers meet children weekly in school for 10 sessions to discuss character's emotions using carefully chosen books. We are now recruiting for volunteers to start the project this September. TrinityLearning is committed to Safeguarding. We provide full training and support volunteers through the application process and DBS checks as well as providing ongoing support and training throughout the project.

Gardening: Are you a keen gardener? Could you spare an hour or so a week (term time only) throughout the year to help maintain a TrinityLearning school Peace garden?

Please email Nicola nic.trinitylearning@gmail.com if you would like to know more about these or any of our volunteer opportunities.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE CHURCHES: Please check church websites for up-to-date info

Abingdon Baptist Church www.abingdonbaptist.org.uk

Abingdon Community Church <https://abingdoncc.org.uk> / www.facebook.com/groups/AbingdonCC/

Abingdon Vineyard Church www.abingdonvineyard.org.uk

All Saints Methodist Church www.allsaintsabingdon.org.uk

Christ Church www.cca.uk.net/ and www.longfurlongchurch.org.uk

RCCG Light House Abingdon www.rccglighthouseabingdon.org

Peachcroft Christian Centre www.peachcroftcc.org/

Quakers www.abingdonquakers.org/

Salvation Army www.salvationarmy.org.uk/abingdon

Our Lady and St Edmund Roman Catholic Church www.ourladyandstedmund.org.uk/

St Helen's, St Michael's, St Nicolas' <https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StH>

<https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StM> <https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StN>

Trinity Church www.trinityabingdon.org.uk

The CiA News is circulated by the Church in Abingdon to member churches within Abingdon to promote church activities and groups, news and any other information that may be of interest to CiA news readers. If you would like to submit news or receive the news by email, please contact the CiA Administrator (dhmcknight@aol.com). The deadline for publication is the 15th of the month previous to publication. For more information about the Church in Abingdon, go to www.church-in-abingdon.org.uk.