



CiA News – November 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

Alpha courses

Two Alpha courses are running on Wednesday evenings from end of September until the first week of December at St Edmunds Roman Catholic Church and at Christ Church, Abingdon.

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).

The Revd Dr Charles Miller final service

The Revd Dr Charles Miller will preside and preach at his final service as Vicar of St Helen's Church & Team Rector of Abingdon-on-Thames on All Saints' Sunday, 3 November 2024, 3 pm, in St Helen's Church, followed by tea and cakes. All welcome.

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.

St Michael & All Angels' Church Christmas fair

Please join us for our annual Christmas Fair on Saturday 9 November 2024 from 10 am until 2 pm. There will be an exciting range of craft and gift stalls plus a raffle with generous prizes. Cakes, bottles, books, plants and bric-a-brac will be on sale and there will be live music and activities for children. Free parking and refreshments available including our favourite bacon butties. All welcome. Proceeds to church funds and local charity Flexicare (Oxford & Abingdon). Event generously sponsored by Breckon & Breckon.

Lunchtime music hour at Abingdon Baptist Church

On Monday 11 November 2024, we invite you to an hour of music from Gill Carpin as she brings a selection of music on piano and organ from 12.30 in the church. Why not buy your light lunch from our Cafe@35 to eat while you listen, or bring your own. Next month (9 December), we welcome Pam Pratt and Linda King who will bring some Christmas fun in song, piano and guitar.



Nasio Trust quiz night

The Nasio Trust are holding a quiz night on Thursday 14 November 2024 at 7 pm (for 7.30 pm start) at the Loose Cannon Brewery, Unit 6, Suffolk Way, Abingdon, OX14 5JX. Maximum teams of 6 and £3 per person (donations also welcome) in aid of The Nasio Trust. To book your place, go to the Loose Cannon website at <https://lcbeers.co.uk/pages/events> or just turn up on the night.

The Nasio Trust is a UK charity, based in Abingdon and Kenya. It derives its inspiration and values from the Christian faith and works to support orphaned and vulnerable children, and to empower communities in Kakamega County, Kenya. Its aim is to break the cycle of poverty by focusing on three key strands: education, healthcare and sustainable livelihoods.

Mercy Ships open meeting

Trinity Church is holding an open meeting on Thursday 14 November 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Conduit Centre. Rachel Buckingham will be talking about her work with Mercy Ships in Sierra Leone in January this year and in Madagascar in July. There will be Mercy Ships Christmas cards on sale as well as a bring and buy table. All are welcome.

Left to their own devices?

This is an evening for parents and carers of under-11s to explore confident parenting in a world of screens. It will take place on Monday 18 November 2024, 7 – 9 pm, The Barn, Christ Church, Northcourt Road. Book your spot at www.cca.uk.net/events.



Agnostics Anonymous

The next meeting of this open discussion group will take place in the Abingdon Parish Centre (entrance opposite St Helen's Church in West St Helen Street) on Tuesday 19 November 2024 from 6 pm to 7.30 pm. John Kerr will speak on 'Evil and the God of Love'. John Barton and Keith Ward will be there to take questions and join in the discussion. Free and all are welcome. For more information, please contact Jill Gant on 01235 528929.

Quiet Garden Day

This will take place at Aston Tirrold Centre for Reflection, Spring Lane, Oxon OX12 9EJ on Saturday 23 November 2024, 10 am - 4 pm. Leader: Abi Perrow. Theme: *Exploring the Nature of Completeness*.

Refreshments are provided, but please bring a packed lunch. A donation of £10 would be welcome. To attend it would be helpful to email atquietgardendays@gmail.com in advance. All are welcome.



St Helen's Church Christmas market

St Helen's Christmas Market will take place on Saturday 30 November 2024 from 10 am to 1 pm. There will be lots to buy, including home baking, gifts, books, jewellery and preserves, a raffle and delicious refreshments on offer. The handbell ringers will be there and there may be some carol singing as well. All proceeds to church funds.

St Helen's Church – Taize Prayer

The next Taize Prayer service will be at the Church of St Michael and All Angels on Saturday 30 November 2024 at 5.30 pm. About 45 minutes of prayers, readings, singing and silence. There won't be a service in St Helen's in December.

Faith Forum

There is no Faith Forum in November. Our next Faith Forum will be on Sunday 1 December, when we will be having our final talk of the current series on Ways of Engaging with the Bible. Our speaker will be Karen Laister from BRF Ministries who will be speaking about using Bible Study notes, either as individuals or in a small group, as a way of engaging with scripture. Faith Forum meets in St Helen's Parish Centre, with a light buffet lunch served from 12.30 pm followed by the talk at 12.45.

Service of Loss

This will be taking place at Christ Church on Sunday 1 December 2024 at 1 pm. All welcome. There will be no CiA Annual Bereavement Service.

'A child is born' – a Christmas concert in aid of The Abingdon Bridge

Abingdon Chorale, directed by Tim Robson, will be holding an informal Christmas concert 'A child is born' for all ages on Sunday 1 December 2024, 4 pm, at St Michael & All Angels Church, with festive refreshments. Tickets £10 (£2.50 under =-16s) from <https://bit.ly/AbChorale>.

An evening of song and life stories with Robin Wakefield

Entitled 'On Wings Like Eagles', come and hear how Robin's Christian faith has helped him through the ups and downs of life, along with the songs that have also helped him through, on Saturday 7 December 2024, 7 pm, at Preston Road Community Centre (Midget Close, Abingdon, OX14 5NR).

Robin is a high baritone, a member of Abingdon and Kidlington Operatic Societies, and is part of Abingdon Vineyard Church. He will be accompanied by Ed Wiles on keyboard. All are welcome and admission is free. This event is ideal for those who do not yet know Jesus as well as being an encouragement for Christians.

CiA - Christmas Carol Singing

Due to popular demand, this will be taking place again this year on Saturday 14 December 2024 at 10 am in Abingdon Market Place. Hope to see you all there with your best voices and all musicians welcome. Sally Mears will be leading us all again in song. For further information, please contact the CiA Administrator on 07896 860381.

Oxfordshire County Council Chair's Carol Service

The Chair of Oxfordshire County Council, Councillor Alison Rooke, and The Bishop of Dorchester, The Rt Revd Gavin Collins, invite you to join them at a County Carol Service on Monday 16 December 2024 at 6.30 pm in St Michael and All Angels Church, 26 Park Road, Abingdon OX14 1DS, 6.30 – 7.30 pm. Seasonal refreshments will be served after the service. Dress code: smart casual and chains to be worn.



Will you be on your own this Christmas?
Peachcroft Christian Centre
invite you to join us for lunch on
Christmas Day
Enjoy a 2 course lunch, entertainment and the company of others all free of charge.
If you or someone you know would like to come then please get in touch with Kay Davies via email: christmaslunch24@peachcroftcc.org
Or phone: **07787 629198**
Venue:
Peachcroft Christian Centre
Lindsay Drive, Abingdon, OX14 2RT

CiA - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

This year the theme adopted by the CiA for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 18- 25 January 2025, will be Serving Others in our Local Community.

There will be no United Service, but Midday Prayers (St Nics) will take place from Monday 20 Jan 2024 to Friday 24 Jan 2025, 12 noon, with refreshments provided. Each day there will be talks by various local groups who work with the hungry, the fatherless, the lonely, the bereaved and refugees. They will tell us about the work they are doing and why, their connections with churches and other community groups, as well as shared witnesses from their users and volunteers.

The Inter-church quiz will take place on Friday 24 Jan 2025, at Abingdon Baptist Church.

CiA - World Day of Prayer

This will be taking place on Friday 7 March 2025 at 2.30 pm at St Helen's Church. Please put the date in your diary. This year the service is prepared by the women of The Cook Islands.

Help us to 'grow' our volunteer gardeners' team



We are in the very early stages of planning a refurbishment to the Carswell School Sensory Garden, shown here during our last minor tidy up in 2023.

The garden was originally designed by Rosemary Perrow in 2012 and has been used by many Carswell School pupils as well as being appreciated by the local community. Now however, many of the original features have become overgrown and features such as seating are in need of replacement.

Refurbishing the garden to reflect the schools changing needs will be a major project and will require both short-term and long-term volunteer support. If you have experience in garden design or would be interested in volunteering for one-off gardening sessions or regular maintenance of the completed garden, please contact Nicola at nic.trinitylearning@gmail.com.



TrinityLearning funding news: Christ's Hospital have agreed to pay TrinityLearning (TL) a £1440 grant to cover the costs of resources for its Thinking Books project for the next two years. Thinking Books is TL's volunteer mentoring project. It involves trained volunteers meeting children for ten weekly in-school sessions to discuss characters' emotions using carefully chosen books. This grant will help TL keep the book boxes well stocked and, most importantly, allow TL to give each child who takes part in the project a copy of the book they have worked with. The children love choosing their books and are proud to take them home when the project is completed.

TL has been updating its project funding records and applying for grants for several of its long-term projects: for example, TrinityLearning offers support and resources such as Bereavement Packs to all the schools in the Abingdon Schools partnership. Many of TL's projects receive partial funding from local or town-based funds - for example, CiA has provided a £750 grant annually for several years towards the costs of Experience Easter resources. However, due to the expansion of Experience Easter in the last few years – now reaching over 500 children a year, as compared to 300 previously - around £1000 a year is needed for resources. This shortfall is made up from funds from regular givers as well as additional donations from other churches within Abingdon, which is essential for TL to continue to offer all its services, workshops and resources to all the schools in the Abingdon Partnership at no cost to the schools. If you are interested in making a donation to TrinityLearning, or in becoming a regular donor, please email Nicola at nic.trinitylearning@gmail.com.

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.

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
-

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.

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.