



November 2021

Services

Please maintain awareness of health and safety.

Sunday 7th November 3 before Advent

- 9.30 Holy Communion in Bletchingdon
- 9.30 Holy Communion in Chesterton *
- 9.30 Morning Worship in Middleton Stoney
- 9.30 Breakfast Church in Wendlebury
- 11.00 Family Service in Chesterton
- 11.00 Holy Communion in Kirtlington
- 16.00 Evensong in Weston-on-the-Green*

Sunday 14th November Remembrance

- 9.30 Holy Communion and Remembrance in Middleton Stoney
- 10.45 Remembrance Service in Bletchingdon
- 10.45 Remembrance Service in Chesterton
- 10.45 Remembrance Service in Kirtlington
- 10.45 Remembrance Service in Wendlebury
- 10.45 Remembrance Service in Weston-on-the-Green

Sunday 21st November Christ the King

- 9.30 Morning Worship in Bletchingdon
- 9.30 Holy Communion in Middleton Stoney
- 10.00 Zoom service
- 11.00 Café Church at Chesterton School
- 11.00 Holy Communion in Weston-on-the-Green
- 16.00 Evensong in Kirtlington*
- 16.00 Evensong in Wendlebury*

Sunday 28th November Advent 1

9.30 Holy Communion in Bletchingdon

11.00 Benefice Service in Chesterton

1662 Book of Common Prayer services are marked with an asterisk

A time to pray...

From 4 November the Thursday morning **Holy Communion** will resume at Kirtlington, at the new time of 10 am.

There will be a joint service with our sister parish in Sweden at 6pm on 14th November, thanks to Zoom. Contact <u>akemanbenefice@gmail.com</u> for a link.

From Friday 5 November there will be a weekly **Midday Prayer** at noon on Zoom, lasting about 20 minutes. A short opportunity to pray together and for online fellowship.

A prayer for All Saints' Day

O Lord of all worlds, we bless your name for all those who have entered into their rest and reached the promised land where you are seen face to face. Give us grace to follow in their footsteps as they followed in the footsteps of your holy Son. Keep alive in us the memory of those dear to ourselves whom you have called to yourself; and grant that every remembrance that turns our heart from things seen to things unseen may lead us always ever upwards to thee, till we come to our eternal rest; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

At the Benefice Service in October, Paula encouraged us to think big in our expectation of God and therefore in how we pray.

Here is a prayer from Christian Aid to help us pray with a big vision:

God of Hope, we give thanks for the coronavirus vaccines we have received and for the freedoms we took for granted.

God of All, we pray that all your children may receive the vaccines and call on world leaders to see that they are delivered with equality and dignity to all.

God of Love, we pray that we show the same love and care to our global sisters and brothers as we do to our sisters and brothers around us.

God of Might, we call on the UK COP Presidency to ensure equal and safe access for all delegates, civil society campaigners, and journalists to COP26.

God of Justice, we pray for the most affected by the climate crisis, may it be their voices which direct the decisions of those in positions of power this COP.

Events to look forward to in November



Exploring faith

We hope to run a group over the winter period for those who would like to explore the Christian faith or be prepared for confirmation. Please let Gareth or Paula Clifford know if you are interested or know of someone else who might be.

Contact details

Do feel free to contact a member of the ministry team if you would like to chat over anything, or a churchwarden if you would like information

Ministry team

Rector: The Rev'd Gareth Miller 01869 350224 akemanbenefice@gmail.com

Associate priest: The Rev'd Nick Ktorides 01869 324191 <u>nickktorides.akeman@gmail.com</u>

Retired priest: The Rev'd Dr Paula Clifford 01869 350806 <u>cliffordpaula.akeman@gmail.com</u>

Retired priest: The Very Rev'd Bob Wilkes 01869 350159 <u>bobwilkes.akeman@gmail.com</u>

Licensed Lay Minister: Paul Clifford 01869 351652 paulclifford.akeman@gmail.com

Children and Families' Co-ordinator: Gemma Maybank 07765 104253 gemmamaybank.akeman@gmail.com

> Safeguarding Officer: Nicky Donne 01869 351748 <u>safeguarding.akeman@gmail.com</u>

Churchwardens

Bletchingdon: Judith Ledger 01869 351542 Deputy: Fiona Teddy 01869 350034 Email: <u>bletchingdon.akeman@gmail.com</u>

Chesterton: David Attwood 01869 241581 Andrew Thomas 01869 247230 Email: <u>chesterton.akeman@gmail.com</u>

Hampton Gay: Julian Bagwell 01865 378012 Graham Dunn 01865 373696 Email: <u>hamptongay.akeman@gmail.com</u>

Kirtlington: Ann Mowat 01869 350525 Deputy: Margaret Forey 01869 351494 Email: <u>kirtlington.akeman@gmail.com</u>

Middleton Stoney: Marc Swan 01869 343956 Catherine Fulljames 01869 343237 Email : <u>middletonstoney.akeman@gmail.com</u>

Wendlebury: Jackie Hucker 01869 322883 Charles Darby 01869 323536 Email: wendlebury.akeman@gmail.com

Weston: Eric Bohm 01869 352006 Peter Driver 01869 350569 Email : <u>westononthegreen.akeman@gmail.com</u>

To send information, articles, news etc to the Benefice Bulletin contact joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com

If you are reading this in a printed version, do also look on the website <u>www.akemanbenefice.org.uk</u> or email <u>joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com</u> for the rest of the Benefice Bulletin, which contains...

- Focus on... individuals
 - New member of the Ministry Team
 - A musical plan
 - A walk to take
 - A quiz
- News from the parishes

This month's focus is on.... People of the Benefice.

Introducing.... Maggie Darby



The latest member of the Ministry Team, Maggie is, like Gemma, doing the Authorised Preacher course. She lives in Wendlebury.

My name is Maggie Darby, recently married to Charles (one of the Church Wardens for St Giles') and we moved to Wendlebury 2 years ago, most of which has been spent in lockdown; nevertheless, we have met and enjoyed the welcome from many residents in the village.

We have 6 children between us. I have three young ladies aged between 22 and 25, and Charles has two young ladies and a 'boy' aged between 20 and 27. I love to travel, camp, keep physically active, craft and learn!...Oh and build dry stone walls (which has three of the aforementioned things I love to do), so all good!

I work full time as a Chartered Architect for a practice in North Oxford, working with Charles (and a team) on projects all over the country, mainly specialising in Community, Ecclesiastical and Education buildings.

Following God's call earlier in the year, and a great deal of prayer, I am training (outside of work hours) to further ground my role as an Authorised Preacher (in which I support the Ministry Team and Parishioners) within the Akeman Benefice.

I have an ecumenical background, having spent my younger years in the Methodist Church, and young adult life in the Baptist Church, which developed into many roles supporting ministry and culminating in acting as a Deacon. However, the Church of England is a different beast and some of the training has been invaluable in explaining all the things some people are taught as a child, but which some of us have not!

Above all, the training, other than identifying the Church of England process and why, is highlighting through Scripture that whatever path we have followed so far in life, we have an even better path we can follow, one which is rewarding, culturally fascinating, with historical drama and futuristic overtones for what can be! I'm on that path, and it's great so far.

A recent arrival in Bletchingdon, Daniel Tate introduces himself:

"Originally from the North East, I moved to Oxford in 2012 to pursue a career as a professional classical musician, singer and conductor. I spend my time variously performing as a bass-baritone singer, as a teacher of singing and music theory, and as bass guitarist in the funk-blues band Reverend Blue. I hold a Lay Clerkship (that is, a position as a full-time professional singer) in the choir of New College Oxford, and am also a founder member of The Davey Consort.



Daniel in action, singing in a concert

I was very excited to move to Bletch just before Christmas 2020. It has been nothing short of a dream, with beautiful views and a peaceful quiet that hovers over everything (apart from when I'm doing my vocal warmups in the shower - sorry neighbours!). For a musician that spends his life making a lot of noise, it is perhaps a necessary balance to come home to somewhere with less of it. It is certainly strange to move to a new house during a pandemic - all of the things I associate with celebrating a new place have not been able to happen: dinner with friends, drinks with neighbours, house warming parties (woah woah it's new carpet, shoes off please!!).

Although I hadn't realised before I moved, I already had a double connection with the benefice: I teach singing at Bruern Abbey School in Chesterton, which specialises in teaching boys with dyslexia and some light learning difficulties. Not only is Chesterton part of our benefice but it's also a historic patronage of New College Oxford, which is one of the four Oxford college patrons of the Akeman Benefice."

Daniel has an exciting vision for bringing live music to our churches and villages. Here he explains...

"It has long been a dream of mine to set up a live concert series, and after moving to Bletchingdon there seems to be no better time to create an exciting and new opportunity to hear music in our wonderful villages. We have seven beautiful churches and good village halls to feature some world-class musicians who I have asked to come and perform over the next year in this new series - the 'Akeman Concerts'. It is my ambition that the 'Akeman Concerts' will feature a wide variety of performers and styles, with an emphasis on the performers talking about their music and what they are doing - because good music doesn't need to be inaccessible to be enjoyable."

The first in this series, 'Music for Remembrance' at Bletchingdon on 12th November, will be performed by Daniel himself with his accompanist, Dónal McCann. The performance will feature songs written by composers directly affected by the First World War: George Butterworth, Ivor Gurney, and Peter Warlock. Daniel introduces the programme:

"The music of Britain would not be the same without song. Composers who penned some of the most grand, large scale orchestral works were also responsible for some of the smallest scale, solo songs for voice and piano. It seems to be something composers took seriously – the marrying of words and music in an intimate setting, often incorporating experimental and sometimes daring musical language. George Butterworth is perhaps the most famous of these, and his setting of '6 Songs from a Shropshire Lad' from Housman's emotional set of poems written and first performed in Oxford when studying at Trinity College, 1911 - is among the best known of his works. And for good reason. Not only was the poetry so closely associated with the men of the



The WW1 memorial on the west wall

of St Giles, Bletchingdon

War (editions of Housman's poetry were published in small sizes so they could be carried easily in a

Composer George Butterworth (1885-1916), seen here in 13th Battalion Durham Light Infantry, shortly after writing his settings of 'A Shropshire Lad'

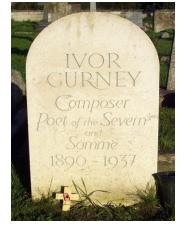


soldier's haversack), but Butterworth himself was killed just over a month into the infamous Battle of the Somme at the age of 31, having been awarded the MC. The whole set is a stunning demonstration of his song-writing skill, but the final of the six songs is the real masterpiece: writer on English music Peter J. Pirie calls it "one of the great songs of the world..."

Ivor Gurney is another directly affected composer who, whilst outliving Butterworth, suffered terribly from PTSD and shell shock, living out his

post-war days in an asylum in Dartford. Such a gifted musical mind was wracked with troubles about his own ability, and songs are a minefield of problems when editing. One version may differ from another in significant ways, so authentic publishing of the songs is an ethical dilemma. Many of his songs are rarely heard and performed. He continued to write songs and poetry even when in the trenches, and the post-script of some of the songs show the location and date stamp of various battlefield sites in France and Belgium - adding to the poignancy of any performance.

Third and finally, Peter Warlock composed the majority of his songs of note in the late 1920s, making his association with the War tenuous. But two songs, book-ending the programme, bring him back into focus. 'Late Summer' was written in 1919, and one of the earliest



The headstone of troubled composer and poet Ivor Gurney, in the churchyard of St Matthew's Church, Twigworth - which also contains the grave of Michael Howells, son of composer Herbert Howells, who died of polio aged 9.

songs he wrote finishes the concert - written in 1918, it takes the Stevenson text 'Bright is the ring of words' (also set notably by Vaughan Williams in his 'Songs of Travel'), except he re-titles it 'To the memory of a great singer.' It is possible, but unfounded, to imagine who it was that he wrote this for. George Butterworth, perhaps? Who knows.."

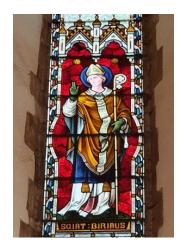
All are welcome to come and support the performance 'Music for Remembrance' at St Giles, Bletchingdon, Friday 12th November, at 7.30pm. Tickets are available by emailing <u>akemanconcerts@gmail.com</u> - £15 each to include entry, refreshments, and a contribution to the church. The performance will have no interval and will last approximately 45 minutes.

There are also plans to set up a children's choir to add to the benefice choir for adults, which will be hugely exciting for getting young people into music. Watch this space for some intriguing developments!

Andrew Thomas, church warden in Chesterton, is a great walker. Here he describes a walk he took a month ago. He higly recommends it for the autumn.

St. Birinus Pilgrimage Walk

Walking is one of my pastimes - and I especially enjoy walking ancient paths, imagining all those who have travelled the same path before me. At only 11 miles this walk is easily do-able in a day and reflects a huge array of Oxfordshire landscapes. The path comprises a mix of road, grass and ploughed fields. It is quite hilly in places and often quite exposed so that it can be quite chilly if there is any semblance of wind. If anyone is interested in walking the path, I can provide a .gpx file for those with a walker's satnav. The start of the path can be quite tricky to find so if any one is interested, please get in touch and I can tell you where to park and where to find the start of the path.





Following the fall of the Roman Empire, as much of England had reverted to its pagan ways, Pope Honorius I encouraged Birinus to go to England to convert the West Saxons to Christianity.

Birinus was a Frank, born around 600 AD. He was a Benedictine monk of the Monastery of St. Andrew in Rome and later made a Bishop in Genoa. He arrived in England in 634 and a year later, persuaded the West Saxon king Cynegils to allow him to preach.

Cynegils was hoping to make an alliance with Oswald of

Northumbria by marrying his daughter but during their negotiations it became apparent that the Christian king Oswald would not ally himself with the pagan worshipping Cynegils. Cynegils became a believer and was then baptised in the nearby river Thame. Birinus was given Dorchester-on-Thames for his episcopal see, where he built a small timber church.

The roundel, above, is the oldest stained glass in Dorchester Abbey and thought to depict Pope Honorius I sending Birinus to England.

Birinus began his Christian mission by giving a sermon from Churn Knob, a round Bronze Age barrow on the slope of a hill near Blewbury in Oxfordshire. He went out from there into the surrounding countryside to preach the gospel. He died in 650 and was buried in Dorchester, although his relics were subsequently moved. Pilgrims probably started visiting the place of his initial mission and his subsequent resting place soon after his death and over the years this has developed into a pilgrimage route. Until recently there has been an organised annual July pilgrimage from Churn Knob to Dorchester Abbey. Since 2005 Pilgrims have carried a passport which is stamped with the seal of each church on the route as it is visited. However, probably due to Covid-19 the annual pilgrimage has not happened recently.

The 11-mile pilgrimage route covers some of the most beautiful parts of the Oxfordshire countryside. Churn Knob is on private land and is only accessible once a year for the

organised pilgrimage, but one can get pretty near to it on established footpaths. The start of the walk is about half a mile from the A417 along a narrow path. From Churn Knob you retraces your steps back to the A417 and on through Blewbury past some delightful, thatched cottages and a thatched wall - which I have never seen before.



The first pilgrimage church is St. Michael's Blewbury, built by the Normans in the 12th century on the site of a previous Saxon church.

Through farmland, the path goes over Blewburton Hill, an Iron Age hillfort which legend says King Alfred used as a lookout post to view two

potential river crossings at Wallingford and Moulsford, which might be taken by invaders. The view from the top is

spectacular - but it was not a



great place to be caught in a rainstorm!

The next stop is St. John the Baptist in South Moreton. A Norman church that was heavily restored in Victorian times, it boasts a Yew tree in the churchyard that has been certified to be 1600 years old.

Just outside the churchyard there are the remains of a Norman *motte* castle, built between 1066 and 1089.

A further two miles along the path is St. Agatha's church in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. St. Agatha's dates from 1152 and is situated inside a castle moat. St. Agatha came from Catania, Italy where she died in 250 AD. A martyr who had been imprisoned and cruelly tortured, she had a vision of St. Peter the Apostle who is said to have comforted her and healed her wounds with his prayers.

The path continues through farmland, currently sown with field corn, each stem towering above me. In the distance is Castle Hill Fort - an Iron Age fort that is known as the Wittenham Clumps. The path here is narrow, uphill, muddy and after the short rainstorm quite slippery. But the trek to the top is well worth the energy as the views are wonderful and makes one realise the beauty of our local countryside.





Poet Joseph Tubb, of Warborough,

carved a wonderful poem in the bark of a beech tree on Castle Hill in the years 1844-45. Over the years, it became impossible to decipher all but a handful of letters of the poem, but a nearby plaque on a large stone recalls the poem, although that

too is quite difficult to read.

Thames as it flows through Day's Lock. And a realisation that there is a hugely steep downhill walk to the next church on the pilgrimage walk - St. Peter's church in Little Wittenham.



9



St Peter's has an uncertain past, although the oldest part of the church is 14th century. As with many rural churches, it was extensively rebuilt in the Victorian era. Perhaps the most interpretion features in the abunch in

interesting feature in the church is an alabaster monument to Sir William Dunch and his family. Beneath Sir William and his wife are figures of seven kneeling

children and two babies in swaddling clothes. One of the babies is resting its head on a skull, representing an early death.



Dorchester is just half a mile away. Before reaching the Abbey, the path passes a relatively modern Catholic Church. Dedicated to St. Birinus it was built in 1849 and has a large canopied standing figure of St Birinus supported by an angel corbel that can be seen from the road.



The pilgrimage path finishes at Dorchester Abbey - the Abbey church of St. Peter and St. Paul. It is generally acknowledged that the church that Birinus founded would have been of timber. The Abbey as it stands today is mainly Norman, although there are traces of an earlier Saxon church. It is a very spacious abbey and has some

splendid highly decorated windows,

frescoes that have been dated to 1340 and one of the few surviving lead fonts in England.

The pilgrimage path is highly recommended.

Andrew Thomas



And finally, on our people focus, a quiz: How well do you know the members of other churches, or even your own?

Several people were asked to provide clues about themselves for you to guess... and some replied, or didn't run fast enough to get away!

Person no. 1 Interesting thing done: I lived at 3500 feet above sea level for 9 years Love: Helping children to read Hate: Waste House clue: TV comedy about life in an antique shop Hint about work: Clinical research I hate disorganisation My house sounds like it should be a manor but it's not! Person no. 2 Lam a Nightingale. I love to bake cakes I hate disorganisation I've appeared as an 'extra' in two films and an episode of Inspector Morse I love dancing I hate getting into arguments I live next-door to where I used to live My work involved using shorthand Person no. 4... I once umpired an Oxford v Cambridge Varsity netball match I love swimming

I love swimming I hate litter My house number is a prime number Prime numbers sometimes featured in my work

Intriguing, eh? Answers at the end – no cheating!

News from across the benefice:

<u>Bletchingdon</u> reports that "there is now a folder at the back of the church giving a full record of all burials in the 'new' churchyard and all interments of ashes. We are aware that some graves were not marked so if anyone has further information we can add it in. There is a copy of the record on the Bletchingdon website under 'church'."

From Kirtlington:

"We had a successful working party in the Churchyard at the beginning of October tidying up for winter. We are extremely grateful to Sarah Varney who has cut the new part of the churchyard all summer." Pictures? "No, we were working much too hard!"

From Wendlebury:

"We have rebuilt another small section of the churchyard dry-stone wall this morning, a



probably have another two

team of just five of us. We have actually found bits of the original church within the fallen down wall, also parts of gravestones, finials from memorials, 'old' beer



bottles, lizards, you never know what you will find next! We will



sessions before signing off for winter, so if anyone wants to join us for a session to learn such a 'sought-after' invaluable skill, they should get in touch with Charles Darby 07770 867074 or Sue Jacobs 07976 738625.

The Harvest Thanksgiving Service on 26th September was well attended, and enjoyed by all, including Gareth's vegetable 'hunt' and quiz! However, there may still be a mushroom astray in the church. The Harvest Supper held in the Village Hall on 3rd October to raise money for St Giles' Church was also a big success and a good time was had by all. It raised nearly £1000, so a huge thank you to the Village Church Fundraising Committee for all their hard work.

We have our All Souls' Service at 4pm on Sunday 31st October and then our very first "Breakfast Church" at 9.30am on Sunday 7th November. So much to look forward to!"

No doubt other things have been happening in other places, too...

Opportunities:

Accommodation offered

Message from Kirsty Durley, who used to live in Heathfield and worship with us, along with Sam and young Florence, but who now live in Ripon College, Cuddesdon, where he is doing ordination training.

"Our tenants have decided to move on from our flat in Heathfield. We are looking to find some new tenants to move in from December 4th. The details are below." Queries to <u>kirstydurley@hotmail.com</u>

1 Bedroom Apartment Available for Rent, Heathfield OX5

RENT: £700 per month

A 1-bedroom apartment set over 2 floors in this attractive rural setting within a character building and easy access to the A34/M40, Kidlington, Bicester and Oxford. The property benefits from an open plan kitchen/dining/siting room, generous double bedroom, communal gardens and allocated parking. The kitchen is newly refurbished and the flat is decorated to a high standard.

Rent inclusive of service charge.

Heathfield is a semi-rural hamlet with excellent transport links including easy access to the A34 and Islip train station with direct trains to London Marylebone station.

Flat unfurnished but includes fridge/freezer, washer/dryer and wardrobe.



SHORT-TERM VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY at the Fairtrade Shop in Oxford-JUST UNTIL CHRISTMAS!



So how well do you know people? - MYSTERY FIGURES IDENTIFIED.



Person 1 is Ron Hill from Kirtlington, who lived in Switzerland for some years. He lives in Acorn Cottage... remember that comedy?

Person 2 is Mandy Jones from Weston-on-the-Green. Her cakebaking is wonderful: see BeccaLou Designs...

Here she is as a Nightingale Nurse, with her lamp! This is nearly 30 years ago but not much has changed, apart from the haircut! "As a nurse, I was awarded funding from the Nightingale Foundation to carry out research that would improve the nursing care given to patients with complex needs on the ward I was working on at the time. I was then asked to take part in the procession of the lamp at the commemorative service at Westminster Abbey, which takes place every year in honour of Florence Nightingale. The procession of the lamp symbolises the handing down of nursing knowledge through the generations. It involves different nursing representatives each year."





Person no. 3 is Jill Peck from Chesterton. She is a terrific dancer.



Person 4 is Sue Tee from Kirtlington, who was a maths teacher, (did you guess?) and like Jill is very fit. You may have seen and heard her in the Kirtlington choir. She usually looks a lot more cheerful than this!

Please send in contributions for the December Benefice Bulletin to joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com by 22nd November.