



Parish of St Peter & St Paul, Abington
- the Church in the Park -
Welcome to our June Newsletter 2025

Rector's Pastoral Letter: Keeping Water Flowing



In 2024, the year of our 800th anniversary, so many good things happened. We did so much together. Just look at this list. It shows only some of what we saw in 2024. And in every single thing, we tried to proclaim the gospel.

- New believers' bible study group
- 8-week Sermon Series on the 800th anniversary
- Family Fun afternoon in May
- Celebrated musical talents in June
- Celebration Service of Thanksgiving with immersion baptism in June
- Visioning Exercise Under the Oak for 6 weeks in June
- Special Fete July
- Parish BBQ in August
- Family Fun Afternoon in August
- Hymns of 800 years in September
- Celebration Service of Rededication with Confirmation in September
- Commissioned a new Icon: Christ with the Church in the Park
- Musical talent afternoon in Sep

Afternoon Tea with Open Doors

Harvest Festival and lunch

Afternoon Tea with Bishop Andrew

Sermon Series on Kingdom for 8 weeks

Afternoon Tea with Jane on history

Butterfly Project with schools, care homes and community

Supported Baby Basics, Christians Against Poverty, Ethiopian children with Breakfast, Read Easy, Christian Aid

I wonder what stands out most to you when you look back on 2024. For me, there are many moments, but if I had to choose just one, one scene comes to mind.

It was the day before our celebration service, when we were going to hold full immersion baptisms outdoors. We had already built the baptismal pool, which we borrowed from Grange Park. Everything for the service was ready. The only thing left was the water. We needed to fill 1,100 litres. Literally, a ton of water.



It was early in the morning, probably around 8 a.m. A massive water tanker lorry from Anglian Water pulled up, thanks to Melissa and Mace. Two men connected a thick, high-pressure hose to the tanker, and they released the water. It was so powerful. It took just ten minutes to fill the pool, which would usually take at least two hours.

I loved that sign on the tanker: "Keeping Water Flowing."

I think that phrase symbolically describes what we have been trying to do.

You see, we did everything we could last year to mark the 800th anniversary. We wanted to make visible what God has been doing for us, with us, and through us in this community. Events, services, courses, welcoming people, inviting them to confirmation and baptism.

All of these were important, but they are like the high-pressure hose. They are channels so that God's life-giving water, His life-changing Spirit can flow into the life of this community.

And that is what we witnessed together. How God poured out His grace and blessing on this place and on the life of this community. Everything we do here is about keeping God's life-giving water flowing, just like that logo said.

You may not remember this, but at the beginning of 2024, we set out three visions for the Church in the Park:

- **Inspiring Church:** Just like the park inspires people and helps them to encounter God, we aspire to be a church that inspires through worship and prayer.
- **Compassionate Church:** Just like the park is a place of comfort and restoration in God's grace, we pray to be a church that comforts the anxious, isolated, marginalised, and bereaved through our service and outreach.
- **Generous Church:** Just like the park welcomes everyone and helps them to flourish in God's abundance and generosity, we want to be a church that is welcoming and generous, especially to strangers and those who feel far from God.

It does not matter whether we remember the exact words. What matters is living them out. And I truly believe we have strived to do that. That is reflected, at least in part, by the numbers.

Here are some of the things we have seen under this vision:

- Over 20,000 ribbons of prayer
- Over 1,400 butterflies of celebration
- Over £5,800 raised for those in need and for charities
- 21 people baptised (12 of them believers' baptisms, professing faith in Jesus. 7 were baptised by immersion outdoors, which was a powerful witness to the community)
- 15 people confirmed

All of this happened in one year. We saw more confirmations and believers' baptisms in one year than in the previous ten years combined.

We also inspired other churches. Cath Maddison, one of the leaders at Long Buckby Church, said in a message that they were inspired by our ribbons of prayer. They launched their own version and received 60 prayers.

They ended their project by moving the ribbons onto a cross inside the church. It was very well received by the village, with many positive comments. Cath and Long Bugby expressed their thanks to us for letting them borrow the idea.

The church in Wootton was also inspired by our full immersion baptisms. They are preparing to hold their first one soon.

This my friends, tells me that we are growing together to be more like Christ: Inspiring, compassionate, and generous.

Again, whether or not you remember, we identified four specific areas for growth through our Under the Oak sessions:

- **Feeding:** Physically and spiritually through the lunch club, fundraising for charities, home groups, and youth church.
- **Community:** Through Little Fishes, family events, schools, care homes, outreach projects, and the Tree of Hope.
- **Person:** One person at a time. Honouring their gifts and responding to their needs. We nurture our curate, our lay ministers, and we commissioned a new Anna Chaplain. We support vocations and those who are new to faith.
- **Space:** How can we create spaces that are sacred, restorative, and filled with the Spirit? We offer reflective services, home groups, and prayer ministry. We keep the church open. I believe this is an area that needs more encouragement and support. It is so important, and I look forward to sharing more with you about it.

There are many other tasks and issues for us to pray about and discern together. One is our response to the Living in Love and Faith process which I am going to discern together with the PCC in the coming months before I bring it to the whole congregation. I am committed to approaching this with care and pastoral sensitivity. My hope is that through our shared discernment, we will reach a deeper experience of love, faith, and grace in our community.

Whatever we do and whatever challenges we may face, let us remember one thing. We are here to keep the life-giving water of Christ flowing.

The good news is that we are not the source. The water flows from Christ. We are the hose-pipe.

Our task is simple. To remain connected to the source. Like that image on the lorry said: **Keeping the life-giving water of Christ flowing** in our lives, in our discipleship, in our prayer, in our community.

Amen.

Preachers for this month

1 June: Prester Coleman

8 June: Jun Kim

15 June: Liz Kelly

22 June: Andrew Proud

Readers and Intercessors for this month

Date	Readers	Intercessor
1 June	Matthew George, Rhiannon George	Sue Harrison
8 June	Peter Gompertz, Sue Harrison	Donald Loe
15 June	Steve Groves, Donald Loe	Bob Purser
22 June	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
29 June	To be confirmed	To be confirmed

‘Little Fishes’ – Abington Church Baby and Toddler Group

‘Little Fishes’ meets at the Church Rooms every Monday morning from 10 am to 11.15 am during term time. The group was opened in February 2022, as the Covid restrictions were lifted. The purpose of the group was to support families with young children, by offering a welcoming space and providing fellowship and care. As a church group we share our faith through the love and support that we provide to all.



In recent months there has been a desire to explore, with those who attend, what direction the group should take. Therefore I devised a short questionnaire for all those who attend the group. 20 questionnaires were issued to parents, grandparents and carers who bring their children to ‘Little Fishes’. 10 completed forms were returned.

Here are some of the replies regarding why they like attending the group -

- ‘Cathy and all the helpers are so friendly, the toys and activities cover all ages and there is a nice atmosphere.’
- ‘An opportunity for safe socialising and play. Nice to meet with other grandparents and carers’
- ‘I find it difficult to attend church regularly so it’s great to be able to play whilst taking part in prayer.’

Questions about faith were included in the questionnaire.

What do you think about the worship time we have at the end of each session?

All 10 replies were very positive about this part of our time together. Comments such as ‘I really enjoy it, and the children like the tea lights and enjoy joining in.’ and ‘I like it as it is not too religious but it is inclusive.’ and ‘It’s the perfect time – long enough to introduce bible stories but short enough to keep children engaged.’

Asked whether they were open to the Christian faith, 6 out of 10 replies said ‘yes’. 4 out of 10 replied to say that they would like more help regarding teaching their children to pray. 6 out of 10 said they would like to keep in touch with the church when their children went to primary school.

As a result of these encouraging responses we plan to build on the ideas and comments that those attending the group have provided.

Sharing our faith and helping parents and others to develop their children's spirituality is so important. 'Little Fishes' is a wonderful opportunity to do just this.

Cathy Tinsley, Children and Youth Missioner.



Abington Summer Fete: Saturday 5 July, 2-4pm

Roll up! Roll up! Fun for all at the Summer Fete, **Saturday 5 July, 2-4pm**, in the churchyard. Save the date, and watch our weekly notice slides for more information!

Raffle tickets will be on sale shortly - please see Melissa, Damian or Dianne

Helpers - please can you help with the fete? We are looking for volunteers to help either set up on the day, run a stall or clear down after the fete. If you can help, please can you add your name to the volunteer list, which can be found at the back of the church?

Donations for stalls - please can you provide donations to the raffle, nearly new or tombola (please, no knives or electrical items). On the day, we will also be seeking donations for the plant stall and cake stall. The donation crates can be found in the porch to place your items in. If your donation is particularly valuable, please hand it to one of the sidespersons for safe keeping.

Congratulations to Clarissa

Clarissa received her first Holy Communion on Sunday 25th May at St Gregory's church. Mum and Dad, Julie and John, and her family supported her on this special day. Cathy, Sandy and Alison also were at the service.



News from Abington Park View Care Home

We were delighted to welcome Bishop Andrew on 14th May to his first visit to APV to celebrate Holy Communion. The Dining Room was full and included three family members. The Gospel reading was John 15.9-17. Jesus was speaking to his disciples the night before he died and he said:

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.”

Everyone listened intently as Bishop Andrew spoke of how wonderful it was to be loved by Jesus and to be called his friends.



Our opening hymn was 'The King of Love my Shepherd is,' and after the Intercessions we sang 'What a friend we have in Jesus.' We concluded the service with 'Lead us heavenly Father lead us.'

Thank you to Jackie and Jane who were there to help the residents during the service.

Our next visit is on Wednesday 28th May when we shall be saying the first Evening Prayer of Ascension Day.

News from St Christopher's

Earlier in the month we had a talk from Glennis Hooper – The Crazy Hat Lady. She told us how after being diagnosed with breast cancer, she went on to start a charity that raised £3.4 million pounds to benefit local breast care services. She was an inspirational speaker, and residents were very interested in her story.

On 5th May we had a VE Day street party, which everyone enjoyed. We gathered in the Chapel for an afternoon of entertainment from Jenny and Bob, and were encouraged to join in with the singing whenever we could. Tea was a lovely spread. Although VE Day was a time of great celebration, everyone was conscious of the price that many families had to pay in order to achieve it.



It's St Christopher's Sumer Fete on Saturday 7th June 1-4pm and we would love to as many people as possible to join us for the afternoon.

Picnic and Praise for Pentecost: Sun 3 June from 1 pm

As we conclude Thy Kingdom Come, you are invited to picnic and praise!

Sun 8th June 1pm -join for a picnic in the churchyard with Churches Together Abington and at **2pm** for a short service to celebrate the birth of the church together at Pentecost. Don't forget your chairs and blankets.

Standing Committee and PCC

The next Standing Committee meeting will be on Wednesday 2 July, 7.45 pm, Parish Office.

The PCC next meets on Wednesday 16 July, 7.45 pm, Church rooms.

[Draft Minutes from the last PCC Meeting](#)

Please click the title above to access the link.

Pastoral Support

We aim to support parishioners through telephone calls, texts, prayer, and pastoral visits. Home Communion is available if you are unable to get to church because of illness. If you, or anyone you know, would like someone to get in touch, please contact Liz Kelly, Lay Pastoral Minister and Anna Chaplain. Her contact details are lizmk@outlook.com and telephone 01604 636947 or 07745 604591. We offer a listening ear, someone to pray with, bereavement support, or a friendly visit.

Zoom Compline

This is a weekly service at 7.00pm on Tuesdays. The joining details are: Meeting I.D. 815 8020 8528. Passcode 409450 Please talk to Liz Kelly if you want to know more about, contact lizmk@outlook.com or telephone on 07745 604591.

Parish Newsletter Contribution

Please send your stories and photos to Revd. Jun, rector@abingtonchurch.org.uk by 23rd of each month.
