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Parish of St Peter & St Paul, Abington  
- the Church in the Park -  
**Welcome to our March Newsletter 2026**

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## Rector's Pastoral Letter

### Gazing at Christ during Lent

The story of Adam and Eve is about what it means to be human. We are wonderfully and fearfully made. We carry the divine image of God. At the same time, we are so fragile and vulnerable. What the Bible tells us through Adam and Eve is that even if we are placed in the garden of Eden, where everything is perfect around us, our minds still can wander, not at peace, and crave more. Not because we are evil but because we are human with our fragility and vulnerability.



The Bible calls it original sin. And of course, there are lots of different theological views about it which I wouldn't bore you with. But original sin does not mean everyone is bad from the beginning. It means that we all carry that brokenness and vulnerability as human beings which can lead to more serious problems.

When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, This is the first thing they did.

*At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. (Genesis, 3.7)*

Then, what happened after was this.

*When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. Then the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid." (Genesis 3.9)*

When they ate the forbidden fruit, the first thing they did was to cover their bodies. Because they were embarrassed. And then when God called them, they hid themselves. Because they were afraid.

The original sin that the Bible talks about is that fundamental condition of being human. Our human fragility means that we are vulnerable to temptations. Our human insecurity means that we not only hide ourselves from others and from God but also from ourselves. Remember, the first thing Adam and Eve did was to cover themselves because they were ashamed of themselves. Then they hid from God.

The Bible tells us. Although we are wonderfully made by the hands of God and carrying his image, we feel distant from God but also from others and ourselves. The story of Adam and Eve shows this inherent condition of being human, wanting to love and to be loved and yet struggle to let God love us; wanting to forgive and to be forgiven and yet struggle to forgive or receive forgiveness because we are all human.

Being human means being tempted. If our story ended there in the Bible, our faith would have remained as a quite disheartening one. But Good news comes with Jesus. In Jesus Christ, St. Paul saw a new possibility for the humanity. That's why Paul saw Jesus as the second Adam in his letter.

Just like us, Jesus was tempted. It is interesting that all the temptations that the devil brought to Jesus was based on doing. "Do this, if you are the son of God. Do that, if you are the son of God." "Turn the stones into bread. Jump off the top of the temple and show who you really are. Worship me and let's reign over the world."

Temptations often come in the form of doing rather than being. And this is so true in our days. Our life can be so busy with things to do. Our minds can be so busy with worries and anxiety. Our eyes can be always busy with scrolling screens and social media. And those temptations are so subtle and powerful. They make us question about our self-worth while we are comparing ourselves to others projected life on Social Media. And I confess I have given in to those temptations.

So how can we resist the temptation when the temptation comes exactly through our weak spots. How can we respond to those temptations with our fundamental fragility and vulnerability. The good news comes with Christ. Here are the 3 things we can try this Lent.

Number 1. Take your weak spots to Christ before the devil uses them against you.

Acknowledge with Christ the struggle and challenge you have. If you struggle with anxiety, give it to Christ. If you struggle with an addiction, give it to Christ. If you are struggling with self-esteem, give it to Christ so that when the devil tries to take advantage of it, you have already given it to Christ. And he knows exactly what you mean because he was tempted the same way you do. And he is with you.

Number 2. Pray. When the devil knocks at the door of your heart in different forms of temptation whether that being fear or anxiety or resentment, guilt, addiction, self doubt. Turn to Jesus and ask him to answer the door. You don't need to deal with the devil on your own. You don't need to go to some odd exorcist and do some type of mystical stuff. All you got to do is to turn to Christ. Glance at the devil and be aware of the temptations but then gaze at Christ. What the devil would love is for you to fix your eyes and minds only on his temptations and the struggles you have and not Christ.

Praying is not about reciting some magical formula. How do you know whether you are thinking really hard or praying? It's very simple. When you think hard, you talk to yourself. When you pray, you talk to Christ. Talk to Christ and remind yourself that Christ is with you. Glance at the devil and gaze at Christ by praying when temptation comes.

Number 3. Bring God's word into your life. Jesus responded to temptation by quoting scripture. It is written, he said.

*"The tempter came and said to Jesus, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written...' The devil said, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written...' The devil said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'It is written...' Then the devil left him. (Matthew 4)*

God's word is enough. Jesus overcame temptations not with supernatural powers, but by remembering Scripture. God's word is enough in our journey of this Lent and of this life. You don't have to sit down and read the whole chapters of Genesis. That's great if you can. But if you can't, do what I do. Often I just open my bible app.

We will soon display on the notice board useful apps that you can use. Use them. The You Version Bible app I use, just shows a verse of the day. One verse of God's word is more powerful than one hour long You-tube video. Jesus overcame the temptation with only 3 verses. Read the Bible. Lent is a great season to start something like this.

Temptation comes in life. But so does Christ. And he understands you. He was tempted just as you and I are tempted. And he promises that he is with you in your life, not only in the good bits but in the messy bits, in your temptations and in mine. Amen.

With love in Christ

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## Preachers for this month

**8 Mar:** Alison Barnes

**15 Mar:** Mothering Sunday, Revd. Helen Halson

**22 Mar:** Prester Coleman

**2 Apr:** Maundy Thursday, Bishop Andrew Proud

**5 Apr:** Easter Day, Canon Jun Kim

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## Holy Week 2026

Please join us for this year's holy week services. There are services every day during the Holy Week which will help us to journey together through the passion, crucifixion and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sun 29 Mar, 10 am: Palm Sunday. **We gather at Abington Museum to begin with.\***

Mon 30 Mar, 7.30 pm: Reflective Holy Communion

Tue 31 Mar, 7.30 pm: Reflective Holy Communion

Wed 1 Apr, 7.30 pm: Reflective Holy Communion

Thu 2 Apr, 7.30 pm: Maundy Thursday Holy Communion with Foot Washing

Fri 3 Apr, 11.15 am: Good Friday Ecumenical Service in the Churchyard

2.00 pm: Good Friday Liturgy

Sat 4 Apr, late afternoon or early evening (TBC): Sanctuary Service

Sun 5 Apr, 10 am: Easter Eucharist with Baptism + Easter Egg Hunt!

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## Supporting Lent Charities

This Lent we support Christian Aid and Baby Basics. One of the Christian Aid key appeal this lent is for the Middle East. Baby Basics is a Christian Charity that support new born babies and their mums in need. If you wish to give to these charities then please use the yellow envelope and write "Lent Charity" or use the card machine at the entrance. You can also give online using our website: [abingtonchurch.org.uk](http://abingtonchurch.org.uk)



## **Hands of Healing: Sun 15 March – Sun 4 October**

On Mothering Sunday, we are going to launch our new Churchyard Art Project: Hands of Healing. This project is in collaboration with Action for Happiness which promotes well-being and mental health support groups. The art will invite everyone to tie a key to the art or leave a prayer request through interactive art to those who are going through difficulties with mental-health. It will also remind us that God invites us to reach out and offer a new hope and a new chance through his love and grace which we are called to make visible. The art will also remind the community of the true source of happiness and wholeness in Christ and how we are called to release others in the name of Christ.

After the Eucharist, we will go out for a service of blessing and dedication outside the church. It is our hope that the art will be here until the 4th of October.

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## **A Big Thank you to Dianne**

Dianne has recently told us that she is going to retire from the Hallbooking Secretary and the Funeral Verger. She has served the church in those two roles, together with many other roles that she took, including the role of a churchwarden for many years. Thank you Dianne for your faithful and loving service for God's Church in Abington and for His Kingdom. We are also grateful to Katie who will take the role of Hallbooking Secretary and to Sandra who will take the role of Funeral Verger. Dianne's retirement will be marked on this coming Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> of March. Please remember Dianne in your prayers as we give thanks to God for her faithfulness.



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## **Joining Parish Directory**

Parish Directory is a way of keeping those who wish to parish receive news or to be contacted by the church can be kept in communication. We are now updating our Parish Directory. There is a sheet for you in the church to indicate your preferences near the entrance. Please consider joining the directory. It has a restricted circulation and owners

are asked not to share the data with anyone else. If you have any questions, please do contact Damian at [dpickard@virginmedia.com](mailto:dpickard@virginmedia.com).

## Children and Youth Missioner's Update

One of the highlights of February was the Pancake Party that took place on Shrove Tuesday at the church rooms. As the party took place during the half term holiday, many families were able to join us. In total we welcomed 40 adults and 30 children!! The afternoon was an opportunity for everyone to get together and enjoy themselves and to eat a pancake or two! Those attending came from our 'Little Fishes' family, our church family and some from the wider community. Everyone was very welcome and we enjoyed pancake crafts and activities, as well as the food!! Thank you so much to everyone who helped make this event such a success. Apologies if I miss anyone but I would like to thank Hilary and Rhiannon



who were busy all afternoon making and serving pancakes! Sue, Sandra and Dave were also in the kitchen serving drinks and washing up. Melissa made some pancakes at home which the children thoroughly enjoyed decorating (and eating!). Alison and Louise were busy on the craft table and Sandy was on the door welcoming everyone! Thank you to everyone who came along and made the afternoon so memorable. It was a wonderful outreach opportunity.

Junior Church continues week by week and we are delighted that Hank's mum, Anita has joined the JC team. Thank you to all of our wonderful JC volunteers. Please see the 40 Acts of Kindness for Lent list (attached to this newsletter!) that some of the children were given recently. I think this could be a challenge for all of us!



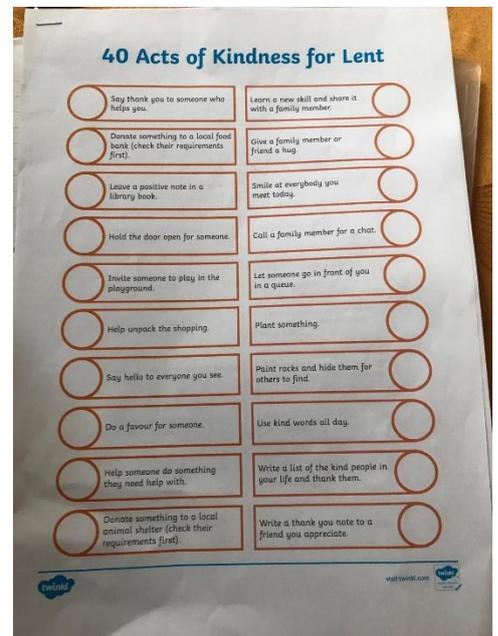
Little Fishes, our church baby and toddler group, meets weekly on Monday mornings. On the first Monday in the month we meet at the church and the other Mondays we meet at the church rooms. A few new families have joined us in recent weeks and they have been very complimentary about the welcome and activities. The older children like to help the younger ones and Andrew, who has just had his fourth birthday, likes to lead us in our final prayer – **God bless you, God bless me, God bless us. Amen!!**

Wishing everyone God’s blessings and love.

Cathy Tinsley

Children and Youth Missioner

Tel. 07516 979223 or [children@abingtonchurch.org.uk](mailto:children@abingtonchurch.org.uk)



## News from News from Abington Park View

The first Messy Vintage session of the year took place on 11<sup>th</sup> February with the theme of ‘Jesus, Light of the world.’ The residents, assisted by a team of helpers, made lamps using templates and brightly coloured cellophane. We sang ‘Shine, Jesus, Shine’ and listened to other music during the afternoon.

We also said goodbye to Mysha as this was her last service with us. She has been a valued member of the group, always joining in with our activities. We shall miss her and wish her well in her new job.

We marked the start of Lent with a Songs of Praise service on 25<sup>th</sup> February. We heard about Jesus being tempted by the Devil in the wilderness and we listened to the story of the lost sheep. The residents enjoyed singing



several well-known hymns, including, 'Just as I am', 'Lead us heavenly Father lead us' and 'The King of love my shepherd is.'

Our next visit will be for a service of Evening Prayer on 11<sup>th</sup> March. Please talk to Liz Kelly if you would like to come and help.



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## **Congratulations!**

We were delighted to hear that Damian and Jill's granddaughter, Amelia and Grant's daughter Fenella Jill Nannes-Pickard was born at 8pm 3rd March. Both mother and baby are doing well. Many congratulations to the Pickards. Welcome Fenella! We look forward to meeting her in person soon.



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## **Concert: Handel's Messiah**

On Sunday April 19th at 4.00pm at Christ Church we are pleased to present a performance of the Easter music from Handel's Messiah.

The combined choirs of Abington Church, Christ Church and friends will be accompanied by the Abington String Ensemble and organ. The solos will be performed by four superb singers, students of local opera star Alison Roddy.

The performance will feature solos and choruses from Part Two, which is the dramatic heart of the work. It tells of Christ's passion, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. We shall end with the gloriously optimistic 'Hallelujah!'.

It is a combined Abington/Christ Church event with Christ Church chosen as the venue for the space available for performers and audience, together with its superb acoustic, probably the best in Northampton.

We hope that people will support the work put in by the performers to what is offered not as a concert but a part of this year's Easter worship. Everyone is invited. A donation towards Christ Church music fund is welcomed, but only if you feel able.

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### **Northampton Chamber Choir Concert: Sat 14 March, 7 pm, at Christ Church,**

Excerpts from Requiem by Stephen L Meakins with Music by Stanford, Faure & Wood  
Tickets: £15. Please speak to Bishop Andrew for more information.

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### **Abington Library - Home Library Service**

Did you know that Abington Library runs a Home Library Service?

Library books are delivered monthly by volunteers to anyone in the Abington area who can't get to the library to choose their own books.

Do you know anyone who would like to have books delivered to their home?

Please contact the library to find out more. Call in or contact the library

- email [abingtoncml@gmail.com](mailto:abingtoncml@gmail.com)

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### **Standing Committee and PCC**

SC: 22 Apr, 24 June, 16 Sep, 18 Nov.

PCC: 6 May, 8 July, 30 Sep, 25 Nov.

APCM: 26 April

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

Please click the title above to access the link.

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### **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](mailto: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.

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## **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.

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## **Parish Newsletter Contribution**

Please send your stories and photos to Revd. Jun, [rector@abingtonchurch.org.uk](mailto:rector@abingtonchurch.org.uk) by 23<sup>rd</sup> of each month.

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