

Our Lady & St Edmund of Abingdon

1 Radley Rd, Abingdon on Thames, Oxon, OX14 3PL

We are a **LiveSimply** parish aiming to live Simply, Sustainably and in Solidarity with the Poor

Parish Priest: Fr. Jamie McGrath Tel: 01235 520375
Parish Secretary: Lisa Paterson Tel: 01235 520375
Office Hours: 8.15am - 12.15pm Tuesday to Friday
Office Email: abingdon@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

We live stream all services

Safeguarding Team: Tel. 07572 935 230
Visits Oxford Hospitals: Priest/Chaplain 01865 221732
Visits and Help: Society of Vincent de Paul Group, contact via Parish Office
Parish Website: www.ourladyandstedmund.org.uk
Primary School: St. Edmund's School, Radley Road, Abingdon, OX14 3PP Tel 521558

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Reg. Charity No 1199568

www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Confessions: Saturdays 11.00 – 11.30am or by appointment

REFLECTION

"I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today... a Saviour has been born to you."

These are the words of the Angels to the shepherds. As we gather here our Saviour is present among us, not as a little, helpless baby, but as our Risen Lord. O come let us adore him!

Joseph and Mary set out for Bethlehem. When they arrived there, the time came for Mary to have her baby, and she gave birth to a son. All of us are journeying to Bethlehem where we hope to be born this Christmas. We were all born once before. Nevertheless, we are still unborn in the sense that our true and full self hasn't yet seen the light of day. When our second birth occurs, then all the gifts of grace and nature which God gave us as seeds, will blossom and bear fruit. Our ultimate goal is the heavenly Bethlehem where we shall see God face to face.

VOCATIONS (to Parenthood)

My God, the author of life and architect of all creation, in humility I come before you. I acknowledge the sacred call to parenthood, a vocation that mirrors your boundless love. It is a path you designed with purpose, and I yearn to walk that path with your help. Grant me to trust in your plan, knowing that every season unfolds under your sovereign gaze. Help me to embrace the journey with its ebbs and flows, its ups and downs. Make me meek and receptive like fertile soil ready for the seed. May my life be an open vessel, ready for the gift of children as our Mother Mary and Joseph her spouse. Mould me into a beacon of your divine love, that I may one day guide your little ones in the way they should go. Amen.

PARISH CLOSURE DATES

Please note that the parish office will be closed from Monday 23rd December until Thursday 2nd January inclusive.

Christmas: Cycle 1 (C)

TUESDAY 24 DEC.

6.00pm First Mass of Christmas (*Special intention*)
8.30pm Christmas Vigil with Carols
9.00pm Mass (*Private intention*)

CHRISTMAS EVE

WEDNESDAY 25 DEC.

8.00am Mass (*John Nelson, RIP*)
9.30am Mass (*Pat & Geoff Castle intentions*)
11.30am Mass (*Paterson family intentions*)

CHRISTMAS DAY

Thursday 26 Dec.

10.00am Mass (*Private intention*)

St Stephen

Friday 27 Dec.

6.30pm Rosary
7.00pm Mass (*Special intention*)

St John, Apostle

Saturday 28 Dec.

11am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
11-11.30am Confessions
12pm Mass (*Special intention*)

The Holy Innocents

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

All collections on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are for the Christmas offering, which supports our priest, Fr Jamie, who serves us so well. You can also donate online using the link on either the *Home* page or *News* pages of our parish website. Thank you for your generosity and support.

LENT 2025 – PARISH CHARITY FUNDRAISING

During the season of Advent, the parish pastoral committee (PPC) ask you to think about charities which we could sponsor during Lent 2025. Ideally, we would like to fundraise for 2 charities – one local/UK based and one worldwide. We are only able to consider registered charities. Please give this some consideration and send suggestions to the parish office by Friday 3 January 2025. Thank you.

PRAYER LIFE OF THE PARISH

As well as all the liturgical and sacramental celebrations in our parish, there's lots of other prayer forms available:

- **The Charismatic Prayer Group** meets at the home of Mike and Maria Pia Oliver. They were recently blessed by a couple from trinity Church, as well as two non-believers, offering thanksgiving to Jesus for all his graces. Then the 16 people present sang Christmas carols accompanied on Aedrin's guitar. They will resume in the new year with online sessions. All are welcome, and please ring 01235 528528 for details.
- Then, quite recently begun, is the **Faith in Action Prayer Group** which meets every fourth Friday of the month in the parish centre at 7.30pm. For information, please call, text or WhatsApp Sabina on 07449 825161. Also, more details are on the flyer at the back of the church.
- Our parish **Grandparents' Association** meet regularly to pray and plan for ways to help our families and pass on the faith. This Christmas they've prepared a lovely nativity card and prayer, which you can collect from the table at the back of the church.
- We also have faithful **Mothers' Prayers** groups in English, French and Spanish.
- People gather every Saturday to **Adore the Lord** in the Blessed Sacrament.
- Other groups meet daily to recite the **Rosary** before Mass.
- Both our marvellous **choirs** help us pray: "*He who sings prays twice.*" (*St Augustine*)
- And finally, our **parish pilgrimages** are an important help to our prayer life too – this year to Lindisfarne, Holy Island.

CHRISTMAS CRIB OFFERINGS

This year, our Christmas Crib offerings will go to the *Knights of the Holy Sepulchre (KHS)*, who financially support Christians in the Middle East, and, above all, pray for them. They fund many works that support the Christians living in the Holy Land, thus ensuring that they survive and that the holy sites are still populated by Christians and do not become museums. The Knights do everything they can to help with practical projects to stabilise Christian communities, and also fund-raise to maintain schools, formation, charitable and social activities. The need to help this year is hugely urgent, because of the war in the Holy Land. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

PARISH EVENTS FOR THE WEEK

- **Sunday:** Refreshments in the parish centre after the 10.15am Mass.

FUTURE DATES

- **Mon 6th Jan:** *Open Doors* in the parish centre from 10.30am to 2.30pm.
- **Fri 10th Jan:** Baby & Toddler group in the parish centre 9.30am to 11.15am in term time.
- **Fri 24th Jan:** Friday *Faith in Action Prayer Group* meet at 7.30pm. Contact Sabina on 07449 825161 for information

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Church in Abingdon (CiA) welcome everyone to participate in a 'Week of Prayer for Christian Unity'. This year the theme adopted by the CiA for the week from 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 20th to Friday 24th January at 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.

OPEN DOORS

There will be no Open Doors on 30th December. Our first session of 2025 will be on Monday, 6th January. During January, February and March, *Open Doors* will also be offering a warm space to those who need it during the winter months and session times will be extended slightly to run from 10.30am to 2.30pm every Monday.

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to everyone who contributed to our Advent appeal for the homeless. This week, five volunteers packed 55 shoeboxes and wrapped each one in Christmas wrapping paper. Other gifts, too big to fit in the shoeboxes, filled two large cardboard boxes. We thank them for their hard work. May those less fortunate than ourselves, receive some joy from your gifts and knowing that people **do** care.

**May God's blessings
and peace be with
you this Christmas
and always.**

