

News from the Upper Thames Churches



In this week's Upper Thames news:

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2. **Rescheduled Bishop Neil Lent Talk**
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 - **Lent Booklet**
 - **Prayers of Love and Faith**
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7. **Morning Prayers - *new meeting link for Monday mornings**
8. **March Services**

1. Sunday 17 March - Lent 5

- **St Sampson's:**
 - 8am Holy Communion
 - 10am Morning Worship
 - 6.30pm Evensong
- **Holy Cross:**
 - 10am Morning Worship
 - 4pm Evensong
- **St John the Baptist:**
 - 10am Holy Communion
- **Readings:**
 - [Psalm 51:1-13](#)
 - [John 12:20-33](#)

2. Rescheduled Bishop Neil Lent Talk

Bishop Neil will be with us all on Wednesday 20 March 7pm at St Sampson's.



3. Dig Deeper into the Bible - as part of an informal group exploring some of Paul's shorter letters. **Our final session is taking place next Wednesday 20 March in The Vicarage big room 14 Bath Rd.**



Our faith is sustained and we grow as disciples through reading the Bible and discovering God's word and wisdom for our C21st lives. Do come and join us for either or both session and have a word with Shirley if you'd like more details.

4. Growing in God Together

For 2023 and 2024 the PCCs of our Benefice have used six themes from Acts 2 as the plan for the year.

In Acts 2 (verses 42-47) we hear about the early church and how they lived and ordered their community, and six themes emerge. Each PCC has chosen Just One Thing to aim for under each of those six themes in the coming year.

The themes are: worship, serving, prayer, outreach, fellowship, learning.

You can ask the PCC members to tell you what they are doing under each theme and see if they can tell you!

It seemed a good idea to focus on these six themes more deeply together, so we have decided to take each one of the themes and use it as the basis of what we are thinking and praying about for 6-8 weeks each over the coming year.

For each theme we will simply slant what we are doing in that direction – the benefice services will specifically focus on the theme, but you may find it cropping up in sermons or prayers, in groups or on our weekly email.

The six overarching themes will appear approximately as follows (though they may start early or finish late):

1. **Worship** – giving God our praise
7 April - 12 May
2. **Fellowship** – our relationships in the Body of Christ
9 June - 14 July
3. **Prayer** – our relationship with God
August



Growing In God
together

4. **Outreach** – witnessing to Christ in the world
8 September - 8 October

5. **Serving** – others in our community
13 October - 17 November

6. **Learning** – growing in knowledge and love of God
Early next year – dates to be finalised.

We hope this will be helpful for us in our churches and in our benefice as we pray, minister and worship together.


5. NWMA:Youth Events

There are some exciting events planned in the next few weeks and months. Help spread the word!



BOWLING TRIP - Saturday 13 April

QUIZ NIGHT - Saturday 27 April

SPREE 2024 - Friday 21 - Sunday 23 June




NWMA:YOUTH
Bowling Trip
Tenpin, Shaw Ridge, Swindon
Saturday 13th April, 4-6pm
Book in via Eventbrite for two games of bowling. Bring cash if you would like snacks.
FOR EVENTBRITE LINK, EMAIL: [JESSICA.PRICE@NWMA.ORG.UK](mailto:jessica.price@nwma.org.uk)

quiz night
in aid of NWMA: Youth's trip to Spree SW Festival

Sat 27th April, 7-9.30pm, Minety Village Hall
Tickets are £7 - available via Eventbrite - follow QR Code
compete to win a trophy you can display in your local church + max team size is 6 adults + fully licensed bar +

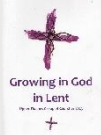
FOR MORE INFO CONTACT: jessica.price@nwma.org.uk



SCAN ME



6. Reminders:



- **Lent Booklet**

Containing readings and prayers for each weekday as we journey through Lent. Still available.

- **Prayers of Love and Faith - a message from Debbie**

Many of you will know that the C of E has had an extended period of discussion and discernment regarding same sex relationship and how we, as a church, might respond.

At present Synod has agreed that churches are able to bless a same-sex relationship within the context of a normal service of worship.

The Prayers of Love and Faith are designed for use with same-sex couples who are in stable, permanent, faithful, exclusive relationships - not necessarily just civil partnerships or marriages (i.e. these are not just intended as blessings for legally recognised relationships)

Services including Prayers of Love and Faith must not be made to look like a marriage service. These prayers are not a marriage equivalent.

As a Benefice we need to consider our local response to all this. The PCCs have begun a discussion, and I am keen to hear from anyone with views (for or against) so that we can come to a good decision based on moving together.

So just to be clear – this is not a stand-alone service, it is blessing a couple in another service. Of course, if we were to be doing such a blessing we would signal well in advance so that people knew what was going to happen when.

Please do tell Debbie or Shirley what you think if you would like to.

- [Foodbank shopping list](#)

7. Morning Prayers

- **Monday Morning Zoom Prayers, 9am** - *new meeting link

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/79062542003?pwd=k2bFFYt0IDvUxBJ5zH8l3k3bQD1DGv.>

1

Meeting ID: 790 6254 2003

Passcode: 9Yz6w9

- **Thursday Morning Prayers at St Sampson's**

There are about 7 - 10 of us in number; we meet at 8.30am to enjoy coffee and the Iona Community's 'Wee Worship Book', and finish by 9.30am. Everyone is most welcome. Do join us.

8. March Services

- **Sunday 17 March - Lent 5**

- St Sampson's:
 - 8am Holy Communion
 - 10am Morning Worship
 - 6.30pm Evensong
- Holy Cross:
 - 10am Morning Worship
 - 4pm Evensong
- St John the Baptist:
 - 10am Holy Communion

- **Sunday 24 March - Palm Sunday**

- St Sampson's:
 - 10am Holy Communion
- Holy Cross:
 - 8am Holy Communion
- St John the Baptist:
 - 10am Morning Worship

- **Good Friday - Friday 29 March**

- 2pm 'Final Hour' service at St Sampson's

- **Easter Day - Sunday 31 March**

- St Sampson's:
 - 8am Holy Communion
 - 10am Holy Communion
- Holy Cross:
 - 10am Holy Communion
- St John the Baptist:
 - 11.15am Holy Communion
- All Saints:
 - 11.30am Holy Communion

