

NEWSWIRE: 27th August 2026



- Services on Sunday
 - Ride and Stride - 12th September
 - Creation Care - St Leonard's churchyard
 - Vacancies at Open Doors
-

A message from Duncan

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you. Psalm 63

There's something lovely about late summer evenings: the sunlight becomes thick and warm and turns the harvested fields and tired hedgerows into gold. A few months ago, my daughter informed me it's called the golden hour and it's an internet thing - ideal light for atmospheric instagram pics! It is of course a real life thing! - a passing but magical moment in the day, just before the sky shows off with its colour explosion as the sun sets.

I took a moment a couple of evenings ago to take it in and it provoked in me familiar feelings. The first, simply awe as the world's beauty is magnified around me. The second, something like homesickness. This might seem odd, but it's not just me, many of you will know what I'm talking about. CS Lewis described the sensation as a painful, beautiful stab of joy. It is the sensation that poets and musicians attempt to describe and contain in verse and song. The German language, with predictable efficiency, has a single word for it - Sehnsucht - a bittersweet longing for an unknown place or distant ideal. For Lewis, it was a hint that this world was meant for something much more, inspiring a spiritual yearning for it to be, if you like, touched by gold; a place where humanity might find itself at peace and at home with God, at last.

The golden hour is one of the reminders built into this present creation that it is, with us, destined for a greater glory. It is a moment in creation designed to drive us nearer to the Creator in prayer and worship. It is not to make us too heavenly minded to be of any earthly use. Quite the reverse, a glimpse of the future

increases our resolve to work toward the Kingdom of God in the present; that we might stand alongside neighbours, family, friends and colleagues on that great day when we see God in his breathtaking beauty and glory in New Creation.

Let us, with joy, keep working towards that day.

Grace and peace be with you all,

Duncan

Collect for the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God,
who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

SERVICES ON SUNDAY

9.30am - Holy Communion at St Peter's

Readings: Psalm 90.1-17; Matthew 25.14-30

**10.30am - Morning Worship at St Leonard's and
livestreamed on [this link](#)**

Reading: Matthew 13:24-35

Click [here](#) for the Service Sheet

If you have difficulties accessing the service on the livestream link above, please try accessing [our youtube channel](#) directly.



NEXT WEEK

Monday 31st August

Bump to One is taking a break for the next 2 weeks. We will be back on Monday 14th September from 10.30am to midday in St Leonard's church

Wednesday 2nd September

A memorial service for the late Malcolm Cook will be held at St Leonard's at 4pm on 2nd September.

NEXT SUNDAY 6th September

9.30am - Holy Communion at St Peter's

10.30am - Morning Worship at St Leonard's

Looking further ahead

The funeral of the late Christine Edwards will be held at St Leonard's at 2pm on 15th September

WANTED: A NEW HOME FOR WEDNESDAY YOUTH CELL

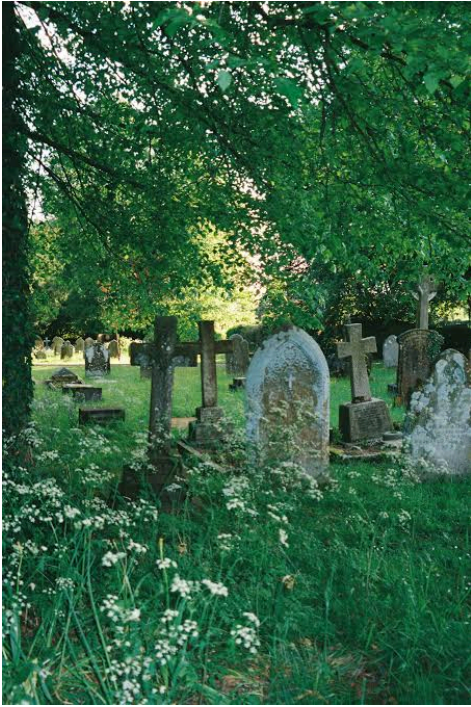
For many years our youth cell groups have met regularly in homes. It's more cosy than the hall or the church and it keeps young people involved in a way similar to adult home groups. Maybe you have older children who benefited from meeting in other people's homes? It's a vital part of our youth ministry.

Caroline Cazyer has hosted cell groups for many years but is now stepping down and we are looking for a new home for our middle cell group (six lovely young people just going into Year 11, age 15). You don't need to be involved in the group, just make your home available on Wednesday evenings 7-8.30pm most weeks during term time.

If you are interested and need more information please speak to Laura Churchyard or Margaret Thornton.

Creation Care – the Climate Crisis:

As part of the A Rocha UK's Eco Church programme, we are committed as a Church to protect and manage our land for nature, providing habitats to encourage and increase biodiversity. One such vital piece of land is our Churchyard. Churchyards are vital biodiversity refuges as they have never been farmed and are free from fertilizers and chemicals. This provides an ideal shelter



for dwindling wildflower species. Ancient trees provide nesting sites and food sources for birds, bats and invertebrates. Stone walls, old monuments and weathered gravestones provide ideal conditions for a variety of lichens. Dry stone walls and ivy-clad structures provide safe places for amphibians, reptiles and small mammals.

In our Churchyard we have areas such as these as well as areas we have been gradually improving to encourage and protect biodiversity. We have left areas of longer grass around the boundaries along the stone walls and provide extra cover such as corrugated sheets for slow worms and newts. Only grass on footpaths is mown short to mark the walkways through the Churchyard. If you look up

you may see bird and owl boxes high in the trees.

We have also been working very hard supported by the volunteers from the Nature Recovery Service to re-introduce areas of native wildflowers to the Churchyard.

I spent a lovely morning in the sunshine last weekend helping cut back and clear the spent wildflowers. Volunteers from the Nature Recovery Service came with scythes to cut down the wildflowers close to the ground. Scything is an old farming skill, which makes no noise and does not frighten any resident birds and mammals, it uses no fuel and moves slowly, allowing small insects to escape safely. It can also be used in more intricate areas such as between headstones where mowers cannot go.

As the scything cut back the wildflowers, some Church volunteers used hay rakes to collect the stems and grasses into large bundles and took them to the compost heap. Removing the old flowers prevents the nutrients going into the ground as they rot down, providing perfect conditions for next year's wildflowers. The old stems and grasses will rot down on the compost heap providing nutrient rich compost for other areas of the land later in the year. The compost heap also provides a refuge for slow worms and hedgehogs.

It was a very relaxed and social morning listening to the array of birds in the Churchyard and the grasshoppers in the dry grass, being immersed in nature and working with the land doing something physical, which is not only good for biodiversity but good for our mental health as well! *Penny Thomas*

The Church Office will be closed from 2pm on Thursday 27th August until 9am on Thursday 3rd September, whilst I take a couple of days off. Laura will be checking for phone messages during this time, so please call if you have any urgent queries. Otherwise send me an email and I will get back to you on my return. Thank you. *Louise*



The annual **Ride and Stride** for **Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust (OHCT)** will take place on **Saturday 12th September**. Ride and Stride raises funds to support the repair, maintenance and improvement of historic churches across the county. Click [here](#) for more information about taking part, including suggested walking and cycling routes.

Love to sing? Come and join Oxford Gospel Choir! 🎵

Oxford Gospel Choir is a friendly, inclusive community choir for adults aged 18+, and new members are very welcome this September.

- **Tuesdays, 7.30–9.30pm**
- **New Road Baptist Church, Oxford city centre**
- **First TWO rehearsals FREE**

There are **no** auditions to join Community Choir, no previous singing experience needed and you don't need to read music – just come along and give it a go.

Whether you've sung in choirs for years or mainly sing in the shower, car or kitchen, you'll be very welcome!

🎵 Sing uplifting gospel and soulful music

🎵 Be part of a friendly, inclusive community

🎵 Lots of opportunities to perform at concerts, festivals and community events

🎵 Pay weekly or for the term

Find out more: www.oxfordgospelchoir.co.uk or contact Jules on **07519 668137**

Instagram: @oxford_gospel_choir

Facebook: Oxford Gospel Choir

Vacancies at Open Doors - Witney / Home based

- [Executive Assistant to the CEO](#) – closing date **Friday 4 September 2026**
- [Social Media Manager](#) – closing date **Sunday 6 September 2026**
- [Marcomms Delivery Manager](#) – closing date **Sunday 6 September 2026**
- [Relationship Manager](#) – closing date **Monday 7 September 2026**,
- [Trusts Manager](#) – closing date **Monday 7 September 2026**,
- [Church Relations Developer](#) – closing date **Friday 11 September 2026**

International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) Vacancies

2 vacancies have arisen at IFES in Oxford for a Financial Controller and an Administrator. Click [here](#) for more information.

Please pray for:

- For Marcella recovering from surgery.
- Dave following his move to Oaken Holt care home.
- Ben and healing for his mental health.
- Katie suffering with epilepsy. Please pray that the right medication be found to control her seizures.

To add names to the prayer list, please contact the Church Office (stleonards_stpeters@btconnect.com) Names will be added to the list by express permission, and only first names will be published.

www.stleonardseysham.org.uk | www.stpeterschurchcassington.org | [Youtube channel](#) | [facebook page](#)

Church Office - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9am – 2pm

Tel: 01865 883325 E-mail: stleonards_stpeters@btconnect.com

Revd Duncan Fraser: 07810 324088 (Day off – Friday)