

A photograph of the University Church, a large Gothic-style stone building with a prominent central spire and multiple rows of arched windows. The sky is blue with light clouds. A tree is visible on the right side of the building.

University
Church

WHAT'S ON
at the University Church

TRINITY TERM 2024

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Now is the month of Maying...

The Revd Naomi Gardom

Soft cloud, that while the breeze of May
Chants her glad matins in the leafy arch,
Draw'st thy bright veil across the heavenly way
Meet pavement for an angel's glorious march.

John Keble – Ascension Day, The Christian Year

Oxford in Trinity term is full of arcane sights and rituals: choristers singing madrigals from the top of a 15th century tower at dawn; students in academic dress wearing colour-coded carnations; a troop of churchgoers with sticks solemnly tracing the invisible boundary between their parish and the next; rowing Bumps and college balls – the list goes on. To the uninitiated, these ceremonies can seem baffling, relics of a world which no longer has meaning; on the other hand, to many they carry a sense of enchantment, of traditions that reach out hands from the past to connect with us today.

In 2014, former archbishop Rowan Williams stated in an interview that Britain had entered an era of being 'post-Christian'. This did not mean, he said, that Christianity was no longer relevant to British society, merely that 'habitual practice for most of the population is not taken for granted.' Ten years after this interview, this is even more evident: in the 2021 census, for the first time, less than half of the population of

England and Wales described themselves as Christian, with 'no religion' being the second most common response.

For those of us seeking to proclaim the good news of God's love in the world, it can feel like Christianity is being squeezed out, just at the moment when it is most needed. However, in that same interview, Williams also suggested that there were grounds for hope: that, as popular knowledge of Christianity declined, this would provide an opportunity for people to 'rediscover Christianity with a certain freshness'. The strangeness of Christianity, and the richness of its sights and sounds and beliefs, have the power to say something fresh and relevant in a jaded and cynical society.

The month of May contains two of Oxford's most distinctive traditions: the May Day celebrations to mark the beginning of the month, and the beating of the bounds on the feast of the Ascension (this year on May 9th). On 1st May, the choristers of Magdalen College sing from the top of the chapel tower, starting with the Christian *Hymnus Eucharisticus*, and finishing with the secular 16th century madrigal 'Now is the Month of Maying'. Down below, the High Street overflows with Oxford's population, Town and Gown alike, with Morris Dancers and always at least one 'Jack-in-the-Green', a figure dressed as a tree. It's a rich combination of Christian tradition, English folklore, and people simply having a good time, as they have been doing on this day for more than 400 years. ►

On Ascension Day, the High Street is again the stage for a strange rite, this one even older than the May Day celebrations. The beating of the bounds began as a way of sharing knowledge about the precise location of the boundaries between different parishes. At a time when important legal and financial obligations were attached to parishes, and when maps were a rare phenomenon, sharing knowledge in this way was of practical importance. While these practical considerations are no longer so relevant, it remains an opportunity to pray for the parish, for our neighbours, and for the colleges and businesses with whom we share this space in the centre of Oxford.

To some, these ceremonies will appear to be an irrelevance, born from an absurd desire to recreate a past that is dead and gone. But, as with the other rituals of the Christian faith, these events carry the power to say something new, despite (or perhaps because of) their ancient origins. As the climate crisis deepens and we become increasingly alienated from the passing of the seasons, the rites of May morning have the power to reconnect us with the beauty of the created world, and to remind us that all time is God's time. As we come to live our lives increasingly in the virtual sphere, and as we have fewer direct connections to those with whom we share physical space, the beating of the bounds teaches us that all space is God's space, and those with whom we share it are precious in his sight.



Hidden Spire

22 April – 30 June | Adam de Brome Chapel

We are thrilled to partner with the Old Fire Station in presenting an exhibition that highlights the art, individuals, and narratives surrounding the Old Fire Station.

The Old Fire Station is a place where barriers are crossed. Many different people come there – to make art, watch theatre, drink coffee, attend a creative workshop or try authentic Middle Eastern dishes. Some people come because they have nowhere secure to live. When we come together, the lines dividing us are blurred: an audience member becomes an artist; a volunteer becomes a mentor; a person experiencing homelessness becomes a staff member. We believe that art is for everyone; we believe it can help re-ignite our self-belief, bring us together and change lives. We hope you enjoy the exhibition. Once you have walked around the exhibition in Adam De Brome Chapel, please visit the Old Fire Station at 40 George Street OX1 2AQ.



Regular Events

BIBLE STUDY - 1 PETER

**Fridays during University Term | Old Library
12.45pm - 1.30pm**

This term, we will be studying the First Epistle of Peter with the help of *The First Letter of Peter: A Global Commentary*, edited by Professor Jenn Strawbridge. This commentary offers a close reading of the text from beginning to end, drawing on a multiplicity of voices and engaging in a number of foundational themes for the Christian community according to the apostolic author: hope, holiness, suffering, joy, witness, hospitality, exile, resurrection, leadership. The epistle invites us to tackle a range of controversial issues, including slavery, exile and refugees, patriarchy, hierarchy, oppression, gender justice, and the risk of hospitality. You are welcome to join us. Tea and coffee are provided.



POETRY HOUR

**Wednesdays during University Term | Old Library | 5.30pm - 6.30pm
1st May, 15th May, 29th May, 12th June**

Join us for an hour as we explore poetry's dimensions of human experience; finding inspiration, solace, wisdom and our own creativity.

This term we will be reading the poetry collection *Self-Portrait as Othello*, by the poet Jason Allen-Paisant (pub. Carcanet). In addition, we are delighted that, on the 15th May, the Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby will join us to talk about her work on Anglican women poets and to give an introduction to the poems of the American Episcopalian and disability activist Vassar Miller (1924-1998).



SUNDAY FORUM

**Sunday lunchtimes | Old Library | 12noon - 1.00pm
14 April, 9 June**

Look out for the Sunday forum following the main Sunday morning service at St Mary's. A range of speakers will be invited to focus our minds on issues of community, justice, and the common good. All are very welcome. For lift access please speak to a steward.

Stepping Stones: Combating homelessness and restoring dignity at the Porch

Sunday 14 April | Old Library | 12noon

Join us upstairs in the Old Library after the service for the first Sunday forum of the new term with Guy Scotece, Director of the Porch Day Centre in the city. The University Church have supported the Porch for a number of years, including in our Harvest collection for their 'Porch Preserves' project. Guy will speak to us about their pioneering work providing a stepping stone to those who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

From Tiny Acorns: Walking, working and worshipping in ancient woodlands

Sunday 9 June | Old Library | 12noon

All are welcome to join us as Gabrielle and Hugh Conway Morris help us to consider the natural, human, and spiritual significance of our native woodlands. Gabrielle has been a co-leader of Oxford Forest Church for several years, and Hugh is an architect and timber framer with particular expertise in traditional and natural building materials. They are members of the community here at St Mary's. As the owners of a woodland, they are passionate about conserving, using, and enjoying woodlands in a holistic way.



Special Events

HIDDEN HIGHLIGHTS TOUR

**Wednesday 1 May, Tuesday 28 May,
Wednesday 19 June | 7.30pm - 9.00pm | Nave**

The University Church is the place where the University of Oxford began. It is also the place where some of the most significant events in English church history have taken place: from the trial of Thomas Cranmer, Henry VIII's Archbishop of Canterbury, at the time of the Reformation, to the launch of the Oxford Movement and the Catholic Revival of the Church of England in the nineteenth century. Join the Revd Canon Dr Will Lamb, the Vicar, for a candlelit tour of



the church as we explore some of its hidden highlights. The tour culminates in the beautiful office of Compline, sung in the Chancel, before we depart for hot chocolate and port in the Old Library. Places are limited, so please book online (£10).

SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG

Wednesday 22 May, 7.30pm | Nave

A unique interactive event that uses live performances of brand-new psalm settings as a springboard for discussion about Scripture and faith. Featuring mezzo-soprano Julia Hollander and pianist Peter McMullin. Curated and hosted by Delvyn Case, Visiting Fellow at Exeter College. Co-sponsored by Deus Ex Musica.



Delvyn Case is an American composer, scholar, and performer whose work explores the intersections of music and theology. He is the founder of Deus Ex Musica, an international organization that promotes the use of sacred music as a resource for spiritual formation, biblical interpretation, and theological thinking.

BUILDING HOLINESS

Wednesday 26 June, 6.00pm | Nave

The architecture of St Mary's reveals different visions of the sacredness of space, different ways in which we are encouraged to encounter God within it. Perhaps the most iconic feature is the seventeenth-century Virgin Porch, associated with Archbishop Laud and his desire that churches should embody the 'beauty of holiness', their design echoing the Temple and the ancient Christian Churches. Join us to reflect on the relationship between architecture, space, and holiness in our building's past and in our own lives today.



COME AND SING FOR CHORAL EVENSONG

Sunday 30 June, 2.00pm - 4.00pm Rehearsal | 5.00pm Evensong | Nave

Directors: Sam Teague, Michelle Castelletti

Choral Evensong is one of the precious gems of the Church of England - and Oxford is one of the cities with the highest concentration of services anywhere in the world. Devised by Thomas Cranmer (1489 - 1556), Archbishop of Canterbury, as part of the Book of Common Prayer, it is a poignant part of the history and heritage of the University Church. Within months of the accession of Queen Mary to the throne, Cranmer was sent to the Tower of London, and found guilty of heresy. Cranmer's final opportunity for a recantation occurred at the University Church, on 21 March 1556. He deviated from the prepared script, reasserting his reformed views, and was promptly taken to Broad Street, where he was burned at the stake.

This is a chance to join the Choral Scholars at the University Church as a festival chorus for Evensong, singing beautiful music in the church so linked to our history and heritage. To sign up, please visit either the church website or the website of the Oxford Festival of the Arts: <https://artsfestivaloxford.org/> This event is a collaboration between the church and the Oxford Festival of the Arts.

The Bread of Life

Reflections on Food, Life and Liturgy

Bread has been a staple part of our diet for centuries. And yet we live in a society in which bread is increasingly a political issue. A loaf of bread in a local artisanal bakery costs £5 while the cheapest loaf in a local supermarket can cost as little as 45p. The 'choice' of bread reveals much about social status, wealth, and health.

And yet bread is also imbued with religious significance. A precious commodity, we pray 'Give us this day our daily bread'. In the Eucharist, we consecrate bread: 'Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made, it will become for us the bread of life.'

In early June, the University Church will be hosting a series of events to help us think about the significance of bread in our lives. The programme will include Workshops and Conversations. There may even be the opportunity to bake some bread. In these sessions, our reflections will be aided by Professor Andrew McGowan, our Theologian-in-Residence.



Andrew McGowan is Dean of the Berkeley Divinity School and McFaddin Professor of Anglican Studies at Yale University in the USA. An Australian Anglican priest, he is a scholar of ancient Christianity whose work has focussed on the early liturgy, food and meals in the ancient world, and on the idea and practice of sacrifice. He is author of books including *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford, 1999), *Ancient Christian Worship* (Baker Academic, 2014), and *Seven Last Words: Cross and Creation* (Cascade, 2021) based on sermons given at the University Church. He is currently working on a theological history of bread.



We are grateful to the Bampton Electors for funding our annual Theologian-in-Residence. The purpose of this role is to promote the public understanding of Christian Theology.

NEW SHOOTS

As warmer days bring new shoots and fresh growth, so we are excited to be growing in our ministry among children and their families, and reaching out into the wider community in new ways. Our new Children, Families and Schools Chaplain will work alongside our fantastic Godly Play volunteers to help to encourage and nurture our families in their faith, as well as to support schools to enrich their learning and engagement with the incredible faith and heritage resources on offer at the University Church.



CREATE & CRAFT CHURCH

Sunday 16 June | University Church | 3.30pm - 4.15pm

Drop in to *Create and Craft Church* for 45 minutes of faith and fun. Build a Bible scene, pray with paints, or get creative through craft this Father's Day in a relaxed and interactive space for families with children.

GODLY PLAY

**First Sunday of the Month
Old Library | 10.30am - 11.15am
May 5, June 2**

Godly Play takes place monthly in the Old Library on the first Sunday of the month during the first 45 minutes of the 10.30am Sung Eucharist. It is particularly suitable for children aged 3-8 years old and their families.



CHILDREN AT ST MARY'S

We are delighted to have children worshipping with us at St Mary's at the 10.30am service. A selection of toys and books are available in the Newman Room (behind the glass brick wall) next door to the baby changing facilities.



PARISH LUNCHESES

**Sunday 21 April & 12 May
12noon - 2.00pm | Old Library**

Lunch will be served in the Old Library following the main Sunday morning service. Everyone is welcome.

SECOND COFFEE

Sundays during University Term | 12noon - 1.00pm Weston Library Cafe

We are always delighted to welcome students and young people at the University Church. Our Second Coffee group offers a chance to catch up and compare notes weekly with an outing for coffee or drinks after the congregational gathering that follows the 10.30 service on Sundays. We also offer a range of activities, including organised dinners, with or without a discussion, movie evenings, walks and picnics, Saturday breakfasts, a book club and visits to museums or galleries. We are always open to suggestions for discussion, study or fun. To join us, meet in the Adam De Brome Chapel after the 10:30 service.

COFFEE & DOUGHNUTS

**Wednesdays during University Terms | 11.15am - 12.00noon
Adam de Brome Chapel**

Come and join us for coffee and doughnuts, as well as company and conversation, in the Adam De Brome Chapel from 11.15am. All are very welcome.



GARDENING DAYS

**Saturday 11 May & 8 June | 10.00am - 12.30pm
Holywell Cemetery**

Holywell Cemetery is one of Oxford's best kept secrets – a haven of tranquillity and reflection in a city where space and stillness are increasingly at a premium. On the second Sunday of the month, a group of volunteers help to maintain this space. We gather at 10.00am with gloves and suitable clothing and work to enhance this space. Afterwards there is an opportunity for a pub lunch. Please email admin@universitychurch.ox.ac.uk to let us know that you plan to join us.

FREE LUNCHTIME RECITALS

Thursdays during University Terms
1.00pm - 1.45pm

If you are free during the lunch hour, come and join us at St Mary's for our lunchtime concerts. The programme includes chamber music, organ recitals, and the occasional jazz concert. Full details for each recital are on the website. You can also sign up to be notified of any changes via the website or by emailing admin@universitychurch.ox.ac.uk



Thursday, 4 April 2024	Tracy Tang
Thursday, 11 April 2024	Neo Hung
Thursday, 18 April 2024	Anjolie Chen
Thursday, 25 April 2024	Brandon Roku Ali
Thursday, 2 May 2024	Tiffany Qiu and Basil Alter
Thursday 9 May 2024	Luke Lally-Maguire
Thursday, 16 May 2024	Cindy Zhu
Thursday, 23 May 2024	Pei-En Wu
Thursday, 30 May 2024	Joshua Harris
Thursday, 6 June 2024	Wing Tung Fan
Thursday, 13 June 2024	Stefanie Droughton (ensemble) and Wanshu Qiu The Aries Ensemble
Thursday, 20 June 2024	Wing Tung Fan Quintet
Thursday, 27 June 2024	Yali Zaken
Thursday, 4 July 2024	(John) Seok Shin

EVENING CONCERTS

11 May, 7.30pm	Oxford Baroque Players
18 May, 7.30pm	Instruments of Time & Truth
1 June, 7.30pm	Oxford Chamber Orchestra
8 June, 7.30pm	Choir of The Queen's College Oxford
14 June, 7.30pm	Piccadilly Sinfonietta
18 June, 6.00pm	Oxford Bach Choir
6 July, 7.30pm	Opus 48 concert

For details about other concerts during Trinity Term, please visit our website: www.universitychurch.ox.ac.uk

26 May	Trinity Sunday
8.30am	Holy Eucharist
10.30am	Choral Eucharist <i>Preacher:</i> The Revd Alan Ramsey
3.30pm	Choral Evensong <i>Preacher:</i> The Revd Hannah Cartwright
2 June	The First Sunday after Trinity
8.30am	Holy Eucharist
10.30am	Choral Eucharist with University Sermon <i>Preacher:</i> Mr Stephen Beresford
3.30pm	German Lutheran Service
8 June	Oxford Pride
10.30am	Pride Service
9 June	The Second Sunday after Trinity
8.30am	Holy Eucharist
10.30am	Choral Eucharist <i>Preacher:</i> The Very Revd Professor Andrew McGowan
3.30pm	Choral Evensong <i>Preacher:</i> The Revd Canon Dr William Lamb
16 June	The Third Sunday after Trinity
8.30am	Holy Eucharist
10.30am	Sung Eucharist <i>Preacher:</i> The Revd Hannah Cartwright
3.30pm	Create and Craft Church

23 June	The Fourth Sunday after Trinity
8.30am	Holy Eucharist
10.30am	Sung Eucharist <i>Preacher:</i> The Revd Dr Stephanie Burette
3.00pm	Ordination of Priests at St Giles Church
30 June	The Fifth Sunday after Trinity
8.30am	Holy Eucharist
10.30am	Choral Eucharist <i>Preacher:</i> The Very Revd Abi Thompson, Dean of Sheffield
5.00pm	Solemn Evensong (Oxford Festival of the Arts)

Weekday Services

9.00am	Morning Prayer
12.15pm	Holy Eucharist

University Sermons

The practice of delivering University Sermons dates back to the earliest days of the University of Oxford. Each year men and women from many different traditions are invited by the Vice-Chancellor to deliver sermons 'before the University'. The University's motto from Psalm 27, Dominus illuminatio mea (The Lord is my light), captures something of its purpose: the illumination of the mind in the context of prayer. Today, these sermons occur at the University Church and in College Chapels across the University. They provide an opportunity to hear thinkers from a range of disciplines and perspectives, drawing together the life of learning, spiritual discovery, and the quest for truth.



- Thursday 18 April at 8.00am. Holy Communion (Latin). At St Mary's.**
Preacher: The Reverend Dr Matthew Salisbury, Assistant Chaplain, Worcester College
- Sunday 21 April at 6.00pm. St Mark's Day Sermon. At Magdalen College.**
Preacher: The Very Reverend Jo Kelly-Moore, Dean of St. Alban's Cathedral
- Sunday 5 May at 10.30am. Commemoration Day Sermon. At St Mary's.**
Preacher: Professor Helen Moore, President, Corpus Christi College, University of Oxford
- Sunday 19 May at 6pm. University Sermon (Whit Sunday). At the Cathedral.**
Preacher: The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield, Third Church Estates Commissioner
- Sunday 26 May at 6.15pm. University Sermon (Trinity Sunday). At Queen's College.**
Preacher: The Reverend Dr Carys Walsh, Curate Training Officer, Diocese of Peterborough
- Sunday 2 June at 10.30am. University Sermon. At St Mary's.**
Preacher: Stephen Beresford, Author
- Sunday 16 June at 10.00am. St John Baptist's Day Sermon. At Magdalen College.**
Preacher: The Reverend Dr Jonathan Jong, experimental psychologist and Rector of Cocking with West Lavington, Bepton, and Heyshott, Diocese of Chichester.

About the University Church

The University Church of St Mary the Virgin is a vibrant, welcoming, and inclusive church within the Church of England. Standing in the centre of Oxford, St Mary's is the spiritual heart of the oldest university in Britain. With dignified liturgy and beautiful music, we strive to be a community of intelligent and faithful Christian witness, unafraid to engage with the modern world.

Find out more about the University Church on our website www.universitychurch.ox.ac.uk

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