

BENEFICE OF ARICONIUM

June 2026

My dear friends,

I hope that you are all well, and are enjoying the fine weather that we have been lucky enough to be on the receiving end of in recent weeks. Nearly a year ago, when I was ordained Deacon, I promised in my ordination vows that I would “serve as a herald of Christ’s kingdom”, “accompany those searching for faith”, and “study the Scriptures with God’s people.” Now, as I write, I am preparing to be ordained Priest, when I shall promise that I will “sustain the community of the faithful”, and be a “messenger, watchman, and a steward.” In just the same way, David made all of these promises when he was ordained, and it is our job to fashion our lives, and our ministries, in such a way as to allow these things to happen – not for our benefit, but for the benefit of all that we serve: whether they believe in Our Lord or not; whether they come into our churches or not; and whether they engage with us at all or not!

Back in April, at the Churchwardens’ Meeting, David and I presented a list of proposed midweek services, which were aimed to provide additional spiritual sustenance throughout the week, especially for those who were unable to regularly attend Sunday worship in the Benefice. We have received some incredibly useful, astute, and helpful feedback about the pattern that we had proposed – it is clear to us that there were too many Communions, and that people wanted more variety in the types of service on offer. I hope that, as you can see below, we have managed to meet this.

The below list is meant to not only be informative, but also to serve as an *invitation*. We would love for you to join with us as we meet to give thanks to God, to hear His Holy Word, and to grow in fellowship with Him. The hope is that, by having weekly services at a variety of times, in a variety of locations, and by a variety of mediums, we can reach a greater number of people with the Good News of the Love of Christ. There is a large range of types of service on offer during the midweek, all of which will be **30 minutes**

or less in length. If you have any further questions about the nature of the services, or anything else, then please do get in touch.

Morning and Evening Prayer – As part of our Ordination Vows, David and I say Morning and Evening Prayer every day. For the majority of days in the week, this takes place together in one of the churches around the Benefice.

- We say **Morning Prayer** at **8.30am** at Weston on Tuesday – Saturday. Beginning in July, we are going to do **Morning Prayer on Thursday on Zoom at 9.00am**, to allow those who are unable to attend church in person to join in with some of the worship that we offer to God throughout the week. Details of this Zoom will be on the weekly Pew Sheet, and also on the website at www.ariconium.church/morning-prayer - this will include a button to press to join the Zoom call, as well as another button to download the order of service.
- We say **Evening Prayer** at various parishes around the Benefice during the week at **5.30pm**, as follows.
 - Monday – Aston Ingham
 - Tuesday – Upton Bishop (please contact us for the exact location)
 - Wednesday – Lea
 - Thursday – Linton

Wednesday Midweek Services – These services, which cover a wide range of traditions and formalities, are offered to you as an opportunity to strengthen your faith, your understanding of the Scriptures, and your relationship with our Heavenly Father. It is important to emphasise that these services do not require any preparatory work on your part – all unlocking & locking up, setting up, and general organising of these services will be done by me and David.

- **1st Wednesday on the month – Book of Common Prayer Communion, followed by Prayer Group, at Upton Bishop, 9.30am.** This service of Holy Communion gives us the opportunity to meet Our Lord in Sacrament, using the traditional language and liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer, before engaging in a time of informal fellowship and prayers, where people are free to bring their own intentions to the group, to be prayer for and with, and to nurture their relationship with God. There is always a time for chatter, as well as tea and biscuits. This is a wonderful opportunity for those who value the traditional language and vocabulary of the Book of Common Prayer, as well as for those who would like to engage in group prayer, and those who value the community that Prayer Groups offer.
- **2nd Wednesday of the month – Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, at Lea, 5.00pm.** For those of you who were with us on our Holy Week walks this year, this is what the service we had at the end of each evening was. Adoration is a time of prayer and reflection before the Consecrated Host (the bread which has been blessed by the priest at a service of Holy Communion), accompanied by classical music and ecclesiastical chant. Fundamentally, it is a time of real quiet and stillness with Christ, who is Sacramentally present in the Host.
- **3rd Wednesday of the month – “The Gospel This Week” Bible Study, at Weston, 5.00pm** – I came across this when I was doing my ordination training. It is really a miniature and “one-off” Bible study, where we look at the Gospel passage that is assigned for the upcoming Sunday, look at what commentaries and Christians of the past have said about it, and discuss it, and what it means for us. This is very similar to what I’m told used to happen at the evening Communion services in Lea, back when

Neil was the Vicar. This is a wonderful opportunity for people who want to dive deeper into the Scriptures, but who do not have the time to commit to a more vigorous or episodic Bible Study. Because of the way that the Lectionary works in assigning Gospel readings Sunday-by-Sunday, we are assured of a wide range of readings and topics, which will in turn help to widen our understanding of God's Word.

- **4th Wednesday of the month – Guided Christian Mediation, at Linton, 5.00pm** – This service involves listening to a narrator who will guide us through a portion of Scripture, or an episode of history from the Bible, whilst prompting us to ask certain questions, and engaging with the text in a way which goes far beyond simply reading it. It is very contemplative, and encourages us to sit back, relax, and allow our minds to wander as we are guided by the narrator, as well as the Holy Spirit.

Saturday Holy Communions – These additional Holy Communions on a Saturday primarily serve as a way of those who are unable to attend church on a Sunday to nevertheless attend an act of worship. The Church has long taught that the evening of the day before serves as a “Vigil” to the following day – thus, attending Communion on a Saturday evening fulfils the calling that we have to gather together in worship on the Lord's Day (Hebrews 10.25). These communions are simple “Said” or “Low” Communions, which means there are no hymns, and only a very brief Homily of just a couple of minutes. Just like the midweek services, David and I will do all of the setting up and clearing away, so there is no extra work for anyone else to take on. The services will all take place at **5.00pm** at various churches around the parish:

- **1st Saturday – Weston**
- **2nd Saturday – Linton**
- **3rd Saturday - Aston Ingham**
- **4th Saturday - Lea**

I hope that it is clear to you that these services cover a wide range of the traditions and spiritualities of the Church of England – this is done in the hope that there is “something for everyone”. David and I are particularly keen to hear your views on these services, both in principle and in reflection from those who are able to attend them. We hope that by hosting these services in different parishes within the Benefice, we can bring together different congregations, PCCs, and worshippers on a more regular basis than the 5th Sunday Benefice Services provide.

We look forward to praying and worshipping alongside you, and we thank you for your support, encouragement, and prayers for our ministry – please be assured of our continual prayers for you all.

Very best,

Ewan & David