



Outlook



February 2026

Abbots Langley
and Bedmond
Parish
Magazine

50p



Dear Reader

Welcome to the February edition of *Outlook*. With Lent beginning on 18th February, it's time to start thinking about our Lent Course, which will begin on **Thursday 19th February**.

This year the course will focus on the Eucharist — see the back page for more

information. Read on for further news, updates, and events to add to your diaries. Until next time...

Amanda Hawkes
Assistant Editor of *Outlook*



 **In aid of the Malawi Project**

QUIZ NIGHT!

AND SUPPER

SATURDAY 7th MARCH

Doors open 7pm for 7.30pm start

ST LAWRENCE CHURCH HALL

Tickets: £15.00: BYO drinks

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Contact: wendymeldrum@gmail.com

or Parish Office: 01923 261795



February Calendar

REGULAR SERVICE TIMETABLE

Sunday
8am Eucharist at St. Lawrence
9.30am Eucharist at St. Lawrence
11.30am Eucharist at the Church of the Ascension

Wednesday
12.00 noon Eucharist

Monday to Saturday
9.15am Morning Prayer

WEEKLY EVENTS

Weekly events do not happen on a bank holiday.

Monday 10.00am
Coffee Morning
Breakspear Room

Tuesday 10.30am
Tiny Tots
Breakspear Room
(Term time only)

Thursday 8.00pm
Friends and Faith Group
Breakspear Room

Friday 10.00am
Bedmond Bells Craft and Chat
The Church of the Ascension

Friday 2.00pm
Craft and Conversation
Breakspear Room

OTHER EVENTS

Sunday 1st 5.00pm
Choral Evensong
St Lawrence Church

Sunday 1st 6.30pm
Nameless Youth Group
Breakspear Room

Wednesday 4th 10am
Coffee Morning
The Tin Church

Wednesday 4th 2pm
Compassionate Café
Breakspear Room

Saturday 7th 9.30am
Churchyard Working Party (CWP)
St Lawrence Churchyard

Sunday 8th 5.00pm
Breathing Space
St Lawrence Church

Monday 9th 7pm
FOSL Meal
La Banq

Wednesday 11th 11am
Mother's Union
Breakspear Room

Wednesday 11th 3.30pm
Messy Church
Methodist Church



Save
the
Date

Funerals taken in January

Brenda Redfearn





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Rickmansworth: 01923 293 136 Mon, Tues & Thurs 10 - 3.30, Wed & Fri 10 - 12.30
South Oxhey: 0208 515 8321 Mon to Fri 10 - 4, Wed specialist appointments only
County wide AdviceLine: 0800 144 8848, Mon-Wed 10am - 9pm Thurs & Fri 10am to 8pm Saturday -10am to 4pm.
This number also uses Relay UK, type in 18001 then 0800 144 8848

Messy Church

It was great to see all our Messy Church Families at our January Messy Church after the long Christmas break and new families too and to wish them all a Happy New Year! We had a very busy, wonderful afternoon of fun activities and crafts as we heard the story of Jesus calling Matthew the Tax Collector to follow him. Our theme for the afternoon was Making Good Choices and we thought about the choices we make especially as we start a New Year and make New Year promises. We made 2026 calendars and 2026 prayer pictures as well as crafts and activities to remember the story of Matthew and the choice that he made to follow Jesus. We made and decorated foam footprints to show that we too will follow Jesus and had great fun with scales weighing coins to find out how Matthew was cheating people with their taxes!

As well as our usual activities, we made Messy Church cards for Dennis who has not been able to attend Messy Church recently as he is unwell and also for Jan who is leaving us. We said a huge thank you to Jan (Nicholson) who has been helping at Messy Church since Messy Church began in 2008. She has been an absolute star hardly missing any Messy Church sessions throughout the 18 years she has helped. We will miss her very much indeed and hope that she will pop back and see us from time to time. As she is leaving we are now short of helpers



**We need volunteers to help assist at Messy Church in the kitchen
If you are able to help, please contact Wendy.**

Our next Messy Church will be on

**FEBRUARY 11TH FROM
3.30PM – 5.45PM
ABBOTS LANGLEY
METHODIST CHURCH**

Please let us know if you are coming so that we can plan for the crafts and for Messy Tea which is the meal that we provide. Messy Church is free but donations are welcome. Contact Wendy Meldrum on wendymeldrum@gmail.com or the Church Office on 01923 261795.

Please come and join in the fun ...
everyone is welcome



More Messy Church photos on page 7

AND STILL THEY COME.....

On Christmas Eve in 1979 Brian Andrews, the then vicar of St Lawrence held a 'Donkey Service'. There were live animals and Mary and Joseph sat surrounded by straw and small children with lighted candles! It was said at the time that the Church Warden took to his bed and checked the fire insurance policy at the thought that another disastrous fire could envelope the church only ten years after the 1969 one. However, the service proved very popular and has grown and continued for forty six years. From that one service there are now five services on Christmas Eve and the church is always packed. There are no longer live animals except for the donkey, and the straw and candles no longer surround Mary and Joseph and the baby as Health and Safety regulations are now much stricter.

This year 1,680 people squeezed into church to hear the timeless story of the birth of Jesus and to sing carols. Nearly 70 people were disappointed as they were unable to get into one of the services and were unable to wait for the next one. I met one particular family who had gone down to the church hall to wait. It was a mother and father with their three children aged 23, 19 and 14. They told me that they had been coming over every year firstly from Hemel and then Tring since the 23-year-old was 10 months old and many other families have similar stories to tell. Our youngest Mary this year was herself a baby Jesus fourteen years ago and it made me think that the babies in those early years must now be well into their forties. Once again, this year, people queued from the church door, through the lych gate, up towards the library. It was wonderful to see so many people in our church. As she passed me at the end of one of the services one person said, "This is where our Christmas really starts". Long may the 'Donkey service' continue to bring joy and the real meaning of Christmas to the hundreds and hundreds of people who queue in the cold to attend.

Brenda Southorn

*People
queuing to
attend the
service!*



Continued from page 6... when there were live animals in the church.



Messy Church Photos...



Celebrating Helen's Curacy

Helen's final Sunday in the parish will be **Sunday 22nd February**. There will be a celebration to mark the end of her curacy after the 9.30am service that morning.

Please note that there will be no Bedmond service that week.

If you would like to contribute towards a gift for Helen, donations can be made: by bank transfer (payment reference: HN), or by cash, in an envelope, handed in to the office.



Helen's licensing as Vicar of Bricket Wood will take place at **7.30pm on Monday 23rd March**. Everyone is warmly welcome to attend.

A note from Sally Sanderson

A big thank to you all at St Lawrence and the Tin Church for my lovely gifts for my garden, and for the messages of goodwill for my retirement as Reader. It is good to have St Francis looking over my garden and I'll find a place for the lady with her cat.

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for accepting me 35 years ago, when I was searching for a church in which to conduct my ministry, and Brian Andrews, as he was just losing his curate, asked me to "try us out." Brian asked me to particularly help with Family Services at Bedmond on the 2nd Sunday of each month, as well as occasionally preach at St Lawrence. I



travelled from Bushey and Bill remained at Bushey to worship, but once persuaded to come to St Lawrence, he came to love the welcome and the life in Abbots. Eventually we moved to Bedmond and on Ascension Day 1995 we left the unopened boxes in our house and attended The Tin Church together.

Thank you for your welcome and all your love you have shown us both over the years.

Sally

The Annunciation

“Hail, Mary, full of grace,” said Gabriel — or did he? The translation is tricky, but the phrase “full of grace” has lit up the Christian imagination for centuries. Was Gabriel simply being polite, or does it reveal something extraordinary about Mary?

What does it mean to say Mary is full of grace? How was she shaped by God to become the one through whom the Incarnation would come — and when did that shaping begin?

These questions sparked what’s been called “perhaps the most prolonged and passionate debate in Christian theology,” culminating in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 — a defining difference between Roman Catholicism and the Reformation.

Led by Revd Dr Peter Waddell, join us for an evening exploring what makes Mary so remarkable — and why it still matters.

This event will be livestreamed and recorded for all ticket holders.



Start: 25th March 2026 at 7:30pm

End: 25th March 2026 at 9:00pm

Where:
St Albans Cathedral

How to Book

Tickets will be on sale until midday on the day of the event.

Visit: www.stalbanscathedral.org/Event/the-annunciation

Please ensure that you provide a current email address when you book. If you wish to book over the phone you may do so via the Box Office on 01727 890290.

Clergy and Readers in St Albans Diocese have complimentary access to our Adult Learning courses, talks, study days, and reading groups. For clergy/Reader bookings, please email: studycentre@stalbanscathedral.org with your name and role and we will confirm your place.

From the Vicar

How on earth is it Lent already? Well, it isn't quite yet – but come February 18th, round Ash Wednesday comes again and we begin the forty days of serious spiritual discipline journeying towards Good Friday and Easter.

Well, it wouldn't be Lent without a reminder about stewardship – the need to take an annual look at what we're giving, financially speaking, to the Church and the other causes close to God's heart. We need to review this every year, not least because if we don't, the value of our giving drops without our even noticing. If you gave £10 a week in Lent 2025, inflation means that's now worth £9.70. So, quite likely, you need to bump it up a bit – unless, of course, your own circumstances have changed and it needs to come down. Either way, Lent is the time to prayerfully reflect and make the change.

We did, however, focus a great deal on financial stewardship last year. And many people said, quite rightly, that it was equally important to think about all the other ways people give to the Church and to God's Kingdom, through volunteering and the free gift of their time and their talents. So that's what we're doing this year.

And the first thing to say is a massive thank you. This parish runs on the efforts of easily more than a hundred people, serving God and their neighbours in all sorts of ways: arranging flowers, serving meals at the Sunday lunch-club, working in the



churchyard, making sure the church is governed right, playing with toddlers ... the list goes on and on. It is simply wonderful to see how many people want to be involved and all that they do – and it puts all our preoccupations with money into context. A church that had wonderful finances but *didn't* have all these people giving of themselves would be a very poor church indeed. So – hurrah for our people, and for all that they do: in church, and beyond.

Over the course of Lent, there'll be a chance for everyone in the church to think about what they love doing, what they're good at, and what they might be willing to give a go! To get you thinking though, here are just some of the people we *need*....

Thinking first of our *worship*... it would be brilliant to have more people willing to read the lessons, or lead the prayers, or sing in the choir. It has been great to have new members of the serving team recently, carrying the cross and the candles – it would be even greater to turn out a full team every week. If you don't fancy being up front, how about being at the door to be a smiling face welcoming people in? Or, if exercise is what you need, there's no shortage of

chairs and tables to move around before and after Spark or Breathing Space services.

What about pastoral care? All that rather intimidating phrase means, by the way, is looking out for people and helping them. It might be offering someone a lift to and from church – we have several people who would love to come, but can't make it under their own steam. All those food bank donations we take in also need transporting, down to the distribution hub. Our Sunday lunch club is always looking for helpers, and so is our pastoral visiting team – if you're good at drinking tea and chatting with people, this is the one for you. We also have a constantly growing number of people who need to receive communion in their homes, which is a lovely thing to be involved in (certainly of the things I do, selfishly speaking it's among the most spiritually rewarding).

What about *children and young people*? There are some pretty terrifying statistics out there: according to some surveys, one third of Church of England parishes have zero – ZERO – children attending their services regularly. Another third has less than five. Relatively speaking, we are in a fantastic position – but we all know it is fragile. Children will come if they and their families feel welcome: if there are lovely people and fun things waiting for them. Could you help this happen? You don't have to be a wonderfully gifted teacher. It might be simply a matter of being another adult presence in the room for safeguarding purposes. Or, when we get our expanded children's area in the next few weeks, someone will have to make sure it's tidy and has

got enough felt-tips and paper and so on... that could be you, even if children TERRIFY you! Or could you cook? Messy Church would bite your hand off for help in the kitchen once per month.

I've just come from taking the January Taize service. It was really beautiful, and more than one person commented as they left how they were sure people would love it if they came ... if they knew about it. How will they know, if they are not told? Well – are you good at communicating? Could you write something every month for *My Abbots* about things going on in church, or are you creative when it comes to posters or the use of social media? Is there something about the website that maddens you, or do you think our noticeboards could do with a real refresh?

Have I missed the obvious thing? Do you have a sense of what this church needs? Do you have things you'd love us to do, or you can't believe we've missed? Well, maybe we need you as part of our leadership – to come on our committees, to serve on the PCC, even (gulp) in time to become a warden. It's all of our church. It's only going to flourish when we all get stuck in.

Let me know what you'd like to do!

Peter



The Snowdrop

The first snow drops were seen in early January starting to flower in the churchyard but soon the churchyard will be covered in a carpet of white. We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful churchyard that brings joy to so many especially at the end of winter and going into the spring. The flowering of the snowdrops is surely wonderful reminder of the beauty of God's creation. The snow drop originated in Europe and was first recorded in England in the 16th Century. They were grown in churchyards for Candlemass Day which is 2nd February. They were also grown in Abbey gardens as a medicinal plant for the treatment of 'Mal au Tete' which means problems of the head. Here are some interesting facts about snowdrops:

1. Snowdrop's scientific name is *Gallanthus*. This means 'milk flower.' The common snowdrop we normally see with one flower per stem is a *Galanthus nivalis* which translates as 'milk flower of the snow.'
2. Snowdrops were named after earrings not drops of snow. In the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries women often wore dangly, white drop-shaped earrings known as 'eardrops.' Some other common names of snowdrops are: Fair Maids of February, Candlemas Bells, White Ladies, Little Sister of the Snows, Snow Piercers, Dingle-dangle, Flower of Hope and Death's Flower.
3. Snowdrop's contain a natural anti-freeze. Even if they collapse in freezing

weather they recover once the temperature rises. When temperatures reach 10C (50F) and above, the outer petals open up revealing the nectar inside. When the temperature drops the petal shield closes and protects the nectar. Nature is rather magical as this is perfect for bumble bees which come out of hibernation when the temperature rises above 10C!

4. Snowdrops and their bulbs are poisonous to humans. Some people have mistaken their bulbs for onions or shallots but they would have to eat an awfully lot of them to be fatal. Snowdrop pollen and nectar is an early spring feast for many bees. The green stripes inside the snowdrops are like landing lights guiding them to one of the only restaurants open this early in the season.

5. Snowdrops are used in medicine to help people. Galamantine extracted from snowdrops is now used in a treatment to slow down dementia in Alzheimer's disease. In folk medicine, snowdrops have been used as remedial herb to ease pain, migraines and headaches.



Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

6. Although there are gardens and woodlands where we can see thousands and thousands of snowdrops, they are endangered and even under threat of extinction in some countries where they naturally grow in the wild. This is because too many were dug up to sell to gardeners across the world. Since 1995 international trade has been banned unless you have a special license.

7. There are lots of legends and myths about snowdrops. One of them was the belief that you should never bring in a single or first snowdrop into the home as it was unlucky or even meant there would be a death soon. That's why it's known sometimes as the 'death-flower' and the flower is described as a 'corpse in a shroud. It's also been known as the symbol of hope.

8. Galanthomania! People who are crazy about snowdrops and/or collect them are known as 'Galanthophiles. Special new 'mutant' varieties are sold for huge sums of money. One bulb called *Gallanthus plicatus* 'Golden Fleece' was sold for £1,390 pounds sterling. Some of these collectable bulbs are so precious they are kept locked up or watched over by security guards. A new record was set in February 2022, according to **Garden Illustrated**, when *Galanthus plicatus* 'Golden Tears' was sold on eBay for £1,850 plus £5 postage.



Breathing Space

St Lawrence Church, 5.00pm

8th Feb: How can the Church survive?

Relax, reflect, and join thoughtful discussions in a friendly setting.

Lovely refreshments will be provided.

All opinions welcome.

All are warmly welcome.

(Please note the change of date for February Beathing Space)



We meet this month on Wednesday 11th February at 11.00am when Helen will be with us sharing a topic of her choice as this will be her last opportunity to spend time with us before she leaves the parish.

We shall also have our AGM when the Branch Leader, Secretary and Treasurer will be voted in, and we shall decide which projects in the national MU to support with the profits of the Coffee Morning held last November.

All are welcome.

Contact: pamrastall@live.co.uk
for more information.

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PARISH DIRECTORY

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Abbeyfield (West Herts) Society	Marcus Coultrup (334387)
Bedmond Bells WI	Janette Noonan 01923 266921 or Moira Bunting 01923 262242
Bedmond Village Carpet Bowls	Margaret Forrest (670989)
Bedmond Village Hall	Simon Smith (07401 331302)
Bell Ringing	Phill Higgs (07973 265666)
Bowling Club	off Langley Road (alongside the Scout HQ) (by Tannerswood School) (274483)
Breakspeare Community Pre-School	www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested
Brownies, Rainbows and Guides	Brenda Southorn 07933 144117
A/L Carers and Former Carers Support Group	Brenda Southorn 07933 144117
Churches Together	01923 271 707, see advertisement on page 4
Citizens Advice Bureau	(to hire 07530 266293)
Community Centre	www.abbotscc.hitsports.com
Cricket Club	Ian Turner (266640)
Evergreen Youth FC	Garston Clinic (234525) Mon & Wed 6.00 – 8.00 pm
Family Planning	Sylvia Clinton (262678)
Flower Arrangement Society	Bill Sanderson (265963) / Wendy Meldrum (07710688633)
Friends of St Lawrence	Church Office: 01923 261795
Friends of The Tin Church	Jane Lay (447281)
Gardening Society	Brenda Southorn 07933 144117
Gilbert & Sullivan Society	School Mead (261734) (248010)
Hillside Residents Association	St Saviour's Hall - Monday 1.30 to 3.00 pm (264639)
Home Start (Helping Families Under Stress)	Mags Bilson (222529)
Infant Welfare Clinic	Open: Mon & Thu 1.00pm-6.00pm; Tue & Fri 9.30am-6.00pm Sat 9.30am - 1.00pm; Wed & Sun closed all day
Jo Jingles	07852 146857 Email: abbotslangley@littlefawnspreschool.co.uk Or visit www.littlefawnspreschool.co.uk
Library	Delva O'Reagan (267585)
Little Fawns Pre School	Jill Matthews (262046)
Local History Society	Penny Abbot (01442 873205)
Mothers' Union	Community Centre; Tue, Wed & Friday 9.15-11.15 am
Orchestra (ALO)	Council Office, Langley Road (265139)
Parent & Toddler Group	Jean James (461549)
Parish Council and Halls	Secretary: Chris Driscoll (01923 675563)
Players (ALP)	Church Office (261795)
Royal British Legion	Church Office (261795)
St Lawrence Church Hall	Chair: Richard Gabriel chair@abbotslangleyscouts.co.uk 5thnwscouts@gmail.com
St Lawrence Church Flower Arrangers	Tim Denyer (270563)
Scouts: 1st Abbots Langley (3rd North Watford)	
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Kevin: sales@gpsprintworks.co.uk
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Malawi Project

As we go to press this month, we are looking forward to our Malawi Sing A Long on Saturday 31st January! Our next event after that will be in March when we will have our quiz ...

MALAWI PROJECT QUIZ NIGHT SATURDAY MARCH 7TH ST LAWRENCE CHURCH HALL 7PM

Why not join us for a fun evening of quizzing! Make up your own table of 8 or join a table on the night. There will be a two course supper and BYO drinks. Tickets are £15pp. So, dust off those little grey cells and book yourself a fun night out!

Contact: wendymeldrum@gmail.com for tickets or Church Office on 01923 261795

We can now confirm the dates for our fundraising events for the first half of this year:

MALAWI PROJECT QUIZ NIGHT SAT 7TH MARCH

60'S AND 70'S EVENING & DISCO TBC

MALAWI STALL A/L CARNIVAL SAT 13TH JUNE

MALAWI AFTERNOON TEAS SAT 15TH AUGUST

Please put these dates down in your diaries and there will be further details nearer the day.

Thank you all for your continued support!

Friends of St Lawrence

MEAL AT LA BANQ ... MONDAY 9TH FEBRUARY

Don't forget to book yourselves in for a great evening at La Banq, there is still time to do so! Start is 7pm for 7.30pm and price is £20pp for a two course meal. See flyer on page 19 for details. Contact Wendy Meldrum: wendymeldrum@gmail.com or the Church Office on 01923 261795, if you would like to book tickets.

We are starting to put together our fundraising events for this year and we have some exciting things to offer. Not all events are confirmed yet but we do have some dates already for your diaries :-

WEEKEND 4TH / 5TH JULY: TOURS OF ST LAWRENCE AND SPECIAL EXHIBITION AS PART OF THE ABBOTS LANGLEY FESTIVAL.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 3RD FRIENDS QUIZ NIGHT

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 28TH: FRIENDS AND MOTHERS' UNION CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING

WEEKEND 19TH/20TH DECEMBER: CHRISTMAS WREATH FESTIVAL.

Please put these dates in your diaries and there will be more details of each event nearer the day. There are also other events "in the pipeline", so keep a careful look out for these too.

A Rocha UK's Easy Eco Tips

This Lent, take part in Climate Steward's Carbon Fast. Lent is a time when Christians traditionally fast and focus on God. The Carbon Fast will help you consider ways to live more simply, give you new ideas to cut your carbon footprint and invite you to focus on God and consider the whole of his creation. Beginning on 5 March, you'll receive a weekly email containing key facts, suggestions for how you could reduce your carbon footprint and a prayer to lead you through this Lenten season. Each week features a different theme designed to help us take climate action in manageable ways that bear witness to a God who has promised to restore all of his creation. Find out more and sign up at climatestewards.org/resources/carbon-fast/

For more eco tips visit:
arocha.org.uk/wild-christian



QR Codes

If you would like to access the website for either St Lawrence and the Church of the Ascension or for St Albans Cathedral, you can do so by scanning the QR codes below.

QR code for St Lawrence Church and The Church of the Ascension



QR code for St Albans Cathedral



Churchwardens

Richard Baldwin
(churchwarden1@abbotslangley.org.uk)

Tom Betteridge
(churchwarden2@abbotslangley.org.uk)

St Lawrence Church Abbots Langley and The Tin Church Bedmond

To submit an article for Outlook, please contact the Church office.



CONTACTS

Vicar: The Revd Dr Peter Waddell
Tel: 01923 263013
Email: vicar@abbotslangley.org.uk

Curate: The Revd Helen Neville
Mobile: 07718 172642
Email: curate@abbotslangley.org.uk

THE CHURCH OFFICE:

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Tel: 01923 261795
Email: adminstlawrence@abbotslangley.org.uk
Website: www.abbotslangley.org.uk

Bedmond Bells Women's Institute

We never know what January will throw at us weatherwise for our monthly meeting, and true to form, this year was a bleak winter's evening. We had planned a games evening among ourselves, so although a few members were not able to attend, we had a pleasant and social evening with some delicious cakes, made by members. We also voted on the WI's national resolution for the coming year. We will know the outcome of the national vote in June.

On Monday 26th January from 12pm to 1.30pm we held a Community Café in the Tin Church. A tasty bowl of soup, a filled roll, cake and a hot drink was served, all for £5.00. We hope you were able to join us for an enjoyable lunchtime.

Our next monthly meeting in on 13th February will be a pancake themed evening. Visitors are welcome to come along so come and see what we get up to.



We continue to hold a craft morning in the Tin Church every Friday from 10am to 12pm. Before Christmas we made a Christmas tree out of knitted squares as a group project, which decorated the Village Hall front gate and which we all enjoyed doing.



For further information our contact details are as follows –

Carol Paley (President) –
07932 007353

Moira Bunting – 01923 262242

bedmondbellswi@gmail.com

**Friends of St Lawrence
are delighted to present ...
An Evening at La Banq**



**MONDAY 9TH
FEBRUARY
7PM FOR 7.30PM**

**Come and join us for an evening at
La Banq: High Street, Abbots Langley,
WD5 0AR**

All proceeds will be used for the maintenance and upkeep of the ancient Church building of St Lawrence which lies at the heart of our community of Abbots Langley.

Tickets price TBC for a two course meal.

Please contact:-

wendymeldrum@gmail.com or Church Office on 01923 261795

Abbots Langley Parish, Lent Course 2026

The Eucharist: What's it all about?



Sessions on Thursdays throughout Lent

1pm-2.30pm & 8.00pm-9.30pm
in St. Lawrence's Church

Beginning from 19th Feb

for more information, contact
vicar@abbotslangley.org.uk

Deadline for all content for March Outlook is Monday 16th February