

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH FARINGDON



Welcome – enjoy your stay and please look around



All Saints', Faringdon

A PILGRIM'S GUIDE TO THE CHURCH

(This leaflet is free – please take one)

WELCOME TO ALL SAINTS! We do hope you enjoy your visit to this historic church built in the 12th century. This is a pilgrim's guide, so as you look around the church, we shall try to explain the meaning of some of the things you see. A church is more than just a building – it is a place where people who comprise the living church meet to worship the living God.

1. The Doors

Did you notice the marvellous 12th century wrought iron work on the South door when you entered? The door surround on the North side is even older. Look at it from the outside – it is a fine piece of Norman work. There is also an old disused door on the South side of the Chancel, where the priest would have entered to take services in medieval times.

Church doors are a reminder that Jesus said, 'I am the door; whoever enters by me will be saved.' Christians 'enter' by Christ when they ask him to be their Saviour.

2. The Font

The Font itself is very old, although it is now set on a Victorian base. Notice the Perpendicular period carving – each of the eight faces has a different design, so it was probably carved by an apprentice mason to show he was master of all patterns. The edges of the font show where the hinges and hasp once were, when the Font had a locked cover to prevent holy water being stolen for magic purposes. This superstition was outlawed after the Reformation.

The Font is used for baptism, when a person is washed with water in the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward gift from God. This gift is the forgiveness of sins and the start of a new life as a member of his family. The water speaks of a cleansing from sins and the life-giving Spirit of God. A child is brought to baptism because of the faith of the parents and godparents, but later the child must choose to follow Christ for him or herself. This is usually marked by the service of Confirmation, but we all need to reconfirm our baptismal promises from time to time.

3. The Nave and Transepts

The Nave (the main body of the church) is mainly Norman, with round-headed clerestory windows and round arches. The capitals of the pillars are decorated with carved leaves, each one different. Notice the tortoise at the base of one of the pillars.

The two Perpendicular windows in the North aisle are beautifully proportioned. The West window behind the organ is also very fine. The organ at the West End is a modern concert instrument with 1390 pipes, installed in 1969. There is only one other organ like this; it is at the University of Sussex.

The charity boards on the walls by the Font are 18th century. All the charity funds have now been consolidated into one United Charity.

Adjacent to the South transept is the Littleworth aisle, which was used by the people of the village of Littleworth until their own church was built. A careful reordering of the South transept has been undertaken, to provide a servery for refreshments, meeting rooms and toilets.

Although impressive, the Nave is not very practical. It is hard to see what is going on, although the low platform under the tower helps. Without the use of the modern audio system (which includes an induction loop for hearing aid users), it would be hard to hear the vicar or lesson reader. The Bible is God's Word and it is vital that all can hear it read and explained in the sermon. It is also important that the whole congregation feels part of the worship, since all have a part to play.

4. The Chapels

The Unton Chapel has the kneeling figure of Lady Dorothy Unton and other interesting family monuments. The Pye Chapel contains several fine memorials to members of the Pye family. Further information on the chapels is given on the hand-bats.

5. The Tower

The supporting pillars are massive, originally 13th century, with finely carved capitals. Look up at the stone heads as you pass under the tower. Outside, the squat tower once had a spire, destroyed during the Civil War by Cromwell's battery on or below Folly Hill aiming at Faringdon House behind. See the cannon ball in the case on the east wall of the South transept (under the overhang).

There is a ring of eight bells, making a fine octave in the key of E. The clock and carillon chimes were fitted in 1926. A hymn tune is played at three-hourly intervals. The bells are rung to celebrate special events and call people to worship on Sundays. Regular worship is an important part of being a Christian – we owe it to God and we need the fellowship and teaching.

6. The Chancel

The Chancel is Early English, dating back to the 13th century. Interesting brasses are mounted on the north wall of the Sanctuary, and on the south side there are three priests' seats under an ornate stone canopy. See also the carved foliate heads to the choir stalls.

The Communion Table reminds us of the heart of the Christian message. Jesus died on the Cross to free us from our sins and rose again to give us life. Week by week, the family of God remembers his death and resurrection by gathering around the Table to receive Holy Communion. The bread and the wine are the outward signs of God's gift of his only Son. In receiving these signs in faith and trust, we receive Jesus Christ.

7. A Living Church

These are just some of the features of this ancient building, where people have worshipped God for at least a thousand years. But old churches are not meant to be dry and dusty museums - the living church is made up of the people who use

the building in this as in previous ages for prayer and praise, for forgiveness and encouragement, for joy and sorrow, for teaching and correction.

We are a part of the Christian family in Faringdon and worldwide. Working side by side with Christians from all churches, our prime aim is to respond faithfully to God's call. Only then can we fulfil his purposes in witnessing to his truth and helping others to find him.

We hope that you have enjoyed your visit to All Saints'. You would be most welcome to join us at one of our services – 8:00am, 10:30am and 6:30pm. Please also say a prayer for all who worship here and for yourself:

**Bless, O Lord our God,
the worship and work of this church,
that it may be a house of prayer, a centre of sound teaching,
a community of service and a witness to your redeeming love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

**Lord Jesus, you gave yourself for me upon the cross.
I now give myself to you:
all that I have,
all that I am,
all that I hope to be.
Give me your forgiveness, your love, your courage,
and send me out in your name and in your service. Amen**

8. Contact

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