

St Andrew's School Pilgrimage 2023

What a day we had on Wednesday 21st June! Did you see us?



The Bishop of Dorchester (the Right Rev'd Gavin Collins) gallantly led the Key stage 1 children from St Andrew's school around Chinnor on a pilgrimage.

It should be noted that the Bishop was fully clad in all his glory: including a heavy cloak (a cope) and his pointy hat (a mitre) despite the blazing midsummer sunshine and a temperature above 25 ° C!

The 120 children plus teaching staff, parents and helpers from the church followed Bishop Gavin from the school to the Methodist church.

Here Liz Thorpe explained to the children that the church building is celebrating its 150 year birthday this year.



We continued our pilgrimage passed the noisy roadworks in Church Road, up into Donkey Lane, over the Railway and into the Community Orchard. Our time in the Orchard was kindly hosted by Alan and Linda Brawn, who explained that people used to live in the orchard, and how much work and fun it has been reclaiming it and discovering the different trees that grow there.

The children (and the Bishop!) then had some time exploring and finding all sorts of interesting things, including bugs and the occasional stinging nettle.





After the Orchard and a snack, the children said hello to the real cows on their way to St Andrew's church. Here we were welcomed by the cool air of the church and the children sang the toddler group's favourite song "Mr Cow (how do you say to the Lord I love you)".

Throughout the pilgrimage at each of the place where we stopped, the Bishop prayed with us. As we began, we prayed for God's blessing on us as we walked, as Jesus did around his community. When at the Methodist church, we thanked God for the church, both as a building and as a people. In the orchard, we remembered God as the Creator of our beautiful world and how we should take good care of it. At St Andrew's church we turned our thankfulness to God into praise and worship. On our return to the school, the children explored a labyrinth that had been created in the playground as a symbol of the pilgrimage and our life's journey with God.

It was truly a splendid time that we all spent together. I offer my heartfelt thanks to Bishop Gavin, the helpers from church who gave up their morning to join us, all the staff of the school and most of all the children themselves, who fully embraced the experience of pilgrimage!

And then... on the following Thursday the year 6 children from St Andrew's school joined our regular worshippers for a service of Holy Communion. The children were very respectful while they were in church and really engaged with the service, taking it all very seriously and joined in with the responses and said the Lord's Prayer beautifully. Thank you Year 6 – you were amazing!

