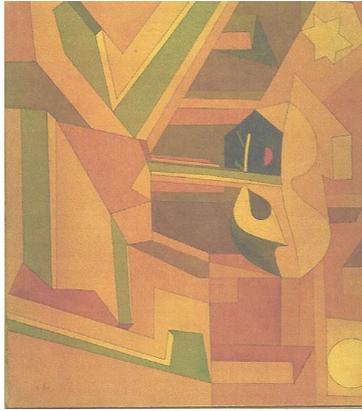


WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



OCTOBER 2016

Covering Thoughts



In the Bauhaus Museum in Berlin is a beautiful painting by Paul Klee called New in October. It is a wonderful design of mainly geometrical shapes in deep oranges, yellows and browns. All these are to be expected in October, but more unexpected are the strong bars of fresh green. October could be considered as an ending process. Autumn is well underway and the brilliant colours of the leaves and Michaelmas daisies are beginning to fade. The year is moving to its close. So why does he speak of New in October?

I do not know what Klee had in mind but this title has set me thinking and I would like to offer it to you too. Endings and beginnings are not as polarized as we might think. Let us not be saddened by the ending of summer time, the light evenings the loss of summer activities, but excited by the changes and new opportunities that October brings.

So with our faith too, may that be new in October. We can seek out new experiences, take time to get to know each other better and ask ourselves how the gospel can be worked out anew in the twenty-first century.

Christine

Ps My October picture on the cover also features some deep autumn colours but with the contrasting addition of blue. How might you paint New in October?

Minister's Letter

Here are some more quotations – I collected most of these in the 1990s.

Prayer is like watching for the kingfisher. All you can do is be where he is likely to appear and wait.

Sooner or later everyone discovers that perfect happiness is unrealistic, but there are few who pause to consider that the antithesis: that perfect unhappiness is equally unattainable. [Primo Levi]

To regret one's own experience is to arrest one's own development.
[Oscar Wilde]

Look to this day! For it is life, the very life of life. [ANON, Sanskrit]

From tomorrow on I shall be sad. From tomorrow on. Not today. Today I will be glad. [Jewish child in a concentration camp]

Right! Who wants to sit at the Master's feet, and who wants to do the teas?
[cartoon]

If you want to spend time in the wilderness you can start on the back garden
[cartoon]

Never be ashamed to own you have been in the wrong [Jonathan Swift]

Happiness? That's nothing more than health and a poor memory.
[Albert Schweitzer]

Q What did a Buddhist say to the hot dog vendor? A Make me one with everything.

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centred; forgive them anyway [Mother Teresa]

Have courage for the great sorrows of life and patience for the small ones
[Victor Hugo]

On our life there is a single colour, as on an artist's palette, which provides the meaning of life and art. It is the colour of love. [Marc Chagall]

Every man's life lies within the present; for the past is spent and done with, and the future is uncertain, [Marcus Aurelius]

My life is my argument. [Albert Schweitzer]

Richard

Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust

“A RAINY RIDE & STRIDE”

At 10.00 am on Saturday 10th September, an ecumenical team of five walkers set out from St Mary's Church, Wheatley in a fine drizzle to walk Westwards from Holton Turn to the churches of Forest Hill and Stanton St John. Some heavier rain was encountered en-route but did not dampen spirits or estimated arrival times at the churches. Both churches had weddings programmed into the day and at Forest Hill it was already in full swing by 11.00 am with a double-decker Routemaster bus and a classic white convertible car and chauffeur parked outside. Access to the church was not possible so we signed in under a very leaky gazebo in a corner of the churchyard (reminding me of a similar checkpoint scenario on the Camino de Santiago in Northern Spain, some years ago). The wedding at Stanton St John was not to take place until 2.00 pm with 230 guests expected! One of the two young flower arrangers was precariously balanced on a step ladder in the doorway trying to complete the arrangements around the door arch and the other ferrying flowers out to him from just inside. They were somewhat taken aback by the appearance of five dripping walkers pushing past them to sign on!

It was by now 12.00 noon and an early lunch in the church was clearly not appropriate, so a decision was needed as to whether to proceed on to Beckley and Barton, with the possibility of a lunch in the shelter of Beckley Church (weddings permitting!) or the prospect of lunch in a rainy field or wood half way back to Holton.

The former prospect seemed the better one and the Beckley radio mast did appear to be invitingly close! So shortly after 13.00 hours we sat down to lunch in a corner of Beckley Church, with the tacit permission of the church cleaner and the promise that we would not leave crumbs or muddy boot prints on her Sunday clean floor! The church has many faint old frescos on its upper walls and there is a bright modern triptych by artist Nicholas Mynheer.

It was still raining when we left the shelter of Beckley Church and continued to do so, relentlessly, all the way along the long straight path to Barton – never was the housing estate a more welcome sight! Having wound our way

through the spiders web of roads we eventually sought refuge in the mid twentieth century church of St Mary's, Barton – oft seen from the busy Green Road Roundabout but ne'er visited. We found a very warm welcome awaiting, equally welcome and warming tea and TOILETS!

We took our leave and caught the 280 bus from opposite Collinwood Road URC (not open which saved us from dicing with death to cross the road!) back to Wheatley for more tea and cake at Wheatley URC and Our Lady of Lourdes.

Results – five damp, weary walkers (but not damp in spirit) having visited 7 churches and walked something over 8 miles, four of whom raised **£65** for The Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust, (half of which passes back to Wheatley URC). Our fifth member was being sponsored according to the number of churches visited and was raising money for OHCT and St Mary's.

Tony Barry

.....

Oxford Friends of Oasis of Peace

Autumn Meeting 2016

Lessons About the Palestinian - Israel Conflict

Life in the Oasis of Peace Community

Guest Speaker: Prof. Cobi Sonnenschein

Wednesday 26th October, 5.30pm for 6pm at

Brasenose College, Radcliffe Sq, Oxford

Chair: John Bowers QC. Principle; Brasenose College

For more information, and to register, please email:

british.friends@nswas.org (or phone **020 8952 4717**)

Cobi and his wife Nava are one of the original four young couples who founded NSWaS in 1979, when it was just a collection of huts and tents on a barren hillside. Since then the community has grown to over 60 families with a further 90 planned in the coming years. Cobi is a member of the municipal council which plans the future development of the Village. Nava is the founder and director of the School for Peace, the outreach educational arm of the Village. Professional life. Cobi holds the Wolfson Chair in Theoretical Physics at Tel Aviv University and is currently conducting research at Imperial College London.

Thoughts from Wheatley URC regarding future ministerial deployment and groupings in the Oxford area URCs

Introduction: Phyllis Williams and Malcolm Benson reported back to our elders' meeting following the meeting on 4th July. The issues were fully discussed both at our elders' and church meetings. We have also had an 'Away Day' since, jointly with Summertown and Marston URCs. Even though views were virtually unanimous amongst the churches, this brief paper is just a reflection from Wheatley URC.

We wish to begin with a question, followed by a comment.

The question which we believe is crucial is about what is the key role we wish ministers to play in the current situation, given that they can no longer be expected to operate in their 'traditional' role.

The comment is to point out that we think it is really important to view this situation as a positive opportunity.

Wheatley elders and church meeting are clearly in favour of option 4, (a consensus having been reached at both meetings) with a team of ministers working together, with the proviso that each church would have a named or designated minister.

- This is the only idea that seems different from the present state of affairs and could offer a creative, innovative and flexible solution, open to change and development.
- We don't see the team necessarily being restricted to three ordained clergy, and might well include other local leaders with relevant skills/experience or perhaps retired clergy.
- A team as we envisage it would have members with a range of gifts able to support, encourage and help each other out. *A programme of well-structured and properly chaired team meetings will be crucial to the effective operation of this scheme.*
- We think it is important to reduce to a minimum the time ministers are travelling from one place to another. Option 4 has the potential to achieve this aim.
- We like the flexibility that the team idea presents, so that as needs or situations change so might the role of team members.

- We think this model might encourage churches to develop appropriate ways of sharing with others (our recent joint away day might be an example of this), as well as building on their existing strengths and continuing with their existing programmes.
- Current ecumenical links are very important and must be allowed to continue and flourish. We think option 4 would allow this to happen and maybe even encourage stronger links and more joint activity.

Footnote.

We are concerned about the position of Aston Tirrold URC which is so geographically remote. Is there any mileage in suggesting they might explore links with URCs that are physically closer to home?

Robert Harding Church Secretary
03/09/16

.....

International Bible Reading Association

Unlike other daily Bible reading notes “Fresh from the Word” offers a truly international perspective. Writers from six continents and different walks of life come together to provide thoughts, reflections and prayers and to share their experiences of the Christian faith around the world.

Over a million people worldwide follow the daily readings set out in “Fresh from the Word.” Why not become one of them? It is translated into local languages from Samoan to Tui, Fanti to Yoruba. By reading, “Fresh from the Word,” you become part of the global community and support the IBRA’s aim of helping Christians around the world engage with the Bible daily. With your copy of “Fresh from the Word” you are supporting international mission.

Copies of the Bible Reading notes for 2017 cost £10 each. Please sign the list in the hall if you would like to order one.

Ann Hardiman

Church Calendar for October 2016

Everyone is invited to stay for coffee or tea after 10am Sunday services.

Date	2nd October	9th October	16th October	23rd October	30th October
Service	Morning Service with H.C.	Morning Service	Morning Service with H.C.	Morning Service	LEP Service with H.C. at URC
Time	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am
Worship Leader	Revd. Colin Thompson	Revd. Pauline Main	Revd. Colin Thompson *	Laurence Devlin	Revd. Pauline Main
Vestry Elder	Liz Barry	Joan Kidd	Laurence Devlin	Phyllis Williams	John Kidd
Welcomer	John Kidd	Ellen Webster	Ann Bettess	Ann Hardiman	Liz Barry
Steward	Charles Bennett	Tom Goss	Joel Rasmussen	Bob Webster	Elizabeth Walkey
Reader	Phyllis Williams	Christine Bainbridge	Sybil Beaton	Joel Rasmussen	Wendy Benson
Prayers	Robert Harding	Ann Hardiman	Joel Rasmussen	Liz Barry	Ellen Webster
Flowers	Wendy Benson	Liz Barry	TBA	Ellen Webster	Catherine Hughes

Traidcraft stall on occasional Sundays.

* Revd Colin Thompson leading with Joan Van Emden preaching.
Joan Van Emden is an Anglican LLM (Licensed Lay Minister) from Reading.

Elders on Communion Duty are shown in bold letters.

Common Lectionary Readings October 2016

Note: leaders may choose to use other readings.

Date	2 nd October	9 th October	16 th October	23 rd October	30 th October
Old Testament	Habakkuk 1:1-4 and 2:1-4	2 Kings 5:1-3 and 7-15	Genesis 32: 22-31	Jeremiah 14: 7-10 and 19-22	Isaiah 1: 10-18
Psalm	Psalm 37 1-9	Psalm 111	Psalm 121	Psalm 84 1-7	Psalm 32: 1-7
New Testament	2 Timothy 1: 1-14	2 Timothy 2: 8-15	2 Timothy 3: 14- 4:5	2 Timothy 4:6-8 and 16-18	2Thessal'ns 1: 1-4 and 11-12
Gospel	Luke 17: 5-10	Luke 17: 11-19	Luke 18: 1-8	Luke 18: 9-14	Luke 19: 1-10

Simple evening worship in the style of Taize will take place at 7.30 pm at 3 Barns Close, Holton on Sundays 16th & 23rd October.

Please remember in your prayers the members of Ann Hardiman's Pastoral Care List: Phyllis and Mark Williams, Annie Hughes and Elliot, Richard and Lynette Wood, Allison and Colin Towner, Ellen and Bob Webster, Ann and Roger Bettess

We also ask you to pray for the members of the Care for the World Ministry Team: Liz Barry, Ann Bettess, Bev Paton, Ellen Webster and Elizabeth Walkey.

The deadline for the November newsletter will be 6pm on Sunday 23rd October. Please send contribution to newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk Paper copy may be handed to Andy Walkey or delivered to 5.Littleworth Rd, Wheatley, Oxon OX33 1NW.

Bi-blog by Laurence Devlin

I have often thought that the punishment inflicted on Lot's wife (**Genesis 19:26**) for looking back at the terrible destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, was really harsh... Yes, she disobeys God but it was just a look ... Why would a look deserve death? Would you not have been tempted to do the same, a last look at everything you had ever known?

There is an obvious similarity with the famous story of Orpheus and Eurydice in Greek mythology even if the details of the two stories are different as the same fate, death, will strike if you "look back" ... This is how the story goes: when Eurydice dies of a snake bite, Orpheus is so overcome with grief, that he goes to the Land of the Dead to try and bring [Eurydice](#) back to life. Because of Orpheus's exceptional talent for music, the king of the [underworld](#), Hades, is charmed and allows Orpheus to take Eurydice back to the World of Life and Light but on one condition: Orpheus is forbidden to look back at Eurydice. When they are almost back into the land of the living and the light is in view, Orpheus turns back to share his joy with Eurydice who immediately dies again and disappears forever. The parallels with the biblical story are clear: God decides to save Lot and his family *from the world of darkness and death* that Sodom and Gomorrah represented but on the condition of not looking back on that world.

But Lot's wife does look back and dies... Contrary to Eurydice however, Lot's wife dies the strangest of death by being transformed into a *pillar of salt*. It is a unique punishment in the Hebrew Bible. What is it all about? Verse 24 gives a possible clue: "suddenly the Lord rained fire and brimstone on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah." This probably indicates that burning lava and molten sulphur from a sudden volcanic eruption - traditionally translated as "fire and brimstone" - fall on her from the sky and crystallize her into a salt pillar. The effects of such a volcanic eruption sound very similar to the ones of the sudden eruption of Mount Vesuvius on the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum when toxic volcanic gases killed people in seconds, freezing them into familiar actions, gestures or pauses and covered them in ashes. So it is a very plausible explanation indeed *but then why would she be the only one to be struck that way?* Volcanic gases and ashes should have affected Lot and his daughters as well.

So we might need the lens of modern medicine and psychology to complement that hypothesis. When Lot's wife looks back and sees everything she has ever known being destroyed with terrible violence, the shock is so overwhelming that she becomes immobile and rigid (as a pillar) which could be an ancient way of saying that she had a "*catatonic reaction*" to a huge stress. "*Catatonia*" or "*cataplexy*" which is a state of extreme muscular rigidity and mental stupor, is a well-known manifestation of what modern medicine calls PTSD, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a terrifying, traumatic event or ordeal in which serious physical harm occurred or was threatened. These traumatic events include violent personal assault, *natural or human-made disasters which cause destruction on a huge scale*, accidents and military combat, all of them engendering massive fear.

Interestingly the English language still records the effects of such traumas in several familiar expressions: "Paralysed with fear", "petrified" (from petrus=stone, rock), "scared stiff". It is also that same reaction recorded in Greek mythology when the fearsome power of the Gorgons turns their victims into stone. So when Lot's wife becomes immobile and rigid, as nailed to the ground and paralysed by shock, the gases produced by the volcanic eruption overwhelm her. She consequently dies asphyxiated and is covered with a whitish film of ashes (like in Pompeii and Herculaneum) which can look like salt. Meanwhile, Lot and his daughters who don't look back and don't see the destruction, run ahead and escape. God naturally knew that witnessing his awesome power of destruction would provoke such a reaction of shock and he also knew that such a catatonic state, combined with the gases from the eruption would make death inevitable. So wanting to spare Lot's family, he forbids them to look back and tell them, through the angels "to run to the mountains and not stop anywhere in the valley." (verse 17) So God's command is not a simple gratuitous act of authority but stems from his concern for Lot and his family.

But we still don't understand the reason *why Lot's wife disobeys* the express order not to look back. Presumably she knew, like all Israelites, that contravening God's orders was not a good idea as it usually has terrible consequences! Is she pure evil and regrets the dissolute life that she had in Sodom, as several commentators have said? I doubt it very much because as she has been allowed to leave the depraved city and follow her husband, it

obviously means that God has judged her as one of the righteous. In any case, why is it so terrible to want to have a last look at the home where she had given birth to her children, entertained her friends and family and led an ordinary and happy life?

Well, I think her action is not terrible per se, even if it is an act of disobedience but it is reprehensible for another reason: “looking back” *demonstrates that she is too attached to her past life and “longed after” it: “longing after”* is another meaning of the Hebrew word translated by “look back”. *She does not embrace the future that God offers her and her family...* This is her real transgression: a lack of trust and forward-vision. If she had trusted God, she would have gone ahead without looking back, ready to start afresh and to act decisively to restore righteousness, according to God’s will. This is why she can’t be allowed to live any longer... **“Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it!” (Luke 17:33).**

It is the hardest of lessons ... and is movingly expressed in the following poem, “Lot’s wife” by Gene Fendt:

“Sodom must not have been perfect in evil.
Not, at least, to Lot's wife, who could remember
days washed in sunshine, setting the clothes
to dry on prickly pear and eucalyptus,
talking to her neighbour with the sweet
clean smell rising around them.
Quotidian work, oblivious of evil,
too ordinary to be of note
to God, or Abraham, or Lot.
Knowing that, she lacked the one virtue
needed for decisiveness in life: Don't look back.
The thought of what you lose would turn anyone to
stone”.

.....

Commitment for Life

As many of you know, Wheatley URC is registered as a 'Commitment for Life' church. *Commitment for Life encourages all United Reformed Churches and Local Ecumenical Partnership churches to take action, pray and give for people living in poverty across the world. 75 per cent of all income raised goes to Christian Aid to be divided equally between the partner countries and 10 per cent to 'Global Justice' formally known as 'The World Development Movement'. The remaining 15 per cent is spent on grants, resources and administration. Last year more than £550,000 was raised to help alleviate the root causes of poverty.*

I would encourage you to do two things. Please keep up to date by reading the short booklet enclosed with your newsletter. Also, would you please donate towards this crucial work, to which we are committed, using the envelope provided and putting it in with the offertory during the next few weeks. **If your donation is in the form of a cheque, please make it payable to Wheatley URC.**

In addition, I can supply you with a small collecting box to keep at home, into which you could put any small change you have. I have just counted the money for this year, just short of £100.

Thank you very much indeed.

Robert Harding.



Setting out full of enthusiasm.

Nearly there, lunch is calling.

We did enjoy the exercise, and the company, and the views, and the lovely tea-shop at the end. Thanks Tony and Robert for a good walk.(Wendy)



23 - 30 October 2016

Travellers All

An evening of journeys
in words and music

by Paula Tait

musician, singer, speech artist

www.speechandmusic.com

7pm FRIDAY 28th OCTOBER

Wheatley

United Reformed Church

in celebration of

ONE WORLD WEEK

poetry, story, song and music
from all corners of the world

*Our journeys may be different,
but we share the same roads...*

light refreshments

no charge

donations to Traidcraft

for further details please contact

Liz Barry – tel: 01865 872293

OCCASIONAL EVENTS IN OCTOBER

2 nd October	Sunday	8.00am 2.30-4.30pm	Morning Meditation, Foodbank Afternoon Tea in hall
6 th October	Thursday	10.00am-12.00	Coffee in the hall, church open
6 th October	Thursday	7.20pm	Elders Meeting
10 th October	Monday	2.00pm- 4.00pm	Not So Young Club in hall
11 th October	Tuesday	1.00pm	Lunch Club Two
18 th October	Tuesday	1.00pm	Lunch Club 01844 215513
24 th October	Monday	2.00pm- 4.00pm	Not So Young Club in hall.
28 th October	Friday	7.00pm	Travellers All – Paula Tait poetry, story, song & music in hall

WEEKLY EVENTS

(NB Youth activities, Choir around the Piano and Wheatley Singers are term-time only)

Brownies & Rainbows (Term time)	Monday 5.30pm to 7pm
Choir Around the Piano (Term Time)	Monday 7.30pm to 9 pm
Carers and Toddlers (Term Time)	Monday 9.30am to 11.30am
Wheatley Singers (Term Time)	Tuesday 7.10pm to 9pm
Pre-School Music Group (Term time)	Wednesday 9.30am and 10.30 am
Guides (Term time)	Wednesday 7pm to 8.30pm
Prayers and Breakfast	Thursday 8.00am
Mindfulness Sitting Group	Thursday 9.00am to 9.40am
Brownies & Rainbows (Term Time)	Thursday 5pm to 6.30pm
Table Tennis	Friday 10.30am to 12noon
Hymn Practice	Sunday 9.30-9.45am
Pulse Youth Group	Sunday 7.30-9.00pm

Disclaimer: The editors of this newsletter welcome letters, articles and announcements from individuals and organisations but reserve the right to publish or not, and to edit.



High Street, Wheatley, OX33 1UE

CHURCH CONTACTS

Minister: Revd. Pauline Main 01865 513581
Email: minister@wheatleyurc.org.uk

Associate Minister: Revd. Dr Colin Thompson
colin.thompson@stcatz.ox.ac.uk

Church Secretary: Robert Harding
email: secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk

Church website: www.wheatleyurc.org.uk