

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2017

Covering Thoughts

Gwnewch y pethau bychain mewn bywyd

Or

Do the little things in life.

These words were among the last that St David spoke before his death, and as his saints day is celebrated on Ash Wednesday this year I thought that I would take them as my meditation through Lent.

I have always been of the opinion that whatever one decides to do in Lent is likely to effect the rest of the year. For me it is not a time of self-denial so much as an opportunity to learn how to live more richly. I see Jesus' time in the desert not as discipline but a chance to touch base with the soul and depth of life. For this he needed solitude. When he returned to work and relationships he was ready to put into practice this awareness of the divine presence in every moment.

Thich Nhat Hanh once wrote: 'People usually consider walking on water or in thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to walk on the earth'.

Thich, described by some as the father of mindfulness, taught the importance of living in the present moment, doing each so called mundane task with awareness and contentment, and being alert and ready to handle with wisdom any situation that might arise.

I think that Jesus was mindful though he did not use the term. His wonderful parables arose from his close attention to people and his awareness of the land around him. He walked this earth accepting with compassion its imperfections as well as its beauty. I think he would approve of David's advice to do the little things in life. After all faithfulness in the small things will prepare us to handle the more daunting experiences that we will surely have to face at some time or other.

Perhaps if I can pay attention to cleaning my shoes I will be on the way to staying in the present moment while I walk in them.

Christine

Minister's letter March 2017 – Lenten Reflections

By the time you read this we shall be into Lent. Linguists (of whom I am not one!) draw our attention to the words which different languages use for this season of the Church year. In some (eg Latin, Italian) the meaning relates to the number forty, remembering the 40-day period when Jesus was in the wilderness; in others (eg French, German) the meaning relates to fasting, putting the emphasis slightly differently. Both emphases draw our attention to Jesus' experience, but also to our own response – how do we use this period of time to draw closer to God? Our English word "Lent" apparently comes from the Old English for 'Spring' – nothing to do with faith at all!

I remember a conversation one lunchtime during Lent last year: prison chaplaincy colleagues were discussing fasting (discussing it, not practising it!). Someone wondered whether the Muslim way, where everyone fasts together during the month of Ramadan, might be more effective than our more individualistic approach of 'giving something up' (especially we Protestants) – Ramadan being a community discipline of faith. It's a thought, though I don't see us adopting a Christian version of Ramadan any time soon. However, it is certainly good to find ways of making Lent meaningful in our faith journey.

Some charities encourage us to donate what we would have spent on the luxury we have given up – an encouragement to us to continue, with the feeling of a worthwhile outcome. Christian Aid is once again encouraging us to "count our blessings" in this way, with an opportunity to learn more about the projects they support and to pray for them, as well as donate what we can afford. That's a very practical response to the discipline of Lent, helps others, and there is an element of 'doing it together'.

What other possibilities does Lent offer? When thinking of Jesus' time in the wilderness we often concentrate on the temptations, but it can also be seen as a time of preparation. Affirmed by God at his Baptism, Jesus is led (Luke 4:1) or, Mark tells us, driven (Mark 1:12) into the wilderness by God's Spirit. It seems God doesn't want him to rush into his mission, but to be well prepared first. So, in that demanding environment, Jesus wrestles with some of the challenges he will face in his public ministry; it is a time to pray, to think things through, to find the right way to go.

We are all used to preparing for things in life. We don't go off into the wilderness, but we do take time and trouble. Even for a simple thing like going on holiday, we read some guide books, look up the weather forecast to see what to pack, maybe

treat ourselves to some new clothes (women do, at any rate!). In our younger days, when we had an exam or a job interview, we would spend sometimes many hours making sure we were well prepared, if we wanted to succeed.

Do we have the same approach to our faith? I expect I'm not alone when I say that so often life gets in the way. My own preparation may focus on leading worship, rather than taking time on my own spiritual journey. Lent gives us the opportunity to correct that balance somewhat; it gives us a finite period when we are encouraged to focus on our faith, and yes, we can do that together, with Christians in our neighbourhood, and realising that we are in the company of God's people worldwide. It's a two-way preparation –as Jesus had to examine himself and his motivation, so we look at ourselves; as Jesus looked towards his mission, so we look towards Easter, when we remember the culmination of Jesus' mission and all that it means.

May God bless us and walk with us during this season of preparation and hope, as we look forward again to hearing the good news of our risen Lord.

Pauline Main

Church and Society on Immigration and Refugees



While fear of immigrants and refugees has existed for some time, in the time since the Brexit vote and President's Trump's election, it has become particularly palpable. This fear is in part fuelled by the media and can be seen in many newspaper headlines related to immigration.

The results of increased stress and anxiety levels lead to a cocktail of diseases. These include cancers, mental health problems, obesity and heart problems to mention a few. It can ultimately lead to a sense of isolation and the loss of community.

An immigrant's thoughts will be published next month.

Bi-blog by Laurence Devlin

At the end of May, Colin will lead a few of us into an exploration of some of the most “difficult” texts of the Bible, texts which most of us know precious little about or texts we don’t even know are there as they never appear in the Lectionary and are never preached on. There are various reasons for that: either they are a bit embarrassing for many preachers because they are too overtly sexual like the Song of Songs or they are a bit mysterious, even plain weird or so shocking that the church has decided to bypass them altogether.

Among the most shocking and difficult texts that preachers and the church have consistently ignored, figure those which not only recount but seem to condone the most abject **violence** against innocent populations, against women or even against children. Examples abound as apparently over 600 passages in the Old Testament talk explicitly about nations, kings or individuals attacking, destroying and killing others! Let’s remind ourselves of just a few examples: the *Book of Joshua* which revels in the genocide of the Canaanite population and the systematic annihilation of their cities while Joshua himself is being commended for “utterly destroying all that breathed *as the Lord God of Israel commanded*” (Josh. 10:40), *Psalms 137* where it is recommended to kill the enemy’s babies by “dashing them against the rocks”(v.9) or *Judges 19* where a Levite’s wife is gang-raped during an entire night and consequently dies of her injuries without anybody lifting a finger to help her, and certainly not the Levite, a so-called man of God, as it is him who throws her out of the house they had taken refuge in, in order to save his own skin!

Prior to the 1960’s, it was almost impossible to hear any voice or find any serious studies (at least among Christian commentators) that raised concern about the presence of such violent texts in the Bible. Very few questions were asked about why these texts came to be included in such a *sacred* book and how they were, in centuries gone by but also in very recent ones, used to justify colonialism, slavery, summary executions, racism, apartheid, “gay-bashing” and the oppression of women. This changed dramatically in the 70’s and in the last 40 or 50 years, even if certain “texts of terror” (as the famous scholar Phyllis Trible calls them) continue to be misused by some groups and pastors in order to abuse, condemn or exclude whole categories of people, many commentators are now confronting head on the “Old Testament’s troubling legacy” to borrow the title of a fascinating book by the American writer, Eric Steibert.

Steibert is only one of many scholars who have tried to find ways to deal with the serious theological problems created by what appears to be the divine condoning

of that violence. This is no mean feat as, while it would be easy to blame solely misguided interpreters who twist Scripture and make it say something it never intended to say, some texts *cannot* be dismissed in that way. Two essential questions therefore need to be asked:

1. Why are such violent texts included in the “Holy” Bible?
2. What do we do with these texts in the 21st century?

We will examine the first question this month and the second, next month.

Let’s first then examine the possible reasons why these violent texts are included in the Bible. For many centuries, history had been written by the victors and was concerned almost exclusively with battles and wars, violent invasions and subsequent repressions. The historians of the great empires of the Mediterranean of the ancient world were no exception and the violence which pervaded the building of such empires consequently not only shaped biblical texts but also played an important role in the religious thought of ancient Israel. This is the reason why violence is presented in the Bible in two different ways: positively or negatively, what Steibert calls “virtuous violence” or “wrongful violence”. *The difference between the two is not so much what kind of violence is performed but much more who does it, to whom and why* as we will see. Two of the most well-known stories of “wrongful violence” in the Old Testament are the story of Cain and Abel (Gen.4) and the murder by King David of Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah the Hittite (2 Samuel 11). In both these stories God shows severe and unambiguous displeasure over these acts. There are many other examples where acts of violence are clearly portrayed as sinful and wrong, in particular in Jeremiah or Ezekiel.

But violence is not always regarded as an undesirable activity and not always condemned. On the contrary, the text often sanctions violent acts and blesses violent individuals. *This violence becomes “virtuous” because it pleases God*. One example is the murder of Sisera by Jael in the Book of Judges (Judges 4:21-22) where, as violent and treacherous Jael’s actions are, the text exhibits no hint of disapproval and she receives nothing but unqualified praise. Another famous example is of course the slaying of Goliath by the young David (1 Samuel 17). David’s action is not only pleasing to God but *empowered by Him* as God stands behind David’s victory. When we read this, we agree and think that David’s action is admirable and it does not even enter our mind that there is anything wrong with it! However as “virtuous” as the violence may appear, it DOES raise important questions: Should we really applaud Jael’s use of deception and lethal violence? Does David’s violent victory over the Philistine giant make him a heroic

figure worthy of our admiration and respect or does it make him a murderer with bloodstained hands?

But there are even more difficult questions to be asked when violence is the direct consequence of God's activity...

This divine violence can be of 2 sorts: either it is violence directly and solely *committed by God* or it is violence *divinely authorized or sanctioned*. In certain episodes, both kinds of violence are combined such as in the conquest of Canaan where, according to the biblical text, God not only commands Israel to exterminate all Canaanites but also fights with Israel by knocking over walls and hurling down hailstones from heaven. There are many other narratives where divine violence is displayed: the flood narrative, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the drowning of the Egyptian army in pursuit of the Israelites, to quote but a few. Of course, we are told that these acts of violence are *justified* and *virtuous* because before the flood "the earth was filled with violence", the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked and the Egyptians had oppressed the Hebrew people. But as God received praises for these actions, we must ask the same uncomfortable question: Is mass murder, especially divinely ordered(?) ever cause for celebration?

These examples show that "virtuous violence" can be defined as violence that is regarded as appropriate, justified and often praiseworthy but it only becomes "virtuous" and praiseworthy *depending on who is doing it and who is receiving it*: Moses, Deborah, David, Solomon and Esther are the "good guys" while Lot, Delilah, Jezebel and Manasseh are the "bad guys". So, when "good" individuals engage in acts of violence, we tend to think they are right (except if the text explicitly condemns them) but what we actually do *is read with Israel against others*. We should resist such an exclusive way of reading and consider the victims' point of view as well as the victors' because it opens richer and newer avenues of interpretation which will speak to us in a more relevant and more inclusive way.

We will examine this in more detail next month.

Is Wheatley URC an Eco Church?

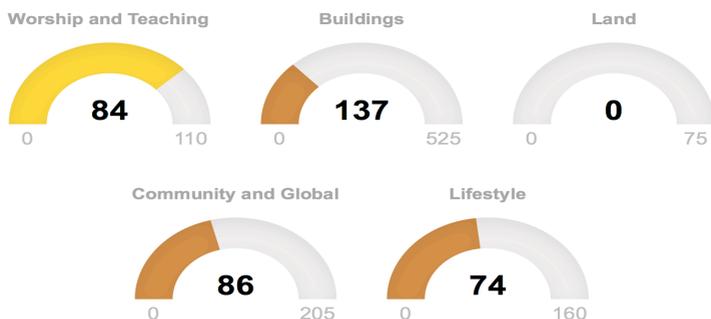
A small group of us met to consider the Eco Church project offered by A Rocha UK. A Rocha UK (arocha.org.uk) works with individuals and communities, encouraging them to think about their use of the environment and develop

practical ways to care for people and the planet, locally and globally and this project has been developed in collaboration with churches of a number of denominations and other charities.

They say “Our vision is for churches of all denominations to care for creation as an integral part of loving their neighbours and following God faithfully. Help us bring that vision to reality by participating in Eco Church.”

We completed the EcoChurch challenge and found we are already rated at the Bronze level overall but Gold level in the ‘Worship and Teaching’ section (obviously the section on ‘Land’ does not apply to us).

Eco Church Award Points



Over the next several months we will be considering the ways that we could improve our score (and therefore make a difference to our environment) in the other areas. This could include offering workshops on how individuals can improve their personal carbon footprint and working together with other organizations such as ‘Sustainable Wheatley’.

- Watch this space for further information!

If you can't wait then have a go at www.carbonfootprint.com to see how much of the world's carbon dioxide burden you generate.

What A Rocha says about Eco Church: **Eco Church** is A Rocha UK's award scheme for churches in England and Wales who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth. It is a free online survey and supporting resources designed to equip each church to express their care for God's world in worship

and teaching; in how to look after buildings and land; in how to engage with the local community and in global campaigns, and in the personal lifestyles of the congregation.

SIMPLE LENTEN SOUP LUNCHES FOR CHRISTIAN AID IN THE WHEATLEY URC HALL

Just a reminder that **Wheatley Area Churches** is hosting simple soup lunches again this year on Saturdays throughout **Lent**, between **12.00 noon and 2.00 pm**, to raise funds and awareness for the on-going work of **Christian Aid**, worldwide.

They start on **the 4th March and run through to the 8th April** and will be hosted and organised by each church in turn, as listed below:

Saturday 4 th March	United Reformed Church Team
Saturday 11 th March	St Mary's Church Team
Saturday 18 th March	Our Lady of Lourdes & St Bartholomew's Teams
Saturday 25 th March	Wheatley Community Church Team
Saturday 1 st April	United Reformed Church Team
Saturday 8 th April	St Mary's Church Team

It is hoped that each church will also provide some form of **themed meditational experience** each week in the URC's worship area (music, visual and/or liturgical), that people will be able to take part in, if they wish, before or after their lunch.

There will be **no fixed charge** for your soup, but there will be a plate or basket left out for **your donations in lieu**, for the work of **Christian Aid**. All are most welcome to attend each week, regardless of denomination, creed, faith or none, so do bring along a friend or neighbour with you, if you can.

Tony Barry (872293)

Church Calendar for March 2017

**Everyone is invited to stay for coffee or tea after 10am Sunday services.
Traidcraft stall on occasional Sundays.**

Date	5th March	12th March	19th March	26th March
Service	Morning Service with H.C.	Morning Service	Morning Service with H.C.	Morning Service
Time	10 am	10 am	10 am	10.am
Worship Leader	Revd. Colin Thompson	Richard Bainbridge	Revd. Pauline Main	Laurence Devlin
Vestry Elder	Pauline Shelley	Laurence Devlin	Ann Hardiman	Ellen Webster
Welcomer	John Kidd	Phyllis Williams	Joan Kidd	Liz Barry
Steward	Moira Watson	Zena Knight	Tom Goss	Andy Walkey
Reader	Ann Hardiman	John Kidd	Joel Rasmussen	Zena Knight
Prayers	Joel Rasmussen	Tom Goss	Bobbie Stormont	Robert Harding
Flowers	Womens W. D. Prayer	Catherine Hughes	Sybil Beaton	Christine Bainbridge

The Pulse Youth Group invite you to Worship with them on
Sunday evening 12th March from 6.00-6.45pm

Simple Sunday evenings in the style of Taize will take place at 3 Barns Close
Holton at 7.30 pm on Sunday March 19th and 26th.

Common Lectionary Readings for March 2017

Note: leaders may choose to use other readings.

Date	5 th March	12 th March	19 th March	26 th March
Old Testament	Genesis 2: 15-17. & 3: 1-7	Genesis 12: 1-4a.	Exodus 17: 1-7.	1 Samuel 16: 1-13.
Psalm	Psalm 32.	Psalm 121:	Psalm 95.	Psalm 23.
New Testament	Romans 5: 12-19.	Romans 4: 1-5 & 13-17.	Romans 5: 1-11.	Ephesians 5: 8-14.
Gospel	Matthew 4: 1-11.	John 3: 1-17.	John 4: 5-42.	John 9: 1-41.

Please remember in your prayers the members of Phyllis William's Pastoral Care List: Sybil Beaton, Laurence & Peter Devlin, Bev Paton & family, Joel & Kit Rasmussen, Revd Colin Thompson.

We also ask you to pray for the members of the Pastoral Care Ministry Team:- Ann Bettess, Jean Boxall, Barbara Joiner, Joan Kidd, Frances Simpson.

Dates for your Diary

- 3rd Mar. 2pm Women's World Day of Prayer service
- 20th Mar. 7.30pm "God Stories" 1st session at Bettess' home
- 24th Mar. 3.00pm Summertown Spring Lecture "Luthers Legacy"
- 25th Mar. 2.00pm Pilgrimage to King Edward Chapel, Cuddesden.
- 26th Mar. Clocks change to Summertime.
- 27th Mar. 6.00-8.00pm Oxford Friends Oasis of Peace

The deadline for the April newsletter is 6pm on Sunday 19th March. Please send email copy to newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk Paper copy may be handed to Jim or Moira Watson.

Don't Forget the clocks spring forward on 26th March



Debt and homelessness by Peter Devlin

Have you seen the Ken Loach film “I, Daniel Blake” about the failure of the benefit system and the human stories of those caught up in it? It is a world with which, as a District Judge in Slough County Court dealing with civil and family matters, I am confronted several times a week. Some of the most difficult cases I have to deal with, are those brought by “social landlords” (councils and housing associations) seeking to evict tenants, usually because of rent arrears and occasionally because of anti-social behaviour. Unlike private landlords, social landlords take every possible step with their tenants to avoid court proceedings and try and resolve the problems of non-payment of rent. Issuing a court summons is very much a last resort.

An example I saw last week involved a couple in their sixties who were facing eviction because of arrears. They were visibly in poor health, frightened, overwhelmed by forms and regulations and appeared lost in a sea of possible benefits but with the help of a CAP volunteer (Christians Against Poverty), the case was put off to enable them to claim the correct benefits. I and my colleagues usually give tenants a chance to avoid eviction by paying the rent plus a nominal sum towards the arrears each week. Nevertheless, a significant number get evicted because often they owe a huge amount of rent (over £5000 is not uncommon) and they have made no attempt to pay anything for several months. This means of course that not only is the tenant himself evicted but his/her family as well (which in many cases includes young children). I feel distressed when this happens as it may mean that the children need to go into care as the parent can no longer cope.

The reasons for non-payment illustrate many of the severe problems facing the most disadvantaged people in our country. For people who are unemployed, the rent is paid by housing benefit but in order to get this benefit, endless forms must be filled in *online* and the task is often beyond the ability of the tenant as the film “I Daniel Blake” so eloquently shows. The tenants who rely exclusively on state benefits enter a bewildering world of form filling for different types of benefits, queuing at council offices or going to medical examinations.

A series of short term poorly paid jobs, with gaps in between often on zero-hour contracts, may mean repeated applications for housing benefit.

Those who have rent arrears often owe money to others creditors and the vast majority of tenants in arrears pay “non-priority debts” (like credit cards) instead of prioritizing rent, running the risk of losing their home. Many

unscrupulous creditors are ruthless in getting their money back and don't hesitate to harass debtors by late night telephone calls, threats and visits. Worried tenants tend to pay those who shout the loudest.

Debt management companies prey on the poor by charging exorbitant fees in order to "manage" their debts by entering into arrangements with creditors when the same service is provided free by organisations such as Christians Against Poverty or Step Change.

The introduction of Universal Credit, replacing a variety of benefits, has meant that the housing benefit element is paid directly to the tenant rather than the landlord, as used to be the case. For people who don't know how to budget – and there are many – this proved to be a disaster. Furthermore, the only way to claim Universal Credit is on line and many tenants do not have access to a computer. They rely on libraries, Citizens Advice Bureaux and other voluntary organisations. But many of those are stretched to breaking point and no longer offer the same service due to budget cuts and even disappear altogether. I remember the recent case of a tenant who had no money, no credit on his phone and no access to a computer, who had to go to a call box to make his claim by phone and a friend had to put £6 in coins into the phone!

As Laurence told me from her years as a CAB advisor, *pride* stops many from seeking help. A tenant I saw recently was ex-army, mentally wounded after Afghanistan. He had destroyed his medals and was depressed. His rent arrears mounted. I managed to persuade him to contact the British Legion who were able to help. Although he had served his country he was a proud man reluctant to receive "charity."

The bedroom tax means that those who are considered to be "over housed" because they have more bedrooms than they need, do not get their full rent covered by housing benefit entitlement and so, each week, the arrears and the overall debt mount up. The only option is to rent out a spare bedroom to a stranger, which is not an appealing prospect for many or to ask the council to move to a smaller property. However, that request is only granted when the arrears are cleared! Catch 22!

Many tenants are vulnerable as they tend to be the less-well educated. They are frightened of the courts and of authority in general. They do not open letters, won't answer the telephone or cooperate with housing offices as they hope the problem will go away if they ignore it. Of course, it does not and only gets worse!

Single mothers are among the most vulnerable and often find themselves in a financial quandary: The absent fathers pay little, if anything, for their children. The mother is reluctant to apply to the Child Support Agency for maintenance because of bullying or intimidation by the absent father. She will rather accept a pair of shoes or some clothes from him from time to time than push the CSA to assess the absent father who ought to be paying some 18% of his gross salary for two children. This money, if she was getting it, would not result in a reduction of her state benefits contrary to what many young mothers wrongly think.

Tenants with adult children living with them are often afraid or reluctant to ask their children for a contribution towards rent and living costs when they are earning, which can push the tenant into greater arrears.

Because of the general shortage of social housing, Council waiting-lists are getting longer. This puts additional pressure on those councils to manage their arrears and therefore evict tenants who don't pay. Evicting people is one of the most distressing thing I have to do in court but I try to remember that those who have been on a waiting list for a long time, will be delighted to take over the tenancy!Oxford Friends of Oasis of Peace

Oxford Friends of Oasis of Peace

Invite you to:

**"A Jewish & Palestinian Israeli in Conversation"
"Women's Role in Peacemaking"**

Monday 27th March 2017

6pm – 8pm

Oxford Quaker Meeting House,
43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW

For more information, and to register, please email: office@oasisofpeace.org.uk
(or call 020 8952 4717)

Women's World Day of Prayer Services

Friday 3rd March

2pm at URC, followed by refreshments

7.30pm at St Mary's



Women's World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of Christian women who come together to observe a common day of prayer held on the first Friday in March each year, and who, in many countries, have a continuing relationship in prayer and service.

It is a unique organisation, truly interdenominational and truly international. It speaks with the voices of women from all corners of the globe. Involvement in WWDP creates a network of Christian women on a worldwide scale which also reaches into our local communities. Preparations go on for months in advance. The origins of Women's World Day of Prayer date back to the 19th century when Christian women in the USA and Canada initiated a variety of co-operative activities in support of women's involvement in mission, at home and abroad.

Although organised and led by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for everybody, demonstrating our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries and all are welcome to attend.

The service is written by a different country each year and that country then becomes the focus of the world's prayers on the day itself. This year the program has been written by the Christian women of the Philippines and follows the theme of **Am I Being Unfair to You?** It tells the story of God's economic justice in contrast to the economy of the strong and powerful and is based on the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (*Mt 20:1-16*).

There will be a number of people from our congregations taking part in the devotional and thought provoking services. Do come along to support them and the women of the Philippines as they relate the stories of injustices within their society.

ACE God Stories

Monday 20 Mar. and Monday 24 Apr. 2017 @ 7PM-9PM

The ACE team invites you to come along to discuss some of the short stories from the book *God Stories*. We plan to hold two sessions. The first one will be held on Monday the 20th March the other will be on Monday the 24th of April. Ann and Roger Bettess have kindly agreed to be the hosts. We hope the sessions will provide rich reflections for all attendees.

If you are interested and wish to order a copy of the book you will need the following details:

Title: *God Stories*, edited by C. Michael Curtis
ISBN: 978-0-618-38793-9
Category: Fiction/Religion
Publisher: Mariner Books/Houghton Mifflin Company

We will put sign-up sheets up in the hall in good time together with advance notice of the different stories for discussion at each meeting

Numbers will be limited so as to allow everyone to contribute should they wish - so do keep an eye open for the sign-up sheets

Details:

Venue: Ann and Roger Bettess

Time: 7pm -9pm

Dates: 20th Mar 2017 and 24th April 2017

We look forward to seeing you there.

The ACE Team

Discussions after morning worship.

The 'Adult Christian Education Ministry Team' would like to trial this idea during 2017. After morning worship on a number of Sundays you will be invited to join a discussion about the sermon that day. These will take place in the church between 11.30 am and 12.00 noon. These are the dates we have chosen: 9th April, 18th June, 6th August and 8th October.



On Sat 25 March 7.30pm-9.30pm at Wesley Memorial Church, John Bell, hymn writer and broadcaster from the Iona Community, will be leading a Big Sing. This will be an inspiring opportunity to sing some wonderful songs in harmony – though no particular singing expertise is needed. Tickets are £7.50 (£5.00 for students and under 18s), and are available from Tickets Oxford or on the door. There's also a poster available.

Pilgrimage to the Edward King Chapel, Cuddesdon

I am organising a pilgrimage to the RIBA award winning Edward King Chapel at Ripon College, Cuddesdon on Saturday 25th March.

For those choosing to walk there, we will be leaving Wheatley URC at 2:00pm for a relaxing amble over the fields to Ripon College. Those choosing to drive will need to arrive there by 3:00pm.

I will give a brief talk about the building and its architecture and Mark Williams will lead us in a short period of reflection.

The pilgrimage will be followed by refreshments served in the Student Common Room at 3:30pm, after which we will return to Wheatley either on foot or by car.

A sign-up sheet will be placed in the hall nearer the time.

Elizabeth Walkey

Wessex and South-Western Synods' Big Day Out

Saturday 1st July 2017 at the Burgate School, Fordingbridge, SP6 1EZ

A fun, celebration day out for all members, friends, and families of all ages in the Wessex and South-Western Synods

ACTIVITIES for all ages include table top displays, young people's events, sports, arts, talks, workshops...

Tickets:

1. **Adult ticket** including a coach seat for the journeys to and from the venue, and entry to it. **Price: £18.00**
2. **Young Person's (Aged 5 – 16 Years) ticket** including a coach seat to and from the venue, and entry to it. **Price: £12.00** [possibly partly financed by our church]
3. **Adult ticket for entry only** to the venue (making their own travel arrangements). **Price: £8.00**
4. **Young Person's ticket for entry only** to the venue. **Price: £4.00**

Coach travel will be from a central point in Oxford. Some car parking will be available at Burgate School, but it will be limited and will need to be booked in advance.

All tickets ordered and paid for by 1st April 2017 will be charged at a discount rate which will be £1.00 less than the prices quoted above.

Catering at Synod Day

Everyone is asked to bring a packed lunch with them. There will be plenty of places to sit and eat it, both inside and, weather permitting, outside. Free tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available at various locations around the venue.

Ellen is co-ordinating tickets for our church, so please let her know if you would like a booking form or further details.

OCCASIONAL EVENTS IN MARCH

2 nd Mar.	Thursday	10.00-12.00 7.15pm	Coffee in the hall church open Elders meet
5 th Mar.	Sunday	8.00am 2.30 – 4.30pm 7.00 – 9.00pm	Morning Meditation, Foodbank Afternoon Tea Pulse Group Discussion
6 th Mar.	Monday	2.00 – 4.00pm	Not So Young Club
12 th Mar.	Sunday	6.00-6.45pm	Pulse Group Worship All welcome
14 th Mar.	Tuesday	1.00pm	Lunch Club Two
19 th Mar.	Sunday	7.00 – 9.00pm	Pulse Group Games in hall
20 th Mar.	Monday	2.00-4.00pm	Not So Young Club
21 st Mar.	Tuesday	1.00pm	Lunch Club
26 th Mar.	Sunday	7.00-9.00pm	Pulse Group - Film Night 17, Bell Lane

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 10.00 – 12.00.
Hymn Practice	Sunday 9.30-9.45am

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

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
eMail: colin.thompson@stcatz.ox.ac.uk*

*Church Secretary: Robert Harding
eMail: secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk*

Church website: www.wheatleyurc.org.uk