



WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER

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



APRIL 2017

COVERING THOUGHTS

*For the poets among us here are two verses from John David's **New Day**, and for the philosophers among us a thought from Deepak Chopra. My painting celebrates dawn and is called **Where His Feet Pass**. I hope that each of these in different ways will encourage us to think creatively about the Easter experience.*

Christine Bainbridge

*New Day
I will love you more than me
And more than yesterday
If you can prove to me
You are the new day.
Send the sun in time for dawn,
Let the birds all hail the morning.
Love of life will let me say
You are the new day.*

*One more day when time
Is running out for everyone
Like a breath I know would come,
I reach for the new day.
Hope is my philosophy,
Just needs days in which to be.
Love of life means hope for me
Born on a new day.*

You are the new day.

John David

*The symbolic language of the crucifixion is the death of the old paradigm;
Resurrection is a leap into a whole new way of thinking.*

Deepak Chopra

our children came along, she was a great and caring grandmother loving her time with her grandchildren and regularly coming to Yorkshire to stay with us.

In her later years, Mum did not like asking for help, but as we lived 200 miles away, I am so grateful for all the help her friends from both the Church and the village gave her, with lifts to hospital, calling in to see her, or in so many other ways. This meant she could stay in the bungalow far longer than would have otherwise been possible. When it was clear that there was no other option, she had the difficult decision to make about a care home in Oxfordshire, or one nearer to us. Moving to Yorkshire enabled us to see her on a daily basis and with provision of care in a fantastic environment until the end.

I think it is a tribute to the friendship and love she gave over her lifetime, that many of you made the long journey to see her in Pocklington over the last 18 months. Many of you have fond memories you could share and I look forward to any reminiscences you might care to write.

Although I am an only child, Mum did not make a fuss when I applied for a job in York. In many ways it is the unselfish approach that she took that kept us closer than we would have been if she had resisted this career move and wanted me to stay in Oxfordshire for her own needs. I hope that in turn we replicate this approach to life, letting go of our children so they can live their own lives and giving to others without expecting anything in return.

We all know what she brought to so many and for us to think about how we can replicate this in our own lives. It is frequently the simple things, the friendship and care shown to others that brings so much, the thought behind the handmade gifts and the many meals made for others. This means so much to so many and will be the way that she is remembered. So we need to focus on how she touched so many lives over the years and not on her passing away.

I finish with a reflection on her strong faith. When she had a heart valve operation some 15 years ago, she said that if she survived she would continue to be with her friends and family, if she died she would be reunited with my father. A simple but reassuring outlook at a stressful time. During her last days she said to us that she was ready to move on from this life and I can only hope that she got her wish and is now reunited with Dad.

for me into my twenties and she also always wanted to know precisely what time I was going to be home, be that from school or the scouts. This was not a controlling habit, but so that a meal could be ready on the table. Part of my rebellion, was for me to learn how to cook and iron, just to deny her the pleasure of doing these things for me. I do not know if this was part of a cunning parenting plan she had, or just a fall out of her incredible caring ways.

Mum sold up and moved to 5 Littleworth Road in 1979 as the 1/2 acre garden became too much for us to manage. Around this time she gave up work, travelled daily on the bus into Oxford to assist caring, first for her mother in law and then for her own her father and mother. She always had this desire to care for others and when they passed away, this continued for numerous people in the village. She was often seen with her shopping trolley delivering a hot casserole or homemade soup, to those who she thought would benefit from it in the village. In fact I would say that when she could no longer do this in her later years it was something that she regretted the most.

I referred earlier to her needlework and craft skills. I know that many of you appreciated her knitting, in particular the countless baby outfits she produced and her cross-stitch, be that samplers or her hand made Christmas cards. I know that many of her friends have kept these and bring them out again each year: a touching memory.

Most of the time she got it spot on, occasionally items were a bit over the top. Mum knitted Rosie a lovely red and white jumper, in a fine Fairisle pattern, the matching hat was great, but the knitted trousers took the whole outfit just a bit too far. On such occasions we learnt to steer Mum in the right direction, so she put her skills and efforts into something which was entirely to our taste. An example of this is the William Morris tapestry that we asked her to do for our wedding, clearly a greater challenge than we anticipated as it took her a couple of years longer than expected to finish it, but she persevered and what a great heirloom we have.

As you know Mum was not of the greatest stature, and she routinely had to shorten her dresses and skirts. I do not know to this day what she intended to do with them, but when we cleared her bungalow in 2016, there was a whole drawer of the 2" strips of material that she had cut off the bottom of the skirts. Clearly saved for some future project and too good to throw out.

Mum has always loved working with children, through Sunday School, volunteering at the Primary School to read with the infants, helping with Mothers and Toddlers Groups and running the Cradle Roll for many years. She was also adopted as a pretend grandmother to a number of children in the village. When

Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

I came across this rendering of Psalm 65 and was overwhelmed by the poet's ability to express an essence of an ancient prayer so beautifully. It's not a translation, more like improvisation on a soulfully profound jazz melody.

If you have a little time, you might read the version you find in your Bible, then slowly allow this poem to drop into a space made by prayer. The poem might even become a daily reflection, as your own Lent moves into Holy Week and Easter.

Merciful God,
at times my faults fragment me,
when weakness cracks resolve,
and my soul sifts through my fingers and away.
Yet, I come to you and boldly beg you:
energize my will;
retrieve the scattered pieces of my soul.

And, as it was in the beginning,
you speak your Word,
and chaos hushes to a stillness,
and the clamour of the waves becomes becalmed,
and the land thrusts up and surges into life:
rivers tumble from the hills,
valleys clothe themselves in wheat,
and tumult is transfigured into power.

You're not content with order.
For you, there must be life!
What shouts of joy!
What singing!

William J. O'Malley
"Daily Prayers for Busy People"

With many blessings,
Mark Williams

CHURCH CALENDAR FOR APRIL 2017.

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

Date	2 nd April	9 th April	16 th April	23 rd April	30 th April
Service	Morning Service with H.C.	Morning Service	Morning Service with H.C.	Morning Service	Morning Service
Time	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am
Worship Leader	Revd. Colin Thompson	Richard Bainbridge	Revd. Pauline Main	Elders Team	Daphne Preece
Vestry Elder	Charles Bennett	Laurence Devlin	John Kidd	Liz Barry	Pauline Shelley
Welcomer	Pauline Shelley	Joan Kidd	Phyllis Williams	Ellen Webster	Ann Hardiman
Steward	Angela Holdaway	Bob Webster	Christine Bainbridge	Elizabeth Walkey	Ann Bettess
Reader	Elizabeth Walkey	Moira Watson	Pauline Shelley	Phyllis Williams	Charles Bennett
Prayers	Ann Hardiman	Barbara Joiner	Liz Barry	Ann Bettess	Ellen Webster
Flowers	Phyllis Williams	Palm Sunday Team	Easter Day Team	Jean Boxall	Allison Towner

Elders' names in **Bold** are on Communion duty

There will be simple evening worship in the style of Taize at 3 Barns Close on Sundays April 16th and 23rd at 7.30 pm.

Please remember in your prayers the members on Ann Hardman's Pastoral Care list: Ann and Roger Bettess, Annie Hughes and Elliot, Moira and Jim Watson, Allison and Colin Towner, Ellen and Bob Webster.

Not everything always went well in the needlework department. Mum's attempt at making jeans and a jacket out of brushed denim in my early teen years was not a success and Mum struggled to understand why I wanted proper jeans. Interestingly I now have the embarrassment of having to wear a home-made brushed denim jacket as my Mother-in-Law had the same idea that she could replicate Mr. Levi.

Sadly my father passed away in 1974 at 53 when I was 13 and Mum was 48. As a 13 year old I thought mum was old at 48 but now this feels such a young age to become a widow and I can only admire the way she ensured that our life continued as normal as possible in the circumstances. Few of us here can appreciate the amount of work it takes to maintain a 1/2 acre garden and bring up a teenager on your own, while hiding your grief for a loved one taken so young.

Mum returned to work, obtaining a part time job as a Doctor's receptionist in Wheatley. As a teenager, used to always having Mum at home, going home on some days to an empty house was a great novelty. It enabled me to get up to all sorts of mischief while Mum was out. Before Dad died he was refitting the bathroom, so one day when Mum was at work I decided that I would change the basin to the new one that was waiting to be fitted. I had probably just turned 14 and did not have the knowledge I have now, about what could have gone wrong, but the water was turned off, the old basin was taken out and the new one fitted in, and all before she came back from work.

Mum reacted with a mixture of horror about what damage I could have caused, combined with surprise and pleasure that the old pink basin had gone and the new white one was in its place. There were other experiments frequently involving various flammable items in the garden that were well hidden before she came home, and to the best of my knowledge she was never aware of these.

There were many memories from around this time, one of which was the annual Church Fete. Mum was Church Treasurer and this was one of the main fund raisers, each year. As well as doing the floats for the stalls, she would spend the week leading up to the May bank holiday baking, and then ran or helped on the cake stall, showing much pleasure when village people asked which were cakes baked by Hazel, before making their purchase. After the fete she would count the money on the kitchen table, bag it up and then set off on her push bike with over a £1000 in the front basket, with me riding alongside for security, down to Barclays Bank to deposit in the night safe.

As a teenager, I found Mum was quite annoying. I am sure that this is part of the job description of a parent, but in many ways, with Mum it was quite different, because Mum was so caring, she wanted to do everything she could for me. I am sure if I had not rebelled she would have continued to lay out my clothes

number of years engagement, they married in 1951 at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church in Oxford. As soon as they were engaged she was told she had to leave the architect's office and went to work for a local builder, but gave up work all together when they married.

An indication of her organised ways is the hand written ledger, showing what they spent on setting up house and the items they bought. She kept this with books listing all the Christmas and birthday cards she sent all of her life. We still have this ledger. Houses were scarce post war and they started in rented rooms in Oakthorp Road and then above a dental practice at 312 London Road Headington. The practice is still in the same building today.

They lived a frugal life while saving for a deposit, with no car but cycling everywhere. In 1958 they bought Millwynds at 83 Littleworth Road, Wheatley and she became a member of this church. In the 1950s Mum had a number of miscarriages and still born babies. There was no counselling in those days but following an experimental treatment to stitch the neck of the womb, Mum stayed in hospital for the last 6 months of her pregnancy and I was born in 1960.

To me, I thought my childhood was typical of all children, with a large garden to play in, looking after chickens, gardening every weekend and a holiday each year at the same place on the Norfolk coast. It was simple, caring and practical. When I say holiday, it was so exciting to me, but not a holiday for Mum as we stayed in a converted railway carriage on the cliff top where Mum was expected to cook each day in a kitchen built in a single compartment of the carriage. There was no running water: just a well in the garden. For washing, water was heated in a pan on the stove and poured into a wash bowl. My grandmother on my father's side also came on holiday with us. Later I realised this was quite a strain for my mother. A highlight of the 2 weeks and the only time we ever ate out, was that Grandma would buy us lunch, at that renowned high class establishment: Debenham's Restaurant in Norwich! I think it is fair to say, that this was how many would caricature a mother-in-law relationship, but Mum in her peace-making way did not challenge Grandma's influence on my father or the same holiday arrangements every year. This in turn influenced Mum when she became a mother-in-law herself, bending over backwards not to influence or interfere with my relationship with Kath.

In our frugal ways as a child, vegetables came from the garden and Mum made our clothes. My Primary School shirts were made from Dad's old shirts and all my jumpers were hand knitted. I have a clear recollection of my first machine knitted jumper, which Betty, a friend of the family bought for me when I was about 10 years old: it was a novelty and luxury.

COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS FOR APRIL 2017

Note: leaders may choose to use other readings.

Date	2 nd Apr	9 th Apr	16 th Apr	23 rd Apr	30 th Apr
Old Testament	Ezekiel 37: 1-14	Isaiah 50: 4-9a	Acts 10: 34-43	Acts 2: 14a & 22-32	Acts 2: 14a & 36-41
Psalm	Psalm 130	Psalm 118: 1 & 19-29	Psalm 118: 1-2 & 14-24	Psalm 16	Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19
New Testament	Romans 8: 6-11	Philippians 2: 5-11	Colossians 3: 1-4	1 Peter 1: 3-9	1 Peter 1: 17-23
Gospel	John 11 1-45	Matthew 21 1-11	Matthew 28 1-10	John 20 19-31	Luke 24 13-35

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

The final two '**Wheatley Area Churches**' simple soup lunches will be on Saturdays 1st and 8th April **between 12.00 noon and 2.00 pm**, to raise funds and awareness for the on-going work of Christian Aid, worldwide. They will be hosted and organised by the following churches:

Saturday 1st April: United Reformed Church Team
Saturday 8th April: St Mary's Church Team

There will be some form of **themed meditational experience** in the URC worship area, that people will be able to take part in, if they wish, before or after the lunch.

There is **no fixed charge** for soup, but there will be a plate or basket left out for **donations in lieu**, for the work of Christian Aid. (Already, about £400 should have been raised).

All are most welcome to attend, regardless of denomination, creed, faith or none, so do bring a friend or neighbour along with you, if you can.

Tony Barry
(872293)

OCCASIONAL EVENTS IN APRIL

<i>2nd April</i>	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>8.00 am 2.30 to 4.30 pm 7.00 to 9.00 pm</i>	<i>Morning Meditation, Foodbank Afternoon Tea Pulse Group, games in Hall</i>
<i>3rd April</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>2.00 to 4.00 pm</i>	<i>Not So Young Club</i>
<i>6th April</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>10.00 am to 12.00 noon 7.15 pm</i>	<i>Coffee in the Hall, Church open Elders meeting</i>
<i>11th April</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>1.00 pm</i>	<i>Lunch Club Two</i>
<i>18th April</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>1.00 pm</i>	<i>Lunch Club</i>
<i>24th April</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>2.00 to 4.00 pm</i>	<i>Not So Young Club</i>
<i>25th April</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>2.15 pm</i>	<i>St Mary's Guild</i>
<i>30th April</i>	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>7.30 to 9.00 pm</i>	<i>Pulse Group, games, 17 Bell Lane</i>

WEEKLY EVENTS

(NB several activities are term-time only)

<i>Brownies & Rainbows (Term time)</i>	<i>Monday 5.30 to 7.00 pm</i>
<i>Choir Around the Piano (Term Time)</i>	<i>Monday 7.30 to 9.00 pm</i>
<i>Carers and Toddlers (Term Time)</i>	<i>Monday 9.30 to 11.30 am</i>
<i>Wheatley Singers (Term Time)</i>	<i>Tuesday 7.10 to 9.00 pm</i>
<i>Pre-School Music Group (Term time)</i>	<i>Wednesday 9.30 am and 10.30 am</i>
<i>Guides (Term time)</i>	<i>Wednesday 7.00 to 8.30 pm</i>
<i>Prayers and Breakfast</i>	<i>Thursday 8.00 am</i>
<i>Mindfulness Sitting Group</i>	<i>Thursday 9.00 to 9.40 am</i>
<i>Brownies & Rainbows (Term Time)</i>	<i>Thursday 5.00 to 6.30 pm</i>
<i>Table Tennis</i>	<i>Friday 10.00 am to 12 noon</i>
<i>Hymn Practice</i>	<i>Sunday 9.30 to 9.45 am</i>

REMEMBERING HAZEL HULL

By Robin Hull

(From the Eulogy given by Robin in the URC at the Service of Remembrance on Wednesday 22nd March, 2017)

Hazel Hull, a long standing member of this church, a friend to many, Aunt, Mother and Grandmother was born on the 29th December 1926, the oldest of 4 children. Unfortunately her only surviving brother was not well enough to travel to the Service of Remembrance, but her nephews and nieces were there. Mum died on 10th March 2017 but we should not focus on that date, but on the 90 years of her life.

The story goes that my Grandmother cooked tea for my Grandfather at 5.30 am, walked to the maternity home, gave birth to my mother and was back home to sort out breakfast. I think this start in life set the scene for her life: she just got on with things.

Mum grew up in the Jericho area of Oxford and lived through the depression and then the Second World War. We talk about austerity now, but can't really imagine how frugal these times were, in a family with 4 children. Mum was very generous with both her time and her money with donations to many charities, but in other ways she maintained a simple and economical way of life. Be that with her home baking and cooking or her lifetime interest in needlework. Mum was fortunate to get a scholarship to Oxford Central Girls School and left in 1942 at 16 to become a junior clerk at Oxfordshire County Council in the architect's office.

During the war the family visited wounded soldiers at the Radcliff Hospital, which was at the top of their street, to run errands for the soldiers, buying sweets and cigarettes, or to take them out in wheelchairs. In addition, as a family with 4 children they also managed to take in David, a refugee from London. Mum was an active member of the local Methodist Church in her teenage years, first as a member of the Youth Club and then involved in running it.

In 1946, following the war a young architect assistant returned from active service and started work in the same office as Mum. I understand that Peter was a quiet and reserved young man, resuming his career interrupted by the war. Mum has said that he was different to many of the other men returning, in that he would not brag or even talk about what he did in the war. Some secretaries bet Mum that she would not get him to ask her out within 3 months. Looking at Mum's reserved ways you may have problems picturing her chasing down her man, but she succeeded and got that date. After a long courtship and a



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK: 14-20th MAY

Refugees: Our focus this year is on the displaced: Home is where we raise families and welcome friends – a secure place from which to go out into the world. For people living in poverty, loss of 'home' is devastating to hopes of living a fulfilled and productive life.

Christian Aid has been there in the aftermath of conflict, earthquakes, floods and cyclones; assessing the needs of the homeless, providing the foundations of safety essential food, access to clean water, hygiene items and emergency shelter.

We're also fighting for communities caught up in the upheavals of health pandemics and the devastating effects of climate change.

Source: Christian Aid is the official relief and development agency of 41 British and Irish churches, and works to support sustainable development, stop poverty, support civil society and provide disaster relief in South America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, and many other regions.

Liz & Tony Barry

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.

Deadline: The deadline for the May Newsletter is Wednesday 19th April. Please send email copy to newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk and paper copy may be handed to Jim or Moira Watson

Bi-blog by Laurence Devlin

Last month we started examining the pervading presence of violent texts in the Bible, texts that very often we have absolutely no idea are there or if we do, we don't necessarily consider as "wrongful" because the writers of the Bible are presenting it as "virtuous" violence condoned by God. In the last 40/50 years, scholars and interpreters have given a lot of attention to these violent texts, dealing with them however in very different ways:

One way consists in simply dismissing them as *primitive* and *inferior* to later teachings especially from the New Testament. I would contend that this is in fact quite a dangerous position as it often gives rise to a rejection of our Jewish heritage as Christians, based on the alleged moral superiority of the Gospels instead of accentuating the continuity between the two faiths and between the two sets of writings. It also smacks of "Marcionism" after the 2nd century theologian, Marcion of Sinope, who rejected the Old Testament as being irrelevant for Christians and who believed that the Hebrew God was a separate and lower entity than the all-forgiving God of the New Testament. Fortunately, he was condemned by the church authorities of his time as a dangerous heretic! But I dare say, although his position is certainly not explicitly adopted throughout the churches, it sometimes seems to creep in when one hears Christians say that they are "striving to be a New Testament church" or "the most relevant Scripture for us is the New Testament". If anybody is tempted to think this, it is worth reminding them that there would not be a New Testament without the Old and there would not be Christianity without ancient Judaism!

The second position stresses that the cultural distance between biblical times and today is so huge that it is necessary to *seek to apply the Bible's underlying principles of love and mercy* rather than specific commands which are clearly outdated. This is undoubtedly true but not only does this sound very vague but it does not tackle the real issue of violent texts. It is rather like the ostrich position: If you put your head in the sand and ignore the problem, it will go away. It does not of course and many people meanwhile, continue to read the Bible literally, forgetting that ethics change according to the time and the culture they emanate from. For example, if we accept that Leviticus 18:22 is right in condemning homosexuality as an "abomination" why don't we follow Exodus 21:7 which sanctions the sale of one's daughter into slavery! This sounds facetious but this is

precisely what some Christians are doing: using some biblical texts when it suits their own prejudices and ignoring others when it does not.

The third position is *entering into conversation with violent texts and strongly critiquing them if necessary*. It is necessary to do this however with an open mind and only if we genuinely consider the Old Testament *as a friend we love, value and respect*. In any friendship, there will be disagreements and even conflicts but if the friendship is strong, the people involved remain committed to one another, even when the differences cause great pain. BUT, as the scholar Matthew Schlimm wryly remarks, “friendship with the Old Testament isn’t for the faint-hearted as it can be messy, confusing, shocking and seemingly absurd to our 21st century western minds”. But then we don’t always understand our friends, but they often give us insights into things that we wouldn’t receive otherwise, especially friends from other cultures if we are lucky enough to have them. Similarly, the Old Testament does give us great insights into God and living godly lives but when it comes to violent, racist or sexist texts, *we’ve got to ask honest questions and challenge them*.

It is also worth stating that recognizing some texts as highly problematic *does not deny the Bible’s power and authority*. It simply recognizes, as Eric Steibert writes, that “for all the truth that the Bible contains, it is not always for us in the 21st century, a perfect guide when it comes to matters of ethics, morality and theology”. The Bible DOES have a dark side and quite a few flaws, something which is not necessarily easily acknowledged by those who regard these texts as “Scripture”. We need however to be acutely aware of how we, as believers, read the Bible and how deeply it has shaped and still shapes the way we think about what we believe *because biblical texts are neither neutral nor innocent*. The writers have shaped their texts in a certain way because they want the readers to see things from a certain perspective. Just as a film director carefully controls the viewers’ gaze, allowing them to see only what he chooses to show them, biblical texts attempt to focus the reader’s attention on certain things or certain points of view and totally exclude others.

This awareness applies especially when we consider the role assigned to God by the writers in many violent episodes. As discussed last month, a considerable amount of “virtuous violence” can be classified as *divine violence* or *divinely-sanctioned violence* and God is routinely portrayed as committing and commanding violent acts. This raises serious ethical and moral questions about the character of God especially when the victims happen to be innocent civilians,

women or children. It is therefore of paramount importance *to distinguish between the “textual God and the actual God”*. The textual God is a literary creation by writers belonging to the victors’ view of history pushing their own personal agenda. The actual God is a living reality. The two should never be simplistically equated.

So where do we go from there then and what do we do with these “violent” texts? I suggest that we choose to read them “non-violently” which, in practice, means *in ways that respect all people, Israelite and Canaanite, women and men, straight and gay, Gentile and Jew and consider every point of view* and not only the one that the writer wants us to consider. For example, the story of the Israelites delivered from Egypt and the “conquest” of the land of Canaan as recounted in Exodus, has inspired many oppressed people, be it in Latin America or in the U.S. Deep South, *but is being read very differently* by Christian Native-Americans, (the ones we used to call “red Indians” in pre-politically correct times). They and other indigenous populations such as the Aborigines of Australia or various tribes of the Amazon Basin (converted to Christianity by the Portuguese) *do not identify at all with the Israelites in full conquest mode*, but rather with the original innocent Canaanite population, mercilessly annihilated by the Israelites, following Yahweh’s command. If we consider their point of view and read “against the text,” we may discover that *the story of Israel is not the whole story* and that those ignored voices have something to teach us *now* about the status of indigenous populations and other oppressed people *whose voice we never hear* and about their rights as human beings and nations.

When we read this way, *honestly and critically engaging with the text*, with our eyes wide open, not only do we recognize that the Bible does have moral and theological limitations even if we fully recognise its power and authority, but we read in ways that promote justice, real liberation and full human dignity. This, surely can only be highly beneficial to the church and the broader society.