

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



November 2019

Covering Thoughts

What are your thoughts about November with its mists and melancholy, early evenings and pearly dawns? Do you dislike the dampness in the air and washing slow to dry?

It is the end of autumn colour. The last leaves linger tenuously on the branches and fruit lays rotting beneath apple trees. Not often now the smell of bonfire, though wood smoke still curls from some chimneys. The final flights of migrating birds are over and we prepare for the onslaught of cold winds and driving rain.

It is a time of turning. A time to value the concluding season and to look forward to the next. It is in between time, when there can be a sense of loss, regrets and low spirits. However it can also be a time to focus positively on indoor things. No longer the warmth and light to call us outdoors, we can turn our attention to books and hobbies, socializing or just simply baking.

Winter brings its wonders: days of clear cold skies, the splendour of late sunrises and early sunsets, and above all for me a vision of trees. Now their dress of leaves is shed, their stature and structure can be admired. It is the old trees that have the most to offer us here, with their wealth of history revealed in their twists and hollows, splits and cracks, lost limbs and sharp shapes.

There is a parable here for those of us who advance in years regretting the loss of youth with its vigour and beauty. All those joys and achievements, trials and traumas of life have made us who we are. Hopefully, through them we have learned wisdom and have much to offer. So I am thinking that November is a good opportunity for getting together, listening and sharing, and simply celebrating who we have become.

Christine

Christine's lovely paintings of the two trees in Shotover, the oak and the silver-birch, are safe and well in our home! Please call in if you would like to see them.

Allison

Pastoral Letter

Is there anybody there!

We seem to have been thinking a lot recently as a church about communication. There have been “conversations” – in meetings, face to face, and by email – about banners, posters, signage, press releases, use of digital media and so on.

Communication was a topic at the recent Synod meeting, and the Communications Team from the national URC office shared with us some of their thinking on the subject, particularly about the use of digital media – social media like Facebook and Twitter, websites and so on. One or two of us felt that the speakers were perhaps more proficient at web communication than addressing meetings (!), but nonetheless, what they said gave food for thought. Apparently, for instance, 94% of young people go online every day via social media apps, and use them to keep in touch with people they have met, not just with online contacts.

Coincidentally, there was an article on the BBC news website on just this topic (“Holy Tech!”), which included a reminder that digital communication isn’t just a “frill” or only for younger folk. Geraint Harries, a technology specialist for St John the Evangelist Church in Lancashire, told of a parishioner who credited the church’s Facebook page for her decision to return to church. Weekly posts on the church’s social media page which asked “How can we pray for you today?” resonated with the woman, who was going through a divorce. “Sometimes it can be daunting to turn up in person to a service, so connecting online, more anonymously, can make it easier to take that first step into the building”, comments Geraint.

We are very grateful to Phyllis for what she does in this area, particularly with the website, but it would be good for our church to have a presence on social media, and elders have been giving some thought to how this might be achieved.

However, it’s also important, I think, to remember that websites and social media are only the mechanisms for communication. We also need to give thought to “content” – what is our message?

I’m reminded that when Jesus spoke to crowds – from a boat, rather than online – he told stories, and perhaps that’s a key to our own communication. We all find stories helpful; the BBC news website tells stories. Its article about digital media

and the church didn't say "this is what churches are doing", it told a story about a particular church. At Wheatley URC we've much appreciated hearing each other's stories when faith journeys have been shared. These are often very personal, to be shared with people we know, not with an on-line audience of strangers, but perhaps there are stories of our church which we can share through digital media?

St John the Evangelist church, quoted in the BBC article, has found that people engaged with material which offered something to them – "can we pray for you", so again something worth considering. Most of the sermons preached each week at Wheatley URC are available on our website for people to listen to, and Phyllis says that they are accessed a significant number of times, showing there is interest in things of faith.

However, all of this is of course not an end in itself, but a way of inviting people into our worshipping community of God's people. St John the Evangelist is the fastest growing church in the Blackburn diocese, much of which is credited to a strong digital presence, but as Geraint Harries comments, "it's important to remember that the digital presence is a shop window for your church and then it's down to the church whether people stay and remain engaged ...".'

Something to reflect on as we look to the future!

Every blessing,

Pauline

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Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the members in Moira Watson's pastoral list: Jean Boxall, Pat Howard, Zena Knight, Frances Simpson, Liz & Tony Barry, Bev Paton & family.

We also ask you to pray for the members of the Children's Education Team: Malcolm Benson, Ann Hardiman, Mark Williams.

~ ~ ~

Thank you

How many times have we heard the words 'I meant to do that before now'? Well here I am echoing that very phrase, so I can't let any more time go by without thanking members of our church for their instant rally to provide a meal to celebrate Joan's life.

That deed will always be in my thoughts. A real demonstration of Christian fellowship. Jesus also liked to partake in a meal with company. Let us not forget the Last Supper. One last thought.

Lest we forget Gethsemane.

Lest we forget his agony.

Thank you.

Love **John Kidd**



Commitment for Life

As many of you know, Wheatley URC is registered as a 'Commitment for Life' church. Just in case you are unsure, 'Commitment for Life' is the United Reformed Church's global justice programme. It enables and encourages congregations to pray, advocate and take action for the most vulnerable people. Each church chooses one of the four areas covered by the programme. At Wheatley we support work done in Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territory. The work is carried out through Christian Aid. *'It works with more than twenty Israeli and Palestinian organisations to protect human rights, access services and build peace based on justice for all'.*

Please keep up to date by reading the information booklets enclosed with your newsletter. If you can, 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. In the last few years this has amounted to around £250.

Thank you very much indeed and have fun with the packet of seeds!

Robert Harding

Our Harvest Celebration

This year, in complete contrast to last year, we decided to celebrate our harvest thanksgiving in an original way bearing in mind that not only was it a Christian Aid fund-raising Sunday but also a food share lunch.



Much as we enjoyed last year's festival on the farm with an al fresco lunch, the prognostication of rain and cooler weather determined us to stay indoors and glorify our church which is nearing completion of its Cogwheel project.



The church looked magnificent with a huge array of colourful berries and fruit tastefully arranged throughout; the singing was uplifting and as for lunch- why, it was a truly epicurean feast and thanks should go to all the providers and organisers (and washers-up).



But what was new this year, was the 'entertainment' organized by Liz Barry and the Care 4 the World team to plug the gap between the end of the church service and the beginning of guzzling. All most amusing and a soothing diversion which filled the time nicely.

Sybil

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# The Magic of Music

“How often, making music, we have found  
A new dimension in the world of sound”

Many of us in our congregation enjoy music and singing, as is obvious week by week in our services, but I don't remember singing this hymn (414).

When in our music God is glorified,  
and adoration leaves no room for pride,  
it is as though the whole creation cried:

*Alleluia!*

How oft, in making music, we have found  
a new dimension in the world of sound  
as worship moved us to a more profound

*Alleluia!*

So has the Church, in liturgy and song,  
in faith and love, through centuries of wrong,  
borne witness to the truth in every tongue:

*Alleluia!*

And did not Jesus sing a psalm that night  
when utmost evil strove against the light?  
Then let us sing, for whom he won the fight:

*Alleluia!*

Let every instrument be tuned for praise;  
Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise,  
and may God give us faith to sing always:

*Alleluia!*

**Frances Simpson**

**Note from the editor:** This sounds like an invitation! 😊

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# Cogwheel Celebration Weekend



Save the Date

11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2020

We're planning a full programme of events to celebrate the completion of our project.

Although the exact programme is not yet confirmed (watch this space), we will be including a range of events to appeal to all ages and tastes.

Already we can announce that there will be a concert on the Saturday evening with Alyn Shipton and Roger Simmonds on the bill, a Family Board Games Café on Saturday afternoon, a quiet service of meditation and movement on the Sunday morning and the celebrations will culminate in a service of Dedication for the Mulberry Room on Sunday afternoon.

As ever we will be offering true Wheatley URC hospitality throughout. So do make a note in your next year's diary so you won't miss out.

11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2020



## Christmas Carol Service Choir

As the Festive Season will soon be upon us, we hope that our choir will be able to sing again at the Carol Service on December 22nd. Last year both at Christmas and Easter the singing was wonderful! Rehearsals will start on Sunday November 17th at 9am. This will give us plenty of time to perfect our carols.



I'm sure there are some lights hiding under bushels so please come and join us. We can all sing! See you on the 17<sup>th</sup> November for our first rehearsal.

**Ann Gajda**



# CHURCH CALENDAR FOR November 2019

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

| Date                  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Nov                          | 10 <sup>th</sup> Nov | 17 <sup>th</sup> Nov      | 24 <sup>th</sup> Nov |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Service</b>        | Joint Morning Service with H.C. - All Saints | Morning Service      | Morning Service with H.C. | Morning Service      |
| <b>Time</b>           | 10 am                                        | 10 am                | 10 am                     | 10 am                |
| <b>Worship Leader</b> | Rev. Pauline Main                            | Rev. Pauline Main    | Rev. Daphne Preece        | Rev. Colin Thompson  |
| <b>Vestry Elder</b>   | <b>Liz Barry</b>                             | Peter Devlin         | <b>Moira Watson</b>       | Catherine Harding    |
| <b>Welcomer</b>       | <b>Malcolm Benson</b>                        | Catherine Harding    | <b>Tom Goss</b>           | Liz Barry            |
| <b>Steward</b>        | Joel Rasmussen                               | Ann Hardiman         | Barbara Joiner            | Charles Bennett      |
| <b>Reader</b>         | Liz Barry                                    | Charles Bennett      | Joel Rasmussen            | Tom Goss             |
| <b>Prayers</b>        | Bobbie Stormont                              | Joel Rasmussen       | Robert Harding            | Ellen Webster        |
| <b>Flowers</b>        | Phyllis Williams                             | Tony Barry           | Catherine Hughes          | Barbara Joiner       |

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

Simple evening worship in the style of Taize at Barns Close 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November

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## COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS for November 2019

Note: leaders may choose to use other readings

| Date                 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Nov            | 10 <sup>th</sup> Nov           | 17 <sup>th</sup> Nov    | 24 <sup>th</sup> Nov |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>First Reading</b> | Isaiah 1: 10-18                | Job 19: 23-27a                 | Malachi 4: 1-2a         | Jeremiah 23: 1-16    |
| <b>Psalm</b>         | Psalm 32: 1-7                  | Psalm 17: 1-9                  | Psalm 98                | Psalm 46             |
| <b>New Testament</b> | 2 Thessalonians 1: 1-4 & 11-12 | 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-5 & 13-17 | 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13 | Colossians 1: 11-20  |
| <b>Gospel</b>        | Luke 19 : 1-10                 | Luke 20: 27-38                 | Luke 21: 5-19           | Luke 23: 33-43       |

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# OCCASIONAL EVENTS in November 2019

|                      |          |                                      |                                                                                                        |
|----------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3rd Nov              | Sunday   | 11.30am<br>2.30 to 4.30 pm<br>6.30pm | Food Bank<br>Church Meeting<br>Afternoon tea in Hall<br>Pulse – Half Term                              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Nov  | Thursday | 10 am to noon                        | Coffee Morning, Church open                                                                            |
| 10th Nov             | Sunday   | 6.30pm<br>7.30 pm                    | Pulse - Games URC Hall<br>Taize at 3 Barns Close Holton                                                |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Monday   | 2.00 to 4.00 pm                      | Not So Young Club                                                                                      |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Tuesday  | 1.00 pm                              | Lunch Club Two                                                                                         |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Sunday   | 8.00am<br>9.00am<br>6.30pm           | Morning Meditation and breakfast<br>Carol Service Choir Practice<br>Pulse Discussion Mulberry Room URC |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Tuesday  | 1.00pm                               | Lunch Club                                                                                             |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Sunday   | 6.30 pm<br>7.30pm                    | Pulse - Games URC Hall<br>Taize at 3 Barns Close Holton                                                |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Monday   | 2.00 to 4.00 pm                      | Not So Young Club                                                                                      |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Tuesday  | 2.15 pm                              | St Mary's Guild                                                                                        |

## WEEKLY EVENTS

(NB several activities are term-time only)

|                                            |                                       |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Mindfulness Sitting Group</i>           | <i>Monday 8.50 to 9.40 am</i>         |
| <i>Brownies &amp; 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>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 8.50 to 9.40 am</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>         |

**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.

**Deadlines:** Friday 15th November 2019 is the deadline for the December Newsletter. Please send copy to: [newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk) and not to individuals and please try to use A5 layout. Paper copy can be given to Bobbie Stormont – again A5.

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## Being Church in Other Ways

The Elders have recently been discussing ways of communicating our message and vision to the community and how our buildings, new and old can be of use to the village. We can easily be discouraged about decreasing numbers attending church, but people still want answers to the big questions of life: What is my purpose in life? Why is there suffering in the world? Is death the end? etc. They may not find the answers by coming to formal church services, but many do engage in other ways with the church and a lot of people say they are “spiritual” but not “religious.” We can accommodate this not only by letting community groups use our building for various activities but by providing a space for contemplation and engaging in a dialogue through social media.

Another way might be to provide candles in the church or in the Mulberry Room provided someone is in attendance. Candles are not as much part of protestant worship as they are in Catholic and Orthodox churches but if a recent post on Mumsnet (an Internet forum for parents) is anything to go by, we might consider introducing them. One mum said; “Hi, I am not religious although I do believe in God but I just wondered if anyone can just walk into a church at any time and light a candle for a loved one? Hope I don’t sound daft, but my dad died almost a year ago and due to problems with the cemetery rules, I have nowhere to go at all to remember him. So I was thinking of going to the church near his old house and asking if I could light a candle for him. Can anyone help?” In response, a reader said; “I always light a candle for those who have died - for friends, relatives, and for my patients who pass away. It makes me feel that I have done one last small thing for them.” Another contributor wrote that lighting a candle helps him as it

is “just a nice, calm time to think of good memories.” In addition to, or in place of a candle, visitors could be invited to write a prayer.

The Times recently carried an article recording the growth, year on year, of those visiting cathedrals. A small minority of visitors said that they came intending to pray and light a candle but in fact over 50% of visitors lit a candle: 250,000 candles were lit in York Minster last year alone! Those visitors said they loved the silence that they found there as silence is such a rare commodity nowadays in our media-dominated lives. For many non-churchgoers, lighting a candle in a church is also finding a special place for quietness and reflection: perhaps the only one in a busy noisy world, a short moment “out of time,” for remembrance, reflection, tears and hope. Sitting anonymously in quiet contemplation in church, away from the distractions outside can be immensely helpful in focusing our minds on the big questions of life and a candle is a useful tool for this. Personally, I always light a candle in churches I visit. I then stand and remember the faces and voices of family and “precious friends hid in death's dateless night” (Shakespeare Sonnet 30). I know that no one will come and talk to me or interrupt me or ask what I am doing.

Outside church, we also love candlelight: fragile and beautiful, yet hard to put out. It is associated with the familiar rites of passage, birthdays, weddings and funerals. It can symbolize hope, defiance or sadness when carried in procession or marches. Painters such as De la Tour use the subtlety of a candlelight to illuminate a face. We often use them to create a special atmosphere and many competitions offer a “romantic candle-lit dinner for two” at a well-known restaurant as a prize. However, from earliest times, candles were symbols of God’s presence: “The light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.” (John 1:5)

**Peter Devlin**

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## Poem on Psalm 23

My Shepherd is the Lord;  
I want for nothing.  
In green fields I lie down  
At His sweet bidding.

Beside His quiet streams  
I walk reflecting.  
My soul His love renews,  
My wrong forgiving.

He guides me in right paths,  
For His own Glory;  
E'en though in night I walk,  
His Light is o'er me.

Though foes may me surround,  
His Spirit feeds me,  
My head with oil provides;  
Joy overwhelms me!

My path is good; mercy  
Blesses all life's days;  
In God's presence I'll rest,  
For now, and always.

***David Herring***

*(Poem 1994, re-written 2019)*

# Autumn



Nature's prayer flags



***High Street, Wheatley, OX33 1UE***

**CHURCH CONTACTS**

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