

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



January 2020

Covering Thoughts

As New Year approaches I have an image of it as a time of turning. Western thought usually takes a linear view but another way of looking at time is cyclical and rhythmic. We find this view in Ecclesiastes: 'What has been will be again... there is nothing new under the sun'. We also see it in the cycle of the seasons, and in Indian imagery of the wheel of life.

A linear view of time leads to an emphasis on the future. In the work situation everything has to do with planning, targets and projected growth. Circular time focuses more on the present moment and we may think of the familiar cliché: What goes round comes round.

Anne Hills wrote a song called The Turning of the Year. Part of the lyrics go: 'We will sing at the turning of the year knowing we are a short time here. So we will sing at the dancing, spinning, turning of the year'. It is worth looking up the verses to the song and even listening to it on You Tube.

While Anne's song has a practical application T. S. Eliot's ode to time in Burnt Norton is philosophical:

At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;

Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,

But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,

Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,

Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,

There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.

The wheels of the cogwheel project have been turning steadily over the past year and now we have the pleasure of putting the new Mulberry Room to good use. Do we have anyone who remembers the completion of the previous rooms opened in 1965? Will we see further refurbishments as the years turn on?

Christine

Pastoral Letter

I hope it's not too late to wish everyone a Happy New Year. Here at Wheatley URC a new year brings us a new room to celebrate, to continue to use and to share with the community. It brings us a new minister; no, I'm not retiring just yet, but Cara will be with us in a new role, focussing on mission here in Wheatley, and with Summertown and Marston. I'm sure that we'll all want to support her at her Ordination and Induction service at Summertown on 25th January, at 3pm. Cara is a joy to work with and I'm personally delighted that she will be continuing in our three churches, and look forward to sharing with her (whilst allowing her, her independence!).

The new year also brings, of course, a new government, and a new post-brexite direction for our country, something not everyone will welcome, though I hope we will uphold the politicians in our prayers – theirs is not the easiest task.

Change can be difficult, and, as I say, not always welcome. Sometimes, perhaps, we look back nostalgically to a time when ... youngsters behaved themselves ... there were bobbies on the beat ... Arsenal could play football ... (insert your own thoughts here!).

We may turn to our faith to help us cope, perhaps looking to the picture of an unchanging God, which is found at times in the scriptures (eg Malachi 3:6 "For I the Lord do not change ...") and sometimes picked up by hymn writers: "change and decay in all around I see; O, thou who changest not, abide with me" (*R&S* 336). Here is God as a bulwark against the chaos which is seen to be brought about by change.

However, I do question this image of a changeless God. God's essence is creative: God brought this wonderful universe into being, a universe full of infinite variety; and as we have recently celebrated, God took another creative initiative, coming to be one of us, living a human life, subject to all the uncertainties we face day by day. God's Spirit is likened to the wind, blowing freely, where it chooses (John 3:8), hovering over the waters of creation (Gen 1:2), full of movement rather than solidity.

And we are beings made in God's image, hard-wired to use our creative talents. And creativity, it seems to me, is all about change, about stimulating new ideas, and through science, technology, music and the arts, medicine etc etc doing new things - making life fuller and richer and the world a better place. And all this in the spirit of the God who tells his people "I am about to do a new thing" (Is 43:19) and "See, I am making all things new." (Rev 21:5).

When the bible speaks of God as unchanging, I don't think it means in the sense of an unyielding force; rather it is speaking about his faithfulness to his people, to his promises. God's people may have turned away, but God has not abandoned them (cf Malachi 3: 6-7), God's people may face challenging times, but God will be in the struggle with them.

So in this new year, may our faithful God be with us as we try to respond creatively to the world around us and serve God and our community.

With every blessing to you and yours.

Pauline Main

Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the members in Tom Goss's pastoral list: Laurence & Peter Devlin, Colin Thompson & Herthe, Catherine & Robert Harding, John Kidd, Phyllis & Mark Williams.

We also ask you to pray for the members of the Finance Team: Chris Shelley, Robert Harding, Bob Webster and Mike Matejtschuk.

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ACE Team - A new opportunity in 2020

Come and join this ministry team

The ACE team would like to invite anyone interested in joining this team to come to our first meeting of the new year on 30th January at 2.30pm in the Mulberry Room. Some members of the current team will be standing down in January to offer their services in other ways within the church community.

This team aims to offer ways to develop members of our church and the local community in various forms of Christian education through open dialogue, lectures, discussions and house groups. You can read about their exciting and recently developed plan in the Annual Reports document of 2019.

There are always lively discussions at these meetings, and opportunities to offer and develop new ideas and ways to explore our faith. If you would like to chat with a current member about joining then please talk with either Pauline Main, Tom Goss, Bobbie Stormont, Sybil Beaton or Mark Williams.

Bobbie Stormont

YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO

A Service for the Induction and Ordination of Cara Heafey

**3pm, Saturday 25th January 2020
Summertown United Reformed Church**

Please join us to celebrate as Cara is ordained and inducted into ministry working initially with Wheatley, Summertown and Marston URCs with a focus on mission.

Light refreshments will be served after the service.

RSVP to Revd Pauline Main
paulinemain@virginmedia.com

Wheatley Memory Café

1st Thursday of the month - 10.30am to 11.50am

Our plans to set up a monthly Memory Café for Wheatley are coming to fruition. We will be opening our doors (both the church hall and the Mulberry Room) on Thursday 5th March to people living with dementia, together with their carers.

However, we do need to find help to ensure the café runs smoothly. Each session will include tea/coffee (of course!), followed by time for a range of activities, then some musical items and a closing prayer. We already have a team of helpers on the coffee/tea front which is much appreciated.

The talents of our congregation and the wider community are surely not hiding under that bushel! We have some ideas for the content of these sessions, but we are looking for an Activities Co-ordinator. This person would be responsible for planning half an hour of activities each month, by finding volunteers to run an individual session based on their particular interests - perhaps crafts, puzzles, memory items, film clips or other appropriate pastimes. Please speak to one of us if you can help occasionally or take on the role of Co-ordinator.

In addition, it is essential that we have one or preferably two people who will take overall responsibility for running the mornings. Your ideas and practical assistance will be welcomed.

Thank you **Pauline M, Cara, Laurence, Ann B, Barbara, Ellen & Bob**

**Wheatley United Reformed Church
Community Celebration
and
Official Opening of**



The
Mulberry
Room

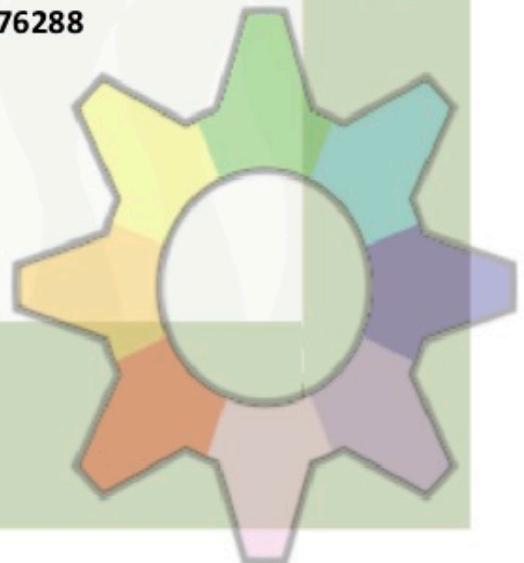
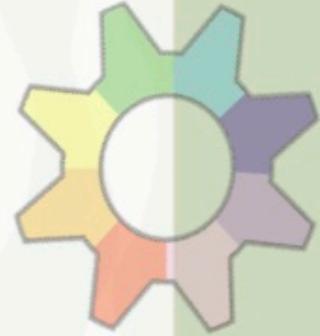
You are warmly invited to celebrate with us the official opening of our new community room

11th and 12th January

A great opportunity for our friends and neighbours to join us in celebration and see the new and refurbished facilities

To help us in planning please RSVP indicating all the events you would like to attend

secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk or 01865 876288



CHURCH CALENDAR for January 2020

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

Date	5 th Jan	12 th Jan	19 th Jan	26 th Jan
Service	Morning Service with H.C.	Morning Meditative Worship & Afternoon Cogwheel Dedication Service	Joint Morning Service Wheatley Primary School - Week of prayer for Christian Unity	Morning Service
Time	10 am	10 am & 3.00pm	10.30am	10 am
Worship Leader	Rev. Pauline Main	10am Richard Bainbridge 3pm Mark Williams	Rev. Colin Thompson	Donald Norwood
Vestry Elder	Moira Watson	Tom Goss		Malcolm Benson
Welcomer	Malcolm Benson	Catherine Harding		Peter Devlin
Steward	Zena Knight	Christine Bainbridge		Ellen Webster
Reader	Ellen Webster	Moira Watson		Wendy Benson
Prayers	Richard Wood	Barbara Joiner		Bobbie Stormont
Flowers	Liz Barry	Christine Bainbridge		Wendy Benson

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

Simple evening worship in the style of Taize at Barns Close on Sunday 26th January.

COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS for January 2020

Note: leaders may choose to use other readings

Date	5 th Jan	12 th Jan	19 th Jan	26 th Jan
First Reading	Isaiah 60: 1-6	Isaiah 42: 1-9	Isaiah 49: 1-7	Isaiah 9: 1-4
Psalm	Psalm 72: 1-7 & 10-14	Psalm 29	Psalm 40: 1-11	Psalm 27: 1 & 4-9
New Testament	Ephesians: 3 1-12	Acts 10: 34-43	1 Corinthians 1: 1-9	1 Corinthians 1: 10-18
Gospel	Matthew 2: 1-12	Matthew 3: 13-17	John 1: 29-42	Matthew 4: 12-23

OCCASIONAL EVENTS in January 2020

2 nd Jan	Thursday	10 am to noon	Coffee Morning, Church open
5 th Jan	Sunday	2.30 to 4.30 pm 6.30pm	Food Bank Afternoon tea in Hall No Pulse
6 th Jan	Monday	2.00 to 4.00 pm	Not So Young Club
9 th Jan	Thursday	7.20pm	Elders' Meeting
12 th Jan	Sunday	6.30pm	Pulse – Games URC Hall
14 th Jan	Tuesday	1.00 pm	Lunch Club Two
19 th Jan	Sunday	6.30pm	Pulse – Discussion Mulberry Room
20 th Jan	Monday	2.00 to 4.00 pm	Not So Young Club
21 st Jan	Tuesday	1.00pm	Lunch Club
26 th Jan	Sunday	11.30am 6.00pm 7.30pm	Church Meeting Pulse – Games URC Hall Taize at 3 Barns Close Holton
28 th Jan	Tuesday	2.15pm	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 & 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>

Changes to our Church Diary for 2020

After reviewing our regular meeting dates, the elders have decided to arrange Church Meetings on the *fourth* Sunday of alternate months through 2020 i.e. 26th January, 22nd March, 24th May, 26th July, 27th September (also AGM), 22nd November. Please make a note of these in your new diaries. The Church Meeting is at the heart of how we conduct ourselves as a church and would be nothing without you.

Elders Meetings will continue to be on the first Thursday of each month - normally. We hope this scheme will reduce the pressure on first Sunday activities as well as allowing sufficient time of preparation between the preceding elders meeting and the church meeting.

Phyllis

Deadlines

Wednesday 15th January 2020 is the deadline for the January Newsletter. Please send copy to: newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk and not to individuals and please try to use A5 layout. Paper copy can be given to Jim Watson – again A5.

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Church Charitable Donations 2019

The Finance Ministry Team met on 9th December primarily to decide which charitable organisations we would be supporting with the balance of our charitable giving for this year. We donate a total of 12.5% of our annual income each year and some of these funds are paid away as and when the need arises during the year. The figure we were left to distribute was £4,100.

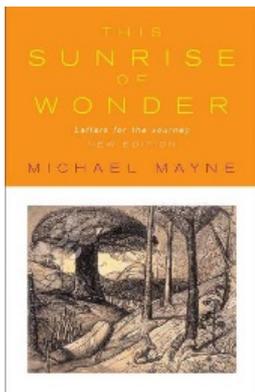
Thanks to everyone who provided suggestions of charities for our consideration. We had previously decided that we should try and reflect our theme for the year, 'God's World in Our Hands' in our charitable giving, although not exclusively so.

We therefore decided to make the following donations:

- ◆ Gatehouse Oxford: £500
- ◆ Practical Action: £900
- ◆ Water Aid: £900
- ◆ Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust: £900
- ◆ Commitment for Life: £900 (in addition to personal donations made during the year).

The full list of all our charitable giving for the year, will be shown in the annual accounts as usual. *Chris Shelley (Treasurer) and the Finance Team*

Book Share: 'This Sunrise of Wonder' by Michael Mayne



My book share choice is 'This Sunrise of Wonder' by Michael Mayne who was Dean of Westminster in the 1980s and 1990s. He has local connections in that he was trained at Cuddesdon Theological College. Robert Bailey gave me this book many years ago and I treasure it.

It is written as a series of letters to his grandchildren urging them not to miss the wonders of creation, of art, of literature, of music and he gives dozens of examples. He insists on the value of wonder and I return to this book again and again and it is truly life enhancing. It reminds me somewhat of the radio programme 'Something Understood' which is broadcast on Sundays at 6am which links the inner and outer worlds, the ordinariness, yet extraordinariness of this world.

The title was inspired by this GK Chesterton quote:

'At the back of our brains, so to speak, there is a forgotten blaze or burst of astonishment at our own existence. The object of the artistic and spiritual life is to dig for this sunrise of wonder'. *Ann Hardiman*

Community Celebration Event Programme

Saturday

Open all day from 10am for viewing - refreshments available.

10am
– 12noon

Open - Coffee and Cake, Bookstall

12:30pm
– 2pm

Soup Lunch

- Donations to Christian Aid

2:30pm
– 5pm

Family Board Games Café

led by Sustainable Wheatley in aid of
Compassion in World Farming

7pm
– 9pm

Community Concert

items from: Alyn Shipton & friends,
Roger Simmonds & friends, members of
Holton Players, Wheatley Productions
and others

Sunday

10am

Meditative worship service

followed by: coffee

3pm

Dedication Service

led by Revd Mark Williams, Convenor of
our Cogwheel Team

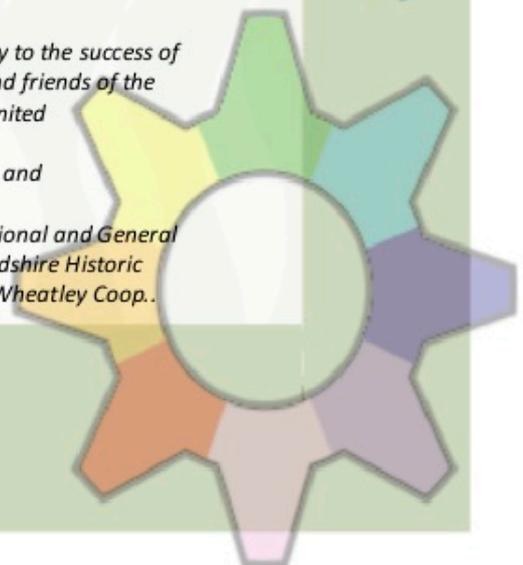
Followed by

Afternoon tea

The church wishes to thank all who have contributed so generously to the success of this project. Donations were received from the local community and friends of the church as well as church members and the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church.

The church was also delighted by the enthusiastic support of local and national charities and trusts:

the Allchurches Trust; Bernard Sunley Charitable Trust, Congregational and General Trust, FCC Communities Foundation, Garfield Weston Trust, Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust, and the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment and Wheatley Coop.



A Poem for January

The end of one year and the beginning of a new one is often the opportunity for us to take stock, looking back and looking forward. This is beautifully illustrated by the poem, “The Gate of the Year” by Minnie Haskins, written in 1908 and made famous when King George VI quoted it in his 1939 Christmas broadcast* at a time when Europe stood on the edge of an abyss:

“I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, “Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown”. And he replied “Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light, and safer than a known way.”

The poem was aptly chosen as it was a time of acute anxiety and fear for many when “wars and rumours of wars” (Matt. 24:6) loomed again, and our towns and villages were full of those who still bore the physical and mental wounds inflicted during World War 1.

The poem evokes for me very powerful images: There is the all-enveloping darkness that surrounds us and our natural fear of its power and nothingness, and yet also, the warm reassuring darkness when, as children, we were read stories and then kissed goodnight, the lights were turned off and we knew we were loved. I can also see an invitation to be vulnerable and put our trust in the unknown, despite our fear. I am sure many of us remember being taught by our parents how to ride a bicycle and then that magical moment when the helping hand let us go and we cycled on our own for the first time! I well remember that feeling of fear followed by a sense of freedom and exhilaration. I also recall when my father would stand behind me and tell me to fall backwards and he would of course catch me. I loved this game but there was always a moment of great apprehension each time I fell back.

The image of God holding our hand, mentioned in the poem, is profoundly reassuring. When we hold hands with someone there is no need for words or explanation. It is an instinctive gesture of unconditional love and acceptance. Shall we embrace 2020 then, trusting in God just as King George VI did, 80 years ago, in the knowledge that we have the strength to deal with anything and everything that may befall?

* The King’s Christmas message is on You tube at: <https://youtube/8GryNdlz2Xg>

Peter Devlin

Starshine

Wise men
Followed
A bright star;
It painted the way
In the dark,
Quietly,
Faithfully,
Towards the Son of Love,
Bethlehem Born.
He, the Everlasting Light,
Shines on throughout time,
For everyone,
And millions shine
For Him, the Light of Life!
And to each one,
He whispers constantly,
***'You're a star!
Keep shining!'***
And they worship Him,
Following Him,
The brightest Star of all;
Rejoicing in Him,
Seeking His wisdom,
And passing on His message
To others shining brightly, dimly,
Or not yet even ignited!
His stars impart the message
Over and over,
Often implied rather than stated;
And, reflecting,
Others begin to shine,
Looking to Him,
The Bright Morning Star,
In adoration,
For inspiration,
And to the eventual Dawning
Of His New Day,
When all shine and sing together,

And know
They are,
One and all,
Stars in Heaven
Shining for Him!
HALLELUJAH!

David Herring

*'For we have seen His star in the east,
and have come to worship Him.'* (Matt. 2:2b)

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Summertown United Reformed Church

Spring Lectures 2020 - 3 – 4.30pm

Friday 27th January: 'What is driving the increase in children's mental health issues and what can we do about it?'

Friday 21st February: 'What kind of police service do we want?'

Friday 20th March: 'Poverty and place in modern Britain – the dynamics of neighbourhood deprivation'

Lectures are held in the church and include discussion and tea

Tickets: £5 per person or £13 the series – available in advance or on the door

All proceeds donated to the Church building fund

Contact Beryl Knotts: 01865 510055 berylknotts@gmail.com

Foods from Around the World: Evening for Refugee Resource

The second delicious recipe from this very successful evening.

Borani Banjan (Afghan Aubergine Dish)

From the kitchen of Mariam - Serves 4

Ingredients:

2 aubergines $\frac{1}{3}$ cup olive oil
1 onion 4 tomatoes
3 garlic cloves, peeled & crushed
1 tsp salt $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp red chilli powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground turmeric $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground mint
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plain yogurt



Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180 c
2. Coat a baking tray with olive oil. Slice the aubergines lengthwise into strips of approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thickness. Lay the strips flat onto the coated tray. Pour about $\frac{1}{2}$ of olive oil onto the aubergines. Covering each strip
3. Bake in the oven 20-30 mins. Flip the strips halfway through.
4. Meanwhile prepare the onion topping.
5. Heat the remaining olive oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Finely chop the onions and add to the pan, frying for 4-5 mins until translucent. Dice the tomatoes and crush the garlic. Add tomatoes and $\frac{2}{3}$ garlic to the frying pan with salt, red chilli powder and turmeric. Cook over medium heat stirring continuously for approximately 10mins
6. Combine yogurt and remaining garlic
7. Remove aubergines from the oven and layer them in a serving dish. Spread the onion topping evenly on the aubergines.
8. Spoon the yogurt mixture on top, sprinkle with dried mint.

Serve warm or cold. Enjoy with rice or toasted pitta bread.

'Come to our Table' recipe books £7.50 from Liz Barry. Proceeds to Refugee Resource Oxford.

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High Street, Wheatley, OX33 1UE

CHURCH CONTACTS

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