

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



September 2021

Covering Thoughts

Richard suggested I mull over the idea of homecoming and use the painting of his desk for this month's newsletter. "It is September" he reminded me "and we think of the harvest home".

Although we are fortunate to still feel connected to the land as most of us live in a rural location, it seems ironic to celebrate the harvest being safely gathered in when there is a world pandemic and not enough person power to do most of the essential jobs to keep society going. Harvest festival could be seen as an idyll from a bygone age before the industrial revolution, and we cannot reverse the inventions which have led to a lot of the world's ecological problems.

Then returning to the harvest home we remember instead natural disasters leaving many homeless through extreme weather. So may we count ourselves among the fortunate and not take for granted the importance of our homes. They are places to find security and rest, acceptance and nourishment, and where we can offer these treasured values to all who visit.

I love sitting in a friends' home absorbing the atmosphere, enjoying the arrangement and choices made to make the home attractive. Likewise, it is always satisfying to tidy my spaces or make small changes so that new objects come into focus. Memories resurface through treasures collected or given by friends: a plant nurtured for years and coming into flower again, or the wildflowers in a special bowl on the scrubbed kitchen table.

It is a lifelong challenge to build a home and to keep it as a sanctuary, creating an atmosphere where we feel contented. As I begin to ponder this, I am drawn to paint interiors and still-lives. So let us think of the harvest home through September, the home that shows the fruits of our labours. For Richard at his desk his lifetime of study surrounds him. What does your home say about you?

Christine



Pastoral Letter

When I took the Sunday service last month, there was a glitch with the sound, which meant that the folk on Zoom could not hear my pearls of wisdom in the sermon! I didn't think you would want to read the whole sermon here, but thought you might like the reflective piece which I read at the end, and which was appreciated by some.

I found it when sorting out some papers, but sadly hadn't annotated it, so I can't credit the author or the publication it came from. It's title seems appropriate to the start of the football season!

Football at Night

"Some he has appointed to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, or pastors, or teachers. ..." Ephesians 4: 11 – and see vv1- 16.

This evening at the stadium, the night was stirring, peopled with ten thousand shadows. And when the floodlights had painted green the velvet of the great field, the night intoned a chorale, filled by ten thousand voices.

The master of ceremonies had given the signal to begin. The ball passed from foot to foot, slipped along the field, and flew away overhead. Each was at his post, taking the ball in turn, passing it to the next one, who was there to receive and pass again.

And because each one did his part in the right place, because each put forth the effort required, because each knew he needed all the others, slowly but surely the ball gained ground, and made the final goal!

While at the end, the immense crowd flowed into the narrow streets, I reflected, Lord, that human history, for us a long game, is for you this great liturgy, a ceremony initiated at the dawn of time, which will end only when the last celebrant has completed their final rite.

In this world, Lord, we each have our place. You, the far-sighted coach, have planned it for us.

You need us here, our sisters and brothers need us, and we need everyone.

It isn't the position I hold that is important, Lord, but the reality and strength of my presence. What difference whether I am a forward or in the defence, as long as I am fully what I should be?

Here Lord, is my day before me ...

Did I sit too much on the sidelines, criticizing the play of others?

Did I play my part well?

And when you were watching our side, did you see me there?

Did I co-operate with my team without seeking the limelight?

Did I play the game to obtain the victory, so that each one should have a part in it?

Did I battle to the end, in spite of setbacks, blows and bruises?

Was I troubled by the shouts and criticisms of the crowd?

Did I think of *praying* my part, remembering that in the eyes of God, this human game is the most religious of ceremonies?

I come in now to rest in the pavilion, Lord. Tomorrow, if you kick off, I'll play a new position ... and so each day.

Grant that this game, played with all my sisters and brothers, may fulfil all that you expect of us, so that when your last whistle interrupts our lives, we shall be chosen for the championship of heaven.

Love and prayers,

Pauline

Rev Pauline Main, Minister

~*~*~

Prayers

Please remember in your prayers our local friends: Karen & Gerrie Fourie, Robin & Jennie Gladwin, Cathy & Mike Hogan, Cynthia Nancy, Ann Newman, Jill Cansell and Frances Fielding.

Also remember members of the Hospitality Team: Catherine Harding, Liz Barry, Ann Gajda, Angela Holdaway, Barbara Joiner, Allison Towner, Ellen Webster and Debi Kidd.

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Birthday Wishes

A very happy, albeit slightly belated, 90th birthday to Pat Simpson for 16th August. We look forward to celebrating with her when we are able.

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Deadlines

16th September 2021 is the deadline for the October Newsletter. Please send copy to: newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk Paper copy can be given to Debi Kidd.

Disclaimer

The Editors welcome letters, articles and announcements from individuals and organisations, but reserve the right to publish or not.

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Summer Flowers

This beautiful photograph was sent in by Sybil. What a lovely display. Thank you, Sybil.



This photograph was sent in by Bobbie. It was taken at Rousham House in August. A real taste of summer. Thank you, Bobbie.



Falcon School Update

Challenges All Round!

It continues to be a challenging environment for the Falcon school development plans in Harare.

Firstly the 'Level 4' lockdown reintroduced in early July was extended by President Mnangagwa on August 9th, for a further 2 weeks.

So, schools have remained closed while the government try to accelerate the vaccination programme (only 7% of the population have been vaccinated); they still hope to re-open by end August.

This is sad news for the children as, unlike in the UK, they do not have on-line facilities for remote learning.

Secondly, in the temporary absence of pupils, Wilbert is keen to install the teachers 'quarters' roof but doesn't want to start until all required funds are available (still not enough yet) as it is uncommercial to 'stop-start' roofing work, and it also avoids raising the hopes of staff prematurely.

We still need a roof!



The drive to complete this building is critical, especially as the toilets and bathrooms in the four teachers' and caretaker's accommodation (the classroom blocks and a 'cupboard'!) do not have doors on them so privacy is far from ideal. The teachers also do their washing from these bathroom facilities; unfortunately, there is no hot water for this and there won't be until solar panels can eventually be installed, next year hopefully.

So as soon as the teachers' block has the roof fitted, they'll be moving in ...even though real floors (coverings) will not have been fitted!

Despite all this, Wilbert (and Lauren) are optimistic, as also are the teaching staff. Photos received show the Head Teacher, Vimbai Nyamakambo (with Wilbert holding her baby on his visit). She, her husband and baby all live on site, so they are looking forward to their new facilities.





Also seen standing with Wilbert is the 'second teacher' (Energy Pabvabango) standing in the classroom; he sleeps in the room behind him and must make sure he is dressed, washed and clear of his room before the pupils arrive in class.

It seems like the work to complete both the second classroom and teachers' accommodation (inc. insulation, proper floor coverings, final painting) will go through to the first quarter of 2022, before solar heating can even be considered, and it is within these areas that we at Wheatley URC hope to continue helping the Falcon staff and pupils.

Thank you so much everyone for all your support to date ... the **QUIZ WALK** now closes at the end of August, so please send your entries in if you have not done so already.

The 'winner' will be announced early September.

Wilbert's latest message to the Wheatley congregation on reading a copy of this news update.

'We thank God for the support that our friends at Wheatley U.R.C are giving. May the God Almighty bless and keep them well''

Care for the World Ministry Team



The Living Word

Lord
Who am I?
Just me

Lord
Who are you?
King of Kings
And Lord of Lords!

My life has at times
Been fractured
Torn
Broken

Your life is
Whole
Strong
Perfect!

Yet
When You saw me
Lying where I fell
You stooped
And lifted me up
With arms of love
And in those hands
I saw the scars
And in Your eyes
I saw the memory
Of when Your life was
Utterly fractured
Torn
Broken

Not because
You deserved death
But because
I deserved it
You, Son of God
Took my place

And now
Every time
I am falsely accused
You stand
In the dock
With me
And face
The world
Encouraging me
To do the same
And as earth's sneers
And my fears
Crumble into dust
The door swings open
And You and I
Walk free
But only because
Long ago
You, my God
With awesome power
To create or destroy
Stood, silent
In the dock
Then tumbled down
The Via Dolorosa
To Your rendezvous
With Death Itself
That humanity
Might live for ever!

Lost in awe
My words are poor
Your life you gave
Each soul to save!
Thank you, O Lord!
THE LIVING WORD!

HALLELUJAH!

David Herring 2010

Thursday Mornings in September

Prayer and Reflection time to start again, in the Mulberry Room at 10am on Thursday mornings from September 2nd.

This will follow Mindfulness and join with others for Coffee in the hall at 10.30am.

This would make for busy Thursday mornings, but it is proposed to have a 3month trial, which would, of course, be subject to current covid guidelines, and reviewed in the New Year.

We have missed 'Prayer Breakfasts', and this would be a way of coming together to share a prayer, a poem, reading or reflection.

Please let me know if you plan on coming, to ensure social distancing

Liz Barry

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Zoom Service Rotas for September 2021

Dates	Worship leaders	Readers	Intercessors
5 th Sept	Pauline	Summertown/Marston	
12 th Sept	Richard	Pauline Shelley	Ann Hardiman
19 th Sept	Colin - Harvest	Chris Shelley	Malcolm Benson
26 th Sept	Abigail Perrow (Candidate for Ministry)	Moira Watson	Robert Harding

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Common Lectionary Readings September

Note: leaders may choose to use other readings

Date	5th Sept	12th Sept	19th Sept	26th Sept
First Reading	Isaiah 35: 4-7a	Isaiah 50: 4-9a	Jeremiah 11: 18-20	Numbers 11: 4-6, 10-16 & 24-29
Psalm	Psalm 146	Psalm 116: 1-9	Psalm 54	Psalm 19: 14
New Testament	James 2: 1-10 & 14-17	James 3: 1-12	James 3: 13 - 4: 3 & 7-8a	James 5: 13-20
Gospel	Mark 7: 24-27	Mark 8: 27-38	Mark 9: 30-37	Mark 9: 38-50

September 5th - Salvation for the rich will include liberation from their injustice [Ronald Sider]

September 12th - Caesarea Philippi, built by Philip in honour of Emperor Augustus, was a long way from Galilee

September 19th - The page from Mark begins with 'They went on from there'. There is movement both literary and metaphorical

September 26th - I don't know who I am. I don't know where I am. I don't know what I am, but please love me [Lyn King, The Way Healing]

Richard Bainbridge



Book Review

“Vaxxers: The inside story of the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine and the race against the virus” by Professor Sarah Gilbert and Dr Catherine Green.

Client in Dry Cleaning shop: “Have you had your vaccine yet?”

Shop attendant: “Naa ... and I won’t have it”

Client: “Oh really, why is that?”

Shop attendant: “It takes 10 years to develop a vaccine and they did it in one year! It cannot be safe and efficient ...”

Client: “But that’s the beauty of it, quite a remarkable achievement!”

Shop attendant: “Naa ... I don’t trust them”

This is a real conversation that I had recently in Timpson’s. I left the shop feeling very despondent, first at the shop attendant who did not trust some of the best scientific brains in Britain but mainly at myself for not being informed enough to counteract his refusal to be vaccinated. So, when the book written by the two people responsible for the making of the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine was published, I rushed to buy it and read it. And I was not disappointed as it is quite a remarkable book which describes in (mostly!) simple terms the cutting-edge science and the colossal hard work by both themselves and their teams, that allowed vaccination to be rolled out across the world in record time. Each chapter is written in turn by each of the two scientists (just “scientists” by the way and not “women scientists” as they both insist that the fact that they are women is totally irrelevant and that Chris Whitty or Jonathan Van Tam are never described as “men scientists”!). They both mix the details of their personal life with the description of their hard graft, making it an often very moving story as well as a very informative scientific book, accessible to all.

“Vaccine hesitancy” as it is called, is a legitimate worry which is addressed with compassion and understanding by the authors. As Professor Gilbert recognizes: *“contrary to medication which make sick people better, vaccines are given to people who are healthy to prevent something that might never happen!”* And she adds: *“Taking a vaccine is not risk-free because nothing in life is. But not taking a vaccine is not risk-free either as you might get the disease yourself and pass it on to others.”* She explains that there are 3 main risks: **First**, no vaccine is safe for everyone as they contain weakened versions of the pathogens which may adversely affect people with compromised immune systems. **Secondly**, vaccines

do have side effects, but they are generally mild (in the case of the Oxford vaccine, soreness of arm, fever, headache) and pass within a few days. **Finally**, no vaccine is 100% efficient and vaccinated people may still develop the disease when they are subsequently exposed to the pathogen but in the great majority of cases, they only exhibit a mild form of the disease. I know this personally as when I got Typhoid in Ethiopia three years ago, I was quite sick but thanks to the vaccine, I recovered even if the experience was far from pleasant!

So, contrary to what the young shop attendant in Timpson's thinks, the unprecedentedly quick development of the Oxford vaccine is NOT a legitimate reason to refuse to have it. In fact, one of the most interesting chapters, entitled "*With great care and due haste*" is the one where Professor Gilbert explained the 3 key factors which allowed the vaccine to be made, tested, manufactured, and rolled out in less than 12 months:

1. First, the work they had already done on the SARS and MERS viruses. The vaccinology specialists of Oxford University are making new vaccines in the lab all the time against so-called "emerging pathogens", vaccines which will be manufactured if the need arises. For years, they had expected a global outbreak of "disease X" (SARS-like or not) so instead of needing to design, make and test a brand-new vaccine, they had already developed a tried-and-tested "platform technology" for that family of coronaviruses which could be quickly adapted to a new disease. So once they had the genetic sequence of Covid 19 (as early as January) they had a vaccine ready in the lab within a few weeks.
2. Access to funding was the second reason they were able to move so quickly. Previous development of vaccines for a lot of diseases of "*significant global burden*" like malaria or avian flu, are taking a long time, NOT because it is impossible or unsafe to go fast, but because going fast is not considered as a high enough priority. Developing a vaccine is expensive and manufacturing it is even more expensive and large pharmaceutical companies which are required to make a profit for their shareholders, do not have enough commercial incentive. Besides, if you are lucky enough to work on a vaccine which could be considered as financially viable, the funding comes in tranches and to move from one tranche to the next, you wait to hear whether you have been successful. That alone can take a year. Then you do a bit more work, publish the results, present your work at conferences, and wait for a further one or two more year and so on... In the case of Covid 19, funding organisations and pharmaceutical companies quickly realised that "*that kind of limping along with a delay of several years*" as Professor Gilbert describes



it, would simply not do. The pandemic was killing hundreds of thousands of people, and it became obvious that the only way to control it, was to develop a vaccine as soon as possible. So usual funding was enormously compressed, cutting literally years out of the development process,

“transforming a funding Cinderella into royalty” as Sarah Gilbert says!

3. Finally, they did *in parallel* things that they would normally do *in sequence*. For example, usually they would not start work on the design of a clinical trial until all the preclinical trials (on animals) are completed. This time, they did all the design and preparation of the clinical trials, including recruiting and screening the volunteers, while the preclinical trials were still going on. At the same time, the UK regulator, the MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency) reviewed all the data on a rolling basis rather than starting only when they had every last piece of evidence.

As Professor Gilbert concludes *“before 2020, no one had ever developed a vaccine in a year, not because it could not be done but because it had never been tried. We did not cut any corners or took any risks with our vaccine. We went faster because we had to.”* This book is an inspirational story of hope, determination, and humour, wonderfully told by two humble and likeable women who have quite literally changed the world for the better and I would highly recommend it!

PHOTO:

The ultimate accolade? Dame Sarah Gilbert and the Barbie Doll made in her image!

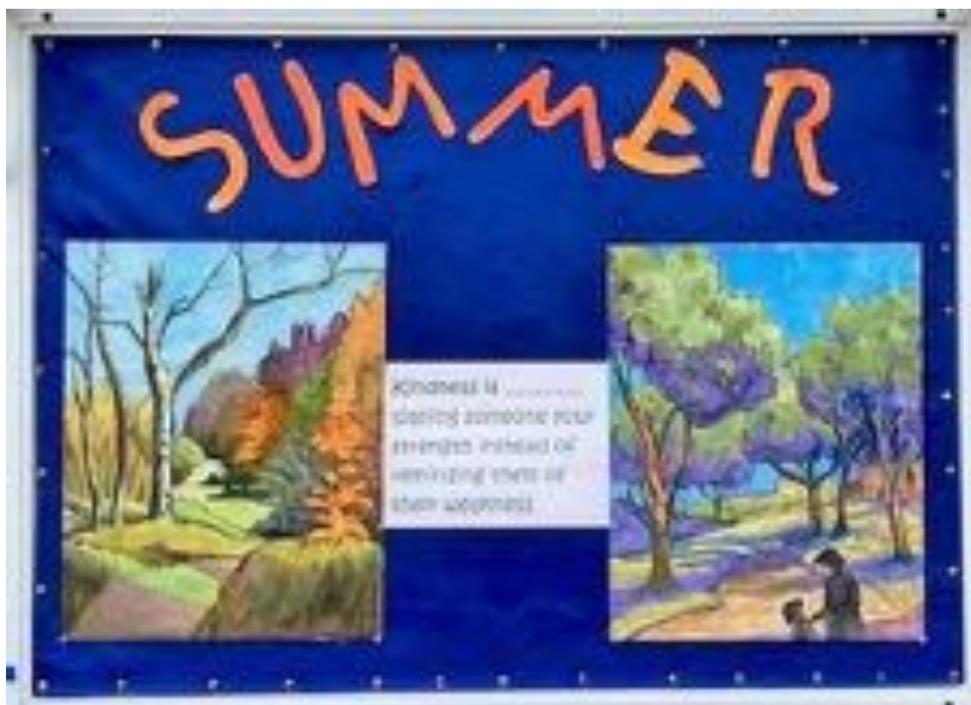
Laurence Devlin

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Our Current Noticeboard

Wayside Pulpit

Here is the latest edition of our outdoor Church Noticeboard from Christine. Through her contribution, often including some of her own original artwork, we hope to reach out to those passing by with art, poems and inspirational thoughts which often come from members of our community.



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Oxford Historic Churches Trust

RIDE AND STRIDE EVENT SATURDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER 2021

This annual fundraising event day for the important work of helping to keep our ancient churches (and some not so ancient) open, against the ravages of time and decay, is again almost upon us.

At the time of writing and as in the last two years, Jill and Gordon Ewbank of Wheatley Community Church have once again volunteered to ride and be sponsored in the name of Wheatley URC. Are there any church members who might wish either to give their financial support to the Ewbanks, or be sponsored themselves to ride a bike or walk between some of our local churches. Any money raised from sponsorship is equally split between **OHCT** and our own church funds and is based on the number of churches visited by bike or on foot during the day.

For the Cogwheel Project **OHCT** were most generous supporters towards the repair costs to our existing buildings. **Last year we collectively (mainly, but not entirely, through the efforts of the Ewbanks) raised £630 for OHCT, half of which came back to Wheatley URC.**

With greater participation, we could do even better this year, perhaps?

Alternatively, I shall probably lead a walk again between some of our local churches for a modest £10 entry fee, to avoid the effort of obtaining sponsorship. This year, I thought that I might favour a circuit of village churches in the Long Crendon area, perhaps?

We also need **a team of folk to act as “welcomers”** to riders and striders from other churches visiting our church during the day, between the hours of 10.00 am and 6.00 pm, please. Subject to Covid arrangements, it normally involves being in the church hall for an hour to sign in the visitors and mark their sponsorship sheets, offer them a drink and a biscuit/cake, direct them to the loo and answer any questions they may have about our church or other churches nearby. Ideally, for company and personal health and safety reasons two people are required for each hour of the day. Remember, you could also be sponsored for just sitting there! A signing up sheet will appear in the in The Hall, if you are prepared to help in this way.

For any queries or sponsorship forms, please contact me.

Tony Barry (872293 or ah.barry@btinternet.com)

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A Surprising “Field Day” in Little Milton

Bobbie and I thought you might like to know about a tucked-away art gallery and sculpture field that we visited recently in Little Milton.

The artworks at Albion Barn are many and varied, both in the gallery and also cleverly sited in 50 acres of field and woodlands, displaying the collection of Michael Hue-Williams.

The sculptures in “Albion Field” can be viewed, free of charge, by prior booking only on Fridays and Saturdays until 25th September.

More details can be seen on the website:

www.albionbarn.com

We hope you will be as surprised and intrigued as we were to appreciate the creativity and talents of such a wide range of contemporary artists. Have fun!

Bobbie and Ellen



We're Not Safe Till All Are Safe

We shall only ever be safe from Covid when we are all safe. We are so lucky to be in a country where vaccines are free and available from the marvellous NHS. In less prosperous countries, both the availability of vaccines and the ability to pay for them are a massive problem for many.

UNICEF has so far raised £ 4 million for its Give the World a Shot campaign, but there is still some way to go to meet their target of providing 2 billion vaccines, 5.5 million treatments and 5.6 million test kits for those in the direst need.

All donations to this campaign are welcome. For those able to afford it, consider giving £9.35 a month, the cost of a prescription, or that amount per month for several months ahead, to the UNICEF campaign or whatever you can manage.

If you would like to contribute to this vital campaign, please go to <https://www.vaccinaid.org> to donate, or, if you'd like to get friends and family involved, why not set up your own Just Giving account via the linked Facebook page? It's easy to increase your donation by 25% by Gift Aiding it on that page.

This initiative is supported by Wheatley URC and Wheatley Area Churches. Remember, no one's safe till we're all safe.





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