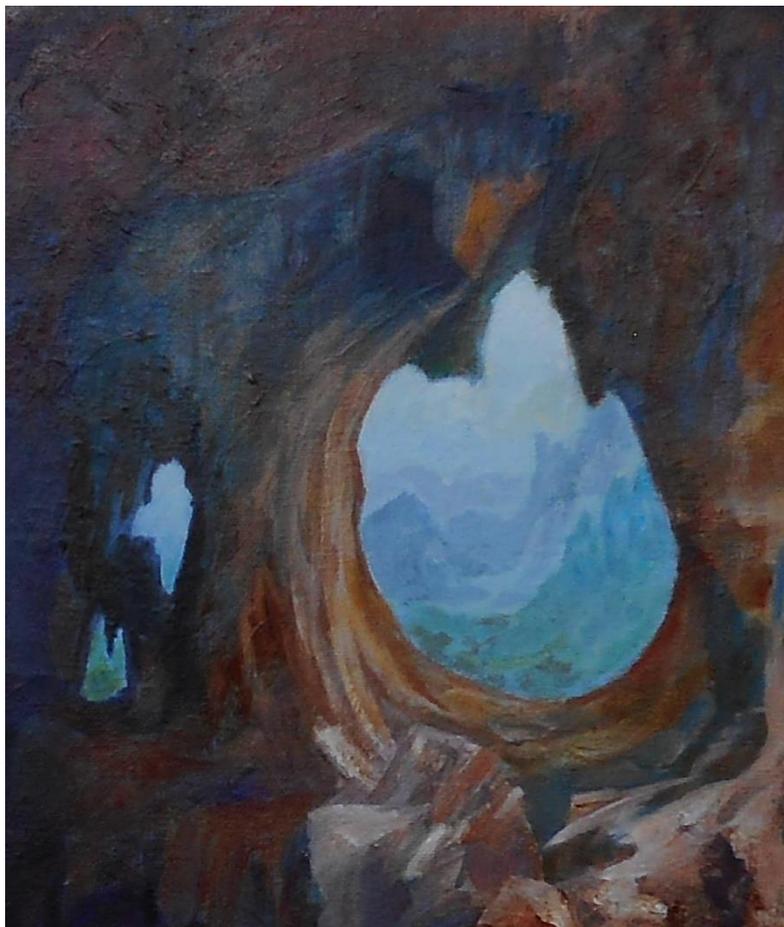


WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



March 2022

Covering Thoughts

When I have finished a painting, I use up any remaining paint to begin an abstract on an old board. It saves clogging up the sink! The daubs of colour are random and build up over the weeks as I return time and time again to daub more paint on it. This week I am at a loose end. Nothing to work on at present so I get out the messy board and start playing.

Gradually some shapes please me and I work on them trying to pull them forward and get a sense of depth. Light and dark tones bring contrast and form, and I am thinking of where I am emotionally with this painting. It slowly dawns that I am in rather a dark place.

Restrictions placed on me since hurting my toes have been challenging, and the winter chill makes me reluctant to sit outdoors.

The painting becomes darker with colours competing to be the deepest and darkest. The whole edge of the board is dark but there is the beginning of a lighter shape emerging like an egg one side of centre.

I know now where I am. This is a cave and ahead is the way out. It ceases to be an abstract and my imagination sees a surrounding wall of rock with a clear blue expanse ahead. Of course, the blue hole allows light into the cave and immediately the rocks take shape, fill with colour and give the interior a warm safe feeling.

I'm feeling more cheerful now. I can appreciate the way the cave contains the shadows and reflects the light. Finally, there is the outside view to paint, and imagination can take me to all those places it will be great to visit when I can get out freely again.

Unfortunately for us all as the years go by, there will be things that we have to give up, skills that diminish, and friends that we miss. We look out from our cave with longing at where we would like to be, what we would like to do. Can we learn with the help of each other how to enjoy the beauty of the cave, where we find ourselves in the present, bringing into it the light which is always there to illuminate it?

Christine

Pastoral Letter

Are you **woke**? The word was originally adopted from Afro-American culture; are you **awake** to issues surrounding racial prejudice? The use has gradually expanded to include a broader awareness of injustice and discrimination. Being aware of past and present man's inhumanity to man and the propensity to exploit or defame other cultures has to be a prelude to changing attitudes. There are however two consequences of 'wokism' which I find uncomfortable.

The first is our attitude to history. There are parts of our history, the slave trade being the most obvious example, which are not worthy of 'celebration' and may make us feel ashamed and uncomfortable. What we must not do is to expunge them, to bury them or even drown them in the Bristol Docks. To quote one wise and humane doctor for whom I had the privilege to work 'We learn most from our mistakes'.

The second concern is what is known as 'cancel-culture' prevalent in some academic circles. It attempts to silence or drown out any views which do not accord with prevailing orthodoxy. Visiting lecturers have been 'disinvited', journalists and writers had their contracts cancelled, academics ostracised and vilified to the point of losing their jobs. Whilst there is no place for publicly promoting hatred and violence, there must be room for academic debate about dilemmas and differences in perception. We do not learn simply by listening to those views which we already hold.

One's formative views often result from experiences in early life and can determine subsequent dismissal of contrary perceptions. Listening to others' life stories can at times lead to mutual understanding and reconciliation. Years ago, I had two Chilean friends; one was a nearby neighbour here with her family whilst her husband was a postgraduate. The other was a trainee doctor working with me. One family was a staunch supporter of Colonel Pinochet (a brutal military dictator) resulting from the fact that all her family's wealth and property were confiscated for 'redistribution' by the previous Allende regime (Marxist). The doctor, also from a wealthy family, was imprisoned by the Pinochet regime because he was working in a hospital in the slums of Santiago and as such was deemed as subversive. Some years after they had returned to their home country, I was invited to give a lecture series in Santiago and had the opportunity to meet them both over a shared meal. They had not previously met.

They shared their life stories and there was immediate understanding, part of the reconciliation process in Chile and incidentally in South Africa.

What then does this have to do with our Christian faith? We choose where we worship for a number of reasons: friendships and social life, access, familiar liturgy and hymns plus theology, exploring together God's calling. Being 'comfortable' is of value especially in times of difficulty or distress. However herewith lies the paradox of our Faith. It does not grow by clinging steadfastly to familiar doctrine but requires humility to accept the mysteries of our faith and acknowledge our uncertainties. Some may feel this as threatening by undermining our beliefs but paradoxically it allows our faith to grow. It may well involve exploring what other forms of worship, other denominations, other faiths, and other cultures can teach us.

I close this letter with a quote from Freidrich Nietzsche:

"Doubt as sin - Christianity has done its utmost to close the circle and declare even doubt to be a sin.What is wanted are blindness and intoxication and an eternal song over the waves which reason has drowned"

Yours in faith and love,
Malcolm

Falcon October School News

3 Brief News & Update Items!

Wilbert is just back from Harare having witnessed and helped with the installation of the water feed from their borehole to the new teachers' accommodation block. So completion of bathrooms and toilets very soon. A 'big thank you' sent back to Wheatley URC from all at Falcon!



'Heavens Preserves' Sale

On January 31st we held our first 'sale' of preserves (chutneys, marmalade, jams), specially produced by members of Wilbert and Lauren's Bournemouth URC,

What a great start! Together with extra sales by Liz at Lunch Club we have raised £162 in support of Falcon (with only 10 jars left) and are discussing further supply opportunities for future months.

Donate Falcon Your 'Sleeping' US Dollars \$\$\$!



When in the US recently Rob found this \$80 in a park whilst walking the dog. It went unclaimed so it will be donated to Falcon ... US dollars are the main currency today in struggling Zimbabwe where inflation ran at an eye-watering 95% in 2021, rendering the local Zimbabwe \$ (ZWL) virtually useless.

So here's an idea! .. could you, families and friends please search out for any spare US Dollar notes (however large or small) you may have from previous trips in your drawers or travel files?

Please give them to any member of the CFW team or Chris and we will consolidate and pass on (after recording them) to Falcon through the appropriate channels.

We will keep you informed with details of progress!

Thank you for your continued support for the Falcon School.

Rob Holdaway
Care For The World Team

~*~

Blended Service Rotas for March 2022

Dates	Worships Leaders	Readers	Intercessors	Vestry	Welcomer/ Door Steward
6 th March	Colin Thompson – HC	Charles Bennett	Robert Harding	Elaine Matejtschuk	Liz Barry
13 th March	Richard Bainbridge	Barbara Joiner	Liz Barry		Tom Goss
20 th March	Mark Williams				Malcolm Benson
27 th March	Laurence Devlin	Phyllis Williams	Ellen Webster		Moira Watson

~ ~ ~

Our Current Noticeboard



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Common Lectionary Readings March

Note: leaders may choose to use other readings

Date	6 th March	13 th March	20 th March	27 th March
First Reading	Deuteronomy 26: 1-11	Genesis 15: 1-12 & 17-18	Isaiah 55: 1-9	Joshua 5: 9-12
Psalm	Psalm 91: 1-2 & 9-16	Psalm 27	Psalm 63: 1-8	Psalm 32
New Testament	Romans 10: 8b-10	Philippians 3: 17 - 4:1	1 Corinthians 10: 1-13	2 Corinthians 5: 16-21
Gospel	Luke 4: 1-13	Luke 13: 31-35	Luke 13: 1-9	Luke 15: 1-3 & 11b-32

March 6th Meaning is constructed through actions and rituals as well as through words.

March 13th It is sometimes said that the people most likely to abuse their power are those who are unsure whether they have any.

March 20th Strange as it may sound we can choose joy. [Henri Nouwen]

March 27th I am his daughter. He said so. Oh the infinite gentleness of my God! [Margaret of Cortona 1247-97]

Richard Bainbridge



Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the members in Robert Harding's pastoral group; Wendy Bailey, Charles & Sue Bennett, Barbara & Albert Joiner, Angela & Rob Holdaway, Ellen & Bob Webster, Phyllis & Mark Williams and Christine & Richard Bainbridge.

Also remember members of the Communication Ministry Team; Phyllis Williams, Christine Bainbridge, Debi Kidd, Bobbie Stormont, Ellen Webster and Moira Watson.



Memory Café

At the very beginning of March 2020, before all our lives changed beyond recognition, we had our first “Memory Café” in the URC hall. This was a gathering of people living with Dementia, their carers and some volunteers. That session consisted of the all-important coffee and biscuits and various activities such as painting, jigsaws, various games, a great deal of conversation and a wonderful half an hour of music and singing together.

Dementia cafés (that we prefer to call Memory Cafés) are popping up all over the country as they can offer people with memory problems and their carers the chance to socialize and share information on dementia. It encourages them to keep active, make new friends and feel more confident.

We are hoping to start again in March this year, if the rate of Covid infections has decreased to a safe level. If we do start again, it will take place on the second Thursday of the month, i.e. **10th March from 10.00 to 12.30** with the same activities as 2 years ago plus new ones... watch this space! It is free and if you know somebody who could benefit from such a gathering, family or friend, please contact Laurence Devlin on 077 13 15 88 13. Thank you.

Laurence Devlin



Lent

Lent Lunches in aid of Christian Aid

Noon to 2pm each Saturday in Lent 12th, 19th, 26th March and 2nd and 9th April
Come and enjoy a simple soup lunch prepared by the churches in Wheatley (Wheatley Area Churches) and bring a donation for Christian Aid.

Lent Courses

This year we have not prepared our own Lent course but there are some interesting options available. These include:

1. Online Lent group starting 9 March - Oxford URCs led by Revds Helen Garton and Cara Heafey will lead a joint Lent Group for all the URC churches in the Oxford Group every week on Wednesdays at 8pm on 9, 16, 23 and 30 March and 6, 13 April.

Watch for further information as it becomes available.

2. Eco Church from A-Rocha - Get Outside in Lent Finding God in Nature. 6 worksheets to download and follow. Self directed or get together with others. Download a worksheet each week guiding you through Lent. <https://bit.ly/3H36TZO>

3. Online (Zoom) Lent Course 'Life on the Breadline' - 4 online sessions Thursday evenings 3,10,17, 24 March. Register on Eventbrite at <https://bit.ly/319fjQP> organised by Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church (JPIT).

Holy Week

Morning Meditations and Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services are being prepared. Further information in April Newsletter.



A Lenten Journey for 2022

'What would it be like, I wondered, to live with that heightened sensitivity to the lives given for ours?

To consider the tree in the Kleenex,

the algae in the toothpaste,

the oaks in the floor,

the grapes in the wine;

to follow back the thread of life in everything and pay it respect?'

- Robin Wall Kimmerer in Braiding Sweetgrass

Have you ever wondered where your favourite item of clothing has come from? Even who made it and what conditions were they working under?

This year during Lent, I have felt inspired by Robin's book to research, reflect and consider items in my household which enable me to live comfortably. What are they made from and what humans worked so hard to produce them? How has the production impacted the environment?

During Holy Week we will be bringing our research findings to God in meditation, reflection and prayer. The meditations will be held in the Mulberry room on 11th 12th and 13th of April. (Times to be arranged)

We invite you to join along with us on this Lenten journey. Your findings will be included in our meditations during Holy Week.

Please speak to Pauline Shelley or Liz Barry for further information.



the mark drama



We have an exciting opportunity to stage the Mark Drama here in Wheatley in 2022! The Mark Drama is an innovative way of experiencing the Gospel of Mark and communicating it to others, performed as theatre-in-the-round. It is a fantastic initiative lead by Andrew Page from Above Bar Church in Southampton which has been used throughout

the UK at churches and Christian Unions over a number of years. It presents every incident in Mark's Gospel vividly and powerfully to a group of invited guests, with a team of 15 actors. It is an amazing experience for Christians, reminding them of the work of Jesus, and it's also great for anyone investigating the Christian faith. You can find out more at www.themarkdrama.com

Churches in Wheatley and Barton will work together to put on two performances of this on the evenings of **25th and 26th June**. Do put the dates in your diary now.

We are seeking a team of 15 actors who will learn their parts from Mark's gospel over 6 weeks. For any who are interested there is an **information evening at the Merry Bells at 8-9.15pm on Tuesday 26th April**. The Info Session is for anyone (aged 17 and up in June) who might be interested in joining the acting team but who wants to know more before committing themselves. Please come along to the evening to find out more. We won't expect everyone who attends to commit to this. So we have a rough idea of numbers please email the producer, Tim Hinks at thinks@doctors.org.uk if you'd like to come to the Info evening, or if you'd like to know more but for some reason can't come.

~ ~ ~

Deadline

March 16th is the deadline for the April Newsletter. Please send copy to: newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk Paper copy can be given to Debi Kidd. If you type your contribution and send via email, please type it in Calibri font, size 11. Thank you.

Disclaimer

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

~*~

The Great Cassock Mystery

There is a black cassock hanging in the cupboard in the Mulberry Room. Does anyone know who it belongs to?

If no-one claims it we will give it away to someone who can use it.

Phyllis

Mob: 07941479540

~*~

‘Talk Your Walk’ - Coast to Coast (Part 2)

So far: we have reached Shap but Philip has blisters and Robert shin splints. After due deliberation and medical treatment for Philip’s blisters, we decided that Robert should try the road which was straight and flat and where there was a bus route to our next destination which was Kirkby Stephen. The footpath takes us across the rugged limestone landscape of Orton scar, through scattered farms and over moor thick with heather. On reaching the picturesque Valley of Smardale, a short detour provided views of an impressive viaduct, now a haunt of hikers and botanists. We arrived at Kirkby Stephen a busy market town and were delighted to meet up with our third member somewhat recovered. After a hearty meal and good night’s rest the three of us felt able to continue to our next destination, the village of Keld. Well provisioned for the day, the route has only a few scattered farms, we crossed rugged terrain eventually joining the Yorkshire Dales National Park at Nine Standards Rigg. This is the highest point of the fells and marks the Pennine watershed. Reaching Keld is the halfway point of our journey and is a friendly refuge in a rather barren landscape. It is also the gateway to Swaledale, unknown to me until this journey. Before moving on we visited the URC chapel in Keld which has a small worshipping congregation but is also the centre for the local community. The adjoining manse is available for holiday lets and retreats.

Exiting Keld, we briefly joined the Pennine Way before branching off into Swaledale. The moors surrounding the Swale bear extensive scars and remnants of industrial decay whence lead has been extracted probably since Roman times. By way of contrast the section from Reeth to Richmond is a delight to all the senses. It is a beautiful, wooded valley, the sound of the gurgling Swale never far away and the air redolent of the smell of wild garlic. Even our hunger was assuaged by a delicious lunch at an isolated farmhouse en route hosted by a friendly farmer’s wife. Reinvigorated we maintained company with the Swale eventually reaching Richmond the largest town visited en route. Space does not permit more than a brief mention, but we had time to spend half a day visiting its various attractions. It is well worth a visit.

The next day’s walk is probably the least attractive at least to hill walkers. The stretch of land between the Yorkshire Dales and the Cleveland hills is across the Vale of Mowbray, 25 miles of flat but lush farmland. This section accentuated a glitch in our companionability of which we had been aware. My comfortable walking pace is fairly brisk whereas Robert’s was much more leisurely. Thus, we set off towards Danby Fiske, an unmemorable hamlet halfway across, the only

redeeming feature being a hostelry welcoming Coast to Coast walkers who are invited to inscribe their names in their 'register'. I regret that I disappeared into the distance with Robert languishing at the rear and Philip trying to oscillate between us. I reached Danby Wiske in time for lunch, but it was only when I was into my second pint and had consumed my pork pie that my companions emerged 3/4 hrs later. There was time for their refreshments before continuing the rest of the journey to Ingleby Cross together. 25 miles is a long way, and we were grateful for the welcome reception at the Blue Bell Inn.

The final section of the walk is 30 miles, as the crow flies, across the North York Moors. This is not a section to be attempted in a day or even two since it needs time to appreciate the diverse terrain and varied habitats. It also involves a lot of climbing across 'rolling' moors. The one disadvantage is that overnight accommodation is a mile or so from the designated route thus adding to the day's exertions. From Ingleby Cross climbing begins, to enjoy complete freedom with no fences or manmade obstacles to bar progress, crossing Beacon Hill, Cringle End, Cold Moor and Hasty Bank Moor to reach Clay Bank Top. It is wild country with many ancient tracks overlooking wooded valleys. It has a long history with interest for the archeologist, geologist, and botanist as well as the fell walker who can enjoy the splendid beauty, peace and freedom from human habitation.



Following an overnight stop at Clay Bank Top, we continued across further open moorland to Blakeney, joining the Lyke Wake Walk to Eskdale across further moors and dales. What I wonder is the origin of Great Fryup Dale? Here also are the remnants of an industrial past where there is the track of the Rosedale railway, an engineering feat to transport high grade iron ore from mines high on the moors. Our final night was spent at Grosmont marking the beginning of 'civilisation'. From here there is a mere 18 miles to the coast and the end of our journey. Our descent commenced in high spirit, initially crossing further moor from which the North Sea and Whitby could be glimpsed in the distance. Leaving the heather covered moors we descend to the beautiful hamlet of Littlebeck and thence through the Falling Foss Nature Trail and waterfall, a single plunge of 67ft which is heard long before it is seen. On reaching a succession of small roads it is tempting to take one direct to Robin Hood's Bay a mere 2 miles. But Wainright prolongs the agony and the ecstasy by a circuitous route with more spectacular views from the coastal path. Unfortunately, in our excitement we missed one of the footpaths and added a further 1/2 mile to our journey. From the coastal path we descend to the outskirts of Robin Hood's Bay, past modern villas, down a flight of steep steps to the old town, a maze of narrow streets. We ignored the seaside tourist shops to reach the seashore and journey's end.

Postscript. I am grateful to have memories refreshed by re-reading Wainright's Coast to Coast Walk. Whether there are any parallels with life's journey are perhaps fanciful. Unlike life, we all started from the same vantage point, walked in the same direction towards the same destination. We took the toughest route, shades of Pilgrim's Progress, which was both awe inspiring and exhilarating even if at times exhausting and painful. We supported each other and shared experiences with fellow walkers. Our hosts at various stopovers were universally kind and welcoming. We made it.

Malcolm Benson



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

A reminder that all are welcome to this service of prayer on Friday, March 4th at 2.00pm, which this year has been prepared by the women of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The service in Wheatley URC has representatives from the Community Church, Our Lady of Lourdes, St Bartholomew's, St Mary's, and the URC taking part. Refreshments are planned following the service.

There is also a service on the same day at St Mary's at 7pm for those who prefer an evening service. Do come to one of them, or both if you like!

Ann Hardiman



Dates for Your Diaries

3rd March	10am Prayer and Reflection in the Mulberry Room (further info - Liz Barry) 2pm Monthly Elders Meeting
4th March	2pm at URC, 7pm at St Mary's, World Day of Prayer
6th March	Food Bank Sunday - First Sunday every month Sunday Afternoon Tea in the Hall - 2:30pm - 4pm (Monthly on first Sunday)
9th March	Oxford URC Churches Online Lent Course Week 1 (4 weeks)
10 th March	Memory Café – 10am-12.30pm, contact Laurence Devlin
12th March	Noon - 2pm Lent Lunch
13th March	Church Meeting 11:30am - 1pm
16th March	Oxford URC Churches Online Lent Course Week 2 (4 weeks)
19th March	Noon - 2pm Lent Lunch
20th March	Gospel Blues Music Celebration 7pm at St Mary's (WAC)
23rd March	Oxford URC Churches Online Lent Course Week 3 (4 weeks)
26th March	Noon - 2pm Lent Lunch
30th March	Oxford URC Churches Online Lent Course Week 4 (4 weeks)

Weekly

Monday 8:45am - Mindfulness Sitting Group (weekly - contact Mark Williams Tel 876288)

Thursday 8:45am - Mindfulness Sitting Group (weekly - contact Mark Williams Tel 876288)

Friday 10am in the Hall - Table Tennis (weekly - contact Val Farmer)



SANCTIFIED!

A CELEBRATION OF GOSPEL BLUES

ST MARY'S CHURCH,
WHEATLEY

MARCH 20, 2022
AT 7PM

COME AND JOIN US
FOR AN UPLIFTING
HOUR OF LIVE
MUSIC, FEATURING
WORSHIP SONGS
FROM SOME OF THE
PIONEERS OF
GOSPEL BLUES!

IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH WHEATLEY
AREA CHURCHES

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE
CONTACT PAUL MORRIS AT
MUDSLIDEMORRIS@GMAIL.COM





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