

# WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



May 2022

# Covering Thoughts

*Sometimes inspiration for Covering Thoughts begins with a painting, but other times there may be the gem of an idea, a poem or something heard that echoes in my head and I sit at the computer and start to type. Like beginning an abstract painting, I may have no plan of where the typing will take me. Then it is a case of finding an appropriate picture, or simply painting one to fit.*

*This month it is a combination of both. The cover is a study of a painting by Euan Uglow. Perfection was his aim both in the proportions of the painting and in the position of the pears with their squared and flattened planes of colour. His work looked effortless, yet I found that it had taken him months to complete. The time I gave to this study was about an hour. You really need to search for the original online to see perfection.*

*As I painted the phrase pear shaped dogged me. When things go pear shaped, they go wrong. Why defame the pear in this way I wondered? This expression is thought to have originated around the 1940s when trainee pilots had to loop the loop, executing a perfect circle. They regularly failed and their attempts were described as going pear shaped.*

*So when we say that things have gone pear shaped we suggest disappointment that what we had planned has not worked out as we intended.*

*It seems a shame that the pear should be used in such a negative way. Yes a pear has an irregular shape and cannot be depended upon to stand straight, but therein lies its uniqueness and its beauty.*

*When it seems that things go pear shaped for us, we could accept that perfection is impossible, like standing a pear on its head and make the best of reality with a smile.*

Christine



# Pastoral Letter

I want to write about education.

I believe in a spiral curriculum where you return to the same topic at a deeper level [watch out to see where it happens with worship leaders]

Education can be humbling – one tutor wondered whether this was my first essay.

There are memorable moments as when a student in a philosophy PhD seminar asked if he could make an empirical point and was asked to do so outside.

There are amusing moments as when a colleague was asked by a student to speak slower, and the student was told to write faster.

It takes time to get the hang of it. Aristotle said that you learn to play the lyre by playing the lyre and then a moment comes when you can play the lyre [he did not have me in mind.]

There are words that challenge as when it was said that Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God and we've got the church.

There are great moments – I once asked a headteacher what he considered the spiritual dimension in education to be, and he pointed to two children walking slowly in thought across the playground and said there it is.

The family was asked to join in as when we climbed through the bushes to see the chateau of a French philosopher that I written a thesis on.

It can be applied as when I finished a thesis on the Quakers as follows: The need to balance the individual and the social has become important during the coronavirus policy, so the analysis of the balance within Quakerism benefits from a wider context and contributes to it.

It can be personal as when I finished a study of this church with the words: It is my world and those I have lived with for more than four decades.

It can be poignant. I concluded the study of a care home with the words: I am grateful for the time to reflect on situations and in the light of further reading. I will continue until the journey with my mother comes to an end.

It happens all around. The golf tutor was as thrilled that I had extended the distance as I was. He had been proved right in his advice. It was a great moment - I see echoes in the New Testament.

It gives you the opportunity to learn new words -a new one for me this week is logomachy which means contention about words – and so we return to where we stated with worship leaders

Richard Bainbridge

# Falcon October School News



**What's 'Up' at Falcon? .....**

**...well, as Lauren says 'yippee, ceilings are (almost!) 'up'!**

Yes, despite all these months of building and 'finishing' the second classroom and teachers' accommodation, there were still no solid ceilings in place.

Our latest donation helped purchase the materials and pay for the labour .. so there really is now, 'a roof over their heads'!

**'Resurrection' in Zimbabwe ...**

Our support for Zimbabwe, through the Falcon School, is just part of wider URC efforts via Commitment For Life (with Christian Aid) so here's another great Falcon type story .....

Their BRAC project has been helping communities to adapt to climate change and start diverse businesses to provide extra income.

A solar water pump in community gardens, for example, can make a huge difference to the foods the women are able to grow. Before, in times of drought, women from the village had to dig and scoop water from sand and carry it long distances.

One of the wild plants that can be collected is the **Resurrection Bush** which can be sold to make herbal tea. After harvesting, this herb can “play dead” for weeks only to resurrect into a green shoot when placed in water.



‘When I look at the resurrection bush’ says Agnes (one of the growers in the project, see photo!) I liken it to our lives. Sometimes life is difficult, and the other time it is okay. But the time during which it is difficult do not lose hope saying it will not become okay anymore. **Anytime life can be good again.’**

**Thank you for your support for Falcon School and Zimbabwe!**



**Care for the World  
Team**

# Prayers

**Please remember in your prayers the members of Ann Gajda's pastoral group;** Moira & Jim Watson, Ann Wilde, John Kidd, Keith & Debi Kidd, Lynnette & Richard Wood, Marion Mole and Wendy & Malcolm Benson.

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

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## Blended Service Rotas for May 2022

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Worship Leaders</b>	<b>Readers</b>	<b>Intercessors</b>	<b>Elder</b>	<b>Welcomer/ Door Steward</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	Colin Thompson Communion	Malcolm Benson	Barbara Joiner	Robert Harding	Elaine Matejtschuk
8 <sup>th</sup>	Richard Bainbridge	Liz Barry	Tom Goss	Malcolm Benson	Ellen Webster
15 <sup>th</sup>	David Catchpole	Wendy Benson	Robert Harding	Liz Barry	Marian Mole
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Care for the World	Mike Matejtschuk	Ann Bettess	Moira Watson	Barbara Joiner
29 <sup>th</sup>	Mark Williams			Robert Harding	Rob Holdaway

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# Deadline

11<sup>th</sup> May is the deadline for the June Newsletter. Please send copy to: [newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk) Paper copy can be given to Bobbie Stormont. 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.

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# Our Current Noticeboard



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# Common Lectionary Readings May 2022

**Note: leaders may choose to use other readings**

Date	1st	8th	15th	22nd	29th
<b>First Reading</b>	Acts 9: 1-6	Acts 9: 35-43	Acts 11: 1-18	Acts 1: 9-15	Acts 16: 6-34
<b>Psalm</b>	Psalm 30	Psalm 23	Psalm 148	Psalm 67	Psalm 97
<b>New Testament</b>	Revelation 5 11-14	Revelation 7 9-17	Revelation 21 1-6	Revelation 21 10 & 21 & 22 - 22.5	Revelation 22 12-14, 16-17 & 20-21
<b>Gospel</b>	John 21: 1-19	John 10: 22-30	John 13: 31-35	John 5: 1-9	John 17: 20-26

**May 1st** Hope comes through action. John Timpson owns the shoe repair chain. His family have fostered 90 children and his business has recruited 270 former prisoners as employees.

**May 8th** On this day in 1373 a young woman aged 30 received a series of visions, this was Julian of Norwich.

**May 15th** Emily Dickinson led a solitary life but contributed a lot of poems which explored the concept of God

**May 22nd** The Black Death reached Norwich in 1349 and many died. Julian of Norwich had her vision of Christ in 1373

**May 29th** The Spice girls had the line 'Tell me what you want' How would you respond if Jesus asked you this question? What is involved in asking this question and answering it?

Richard Bainbridge

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# Stepwise is making a difference

## What is Stepwise?

Stepwise is an integral part of *Walking the Way – living the life of Jesus today*, the United Reformed Church's focus on whole-life discipleship and mission.

Wessex Synod is delighted that Stepwise is now part of the life of the Synod with people having completed the first stream, while others are just about to start. A Synod Stepwise Advocacy Group has been formed and they have been working hard to make sure that all the procedures are put in place to ensure that Stepwise has been able to happen through the last 18 months.

Stepwise is a programme of learning and discipleship development for everyone – including you! – whether you are exploring and enriching your personal faith life, discerning where God's call on your life may be leading, preparing for a new direction, or developing a specific role within your community or church.

One key aspect is that, as a Stepwise participant, your group will have a facilitator and you will also have a mentor who will be with you throughout your Stepwise stream. The Synod Advocacy Group is ensuring safe recruitment and orientation of voluntary facilitators and mentors.

What is a Stepwise Stream? Stepwise has five streams: Faith Filled Life, Faith Filled Worship, Faith Fuelled Leadership, Faith Filled Confidence and Faith Filled Community. Everyone starts with Faith Filled Life, and then after that depends on you! You don't have to follow any set path through it.

Stepwise is open to anyone who is keen to reflect on and develop their Christian faith. If you're ready to be stimulated and challenged – and want to make a difference in your own life and the lives of others – then Stepwise could be just what you're looking for.

Stepwise is learner orientated and designed to draw on the strengths and to address the needs of individual learners, in the context of their communities and

churches. The programme emphasises the vital importance of people learning from their daily lives, wherever and whoever God calls them to be.

There are different start times, so there should be a group that is convenient for you – either online or in person.

This is what you need to know

- All participants wanting to engage in the Stepwise programme will have to begin with completing Faith Filled Life
- If you want to participate in Faith Filled Life, go to our Synod website and fill in an application form, and send this to Ruth Heine, [development@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:development@urcwessex.org.uk)  
You will then be contacted by a member of the Synod Advocacy Group.
- Synod will identify where the learning Hubs will be located within the Synod, and what online offering there may be.
- Groups will be formed logically for participants and will be registered with Synod. This will connect you for your login for your online learning.
- You will have a mentor throughout Stepwise, and if you are unable to identify one from your church, you will be given help to find one.

If you want to know any more about this, please contact  
Mary Thomas [dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk) or Ray Stanyon [dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk)



# Fun Bible Trivia - Answers

1. How many words are in the shortest verse in the Bible? Two. "Jesus wept." (John 11:35)
2. Who is the oldest man mentioned in the Bible? Methuselah. He lived 969 years. (Genesis 5:27)
3. What book in the Bible doesn't mention God by name? The book of Esther.
4. Who are the five angels mentioned by name in the Bible? According to CARM.org, the five angels are Abbadon, Gabriel, Michael, Beelzebub, and Satan.
5. What so-called mythological creature is mentioned in the Bible? Unicorn, in the King James translation. (Isaiah 34:7).
6. What is the last word in the Bible? Amen. (Revelation 22:21)
7. How many wives did King Solomon have? He had 700 wives and 300 concubines. (1 Kings 11:3)
8. What two men in the Bible never died? Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) and Enoch (Genesis 5:21-24).
9. Who shut the door of Noah's ark? God. (Genesis 7:16)
10. What street did Judas live on? Straight street. (Acts 9:11)
11. Which apostle was a tentmaker? Paul. (Acts 18:1-3)
12. How long did Jesus hang on the cross? Six hours - from the third hour to the ninth hour. (Mark 15:25-37)
13. What were the first spoken words in the Bible? "Let there be light." (Genesis 1:3)
14. Who was the only female judge of Israel in the Old Testament? Deborah. (Judges 4)
15. What book in the Bible mentions mowed grass? Psalms. (Psalms 72:6)

16. In the Old Testament, what happened to the kids who mocked Elisha's bald head? They were mauled by two female bears. (2 Kings 2:23-24)

17. How tall was the giant, Goliath? Nine feet nine inches. (1 Samuel 17:4)

18. What two books of the Bible are named after women? Esther and Ruth.

19. How many days after birth was Jesus officially nameless? Seven. He was officially named on the eighth day. (Luke 2:21)

20. What person in the Bible was a fast and furious driver? Jehu. (2 Kings 9:20)



Debi Kidd



# Sunday Teas



Please come along and mention it to your friends ...time for some good 'company', a nice chat, and delicious cakes!

First Sunday of the month from 2.30-4pm in the URC church hall

Next Teas on Sunday May 1st!

Any questions? ... please contact your Pastoral Care Team



# Church Finance – Offerings

In my report to the March Church Meeting, I confirmed that the decrease in our offerings for 2021 was approximately £2,000, as forecast.

We have recently had significant expenditure on our building, in particular the work on the delaminated coping stones and associated work on the gable ends, which came to our notice during the gales in February. This has reduced our reserves considerably. We have also had the significant increase in energy costs to cover.

Whilst it is appreciated that we are all affected by the increase in living costs, would you please consider whether you are able to increase your giving to the Church? Several members have already done so and many thanks to them for this, although I realise that not everyone will be in a position to increase their giving at this time.

With all the local branches of Barclays Bank now closed, apart from Oxford City Centre, it is now difficult, although not impossible, to pay in cash to the bank. Direct bank transfers and standing orders are the easiest ways to make payments, but I can also accept cheques which can be processed through our local Post Office.

There are some blue offertory envelopes on a plate, on the table in the Church vestibule. Offerings can be placed in the envelopes, your name written on the front and left on the plate. Envelopes containing cheques can also be placed in the Church letter box just outside the main Church door.

If anyone requires clarification or has any questions, please telephone, or email me, if I am not available to speak to.

Many thanks to everybody for your continued support.

Chris Shelley



# Easter Flowers

For anyone who was unable to attend our church in person on Easter Sunday here are some photographs of the lovely floral arrangements that you will have missed. Many thanks to the team for, as usual, creating such a beautiful display!



# Happy Birthday Jean!

On Easter Sunday we celebrated Jean's very special birthday with a delicious cake with our coffee. These lovely photographs were taken to mark the occasion.



# Dates for Your Diaries

## Weekly

Monday 8:45am	Mindfulness Sitting Group (contact Mark Williams Tel 876288)
Thursday 8:45am	Mindfulness Sitting Group (contact Mark Williams Tel 876288)
Friday 10am	Table Tennis (contact Val Farmer)

## Monthly

Alternate Mondays (9 <sup>th</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup> May)	Not So Young Club (contact Frances Simpson)
First Thursday	Prayer and Reflection 10:00am followed by coffee (contact Liz Barry & Barbara Joiner)
Second Thursday	Memory Café (contact Laurence Devlin)
Second Tuesday	Lunch Club (contact Laurence Devlin)
Third Tuesday	Lunch Club (contact Catherine Harding)



**WHEATLEY REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP**  
invites you to a presentation by  
**SANCTUARY HOSTING**

Rearranged Date, new time and date:

**Tuesday 3 May, 7.00pm – 8.30pm**  
**Merry Bells, High Street, Wheatley**

**Meet Director Tess McCay; and  
current host Linda King**

**What does Sanctuary Hosting do?  
How does it work?**

Enjoy some  
Syrian  
Snacks



**Cost £5 at the door: for Syrian snacks and soft drink**  
**Sanctuary Hosting would welcome further donations.**

**Contactless payment available**

**ALL WELCOME; advance notice of numbers would be helpful**  
**by email to: [wheatleyrefugeegroup@gmail.com](mailto:wheatleyrefugeegroup@gmail.com)**

Sanctuary Hosting is a scheme that provides temporary accommodation for refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable migrants at risk of homelessness by matching them with generous volunteer hosts who offer a free bed and a warm welcome.

The service gives guests a chance to tackle the causes of their homelessness from a place of safety and security. The hosts and guests are supported by a team of dedicated volunteers.



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

**CHURCH CONTACTS**

*Non-Stipendiary Minister: Revd. Cara Heafey*  
*Email: [caraheafey@hotmail.com](mailto:caraheafey@hotmail.com)*

*Church Secretary: Phyllis Williams*  
*email: [secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk)*

*Church website: [www.wheatleyurc.org.uk](http://www.wheatleyurc.org.uk)*