

# **WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER**



**December 2022**

## Covering Thoughts

*Looking back over the paintings chosen for the newsletter cover I was surprised to see just how many were of mountains.*

*One experience that remains etched in my mind was a day when the mist came down, snow began to fall and all but the path ahead was suddenly obliterated. We had no choice but to go forward, making our way in the surrounding silence, unaware of the terrain either to the right or the left. I can recall the magical feeling of being aware of the immediate way ahead – no distractions or distant views – just being in tune with life in the present moment.*

*So this month here is another mountain painting. As autumn turns to winter you might expect it to be bleak and cold, but instead this scene has a hot red underpainting. It's title is The Glaciers are Melting and it is a solemn reminder of global warming.*

*We are all too aware of the mountainous problems facing our leaders and politicians. They are far removed from first century Palestine yet Jesus spoke of moving mountains and the faith required to do the seemingly impossible.*

*As we rely on the knowledge of scientists to raise our awareness and the power of politicians to take major decisions, it is up to each one of us to try to live more economically, and to be open and experimental in our attempts to change.*

*We need people of courage to set examples of living in harmony with nature rather than exploiting it, and as we approach the Christmas period with its temptation to over indulge I wonder how courageous we can be to live more simply. Can we stand alongside those who have no choice but to cut back on their spending? Can we celebrate in true Christian style?*

*It seems to me that unhappiness results from wanting the beautiful view or way of life to continue unchanged, we need to be able to let go and be open to change. Faith is needed to continue moving forward when the distant view is obscured and all that remains is a bewildering mystery.*

**Christine**

# Pastoral Letter

As most of you are aware, after 20 years, Wendy's Parkinson's has reached a point where life has become more of a challenge for both of us. In addition to her mobility and balance being impaired, she is much slower at everyday tasks and in greater need of help. As a result I find myself 'waiting' and am gradually learning how to be more patient and not simply sit twiddling my thumbs. However patience does not equate with doing nothing, which, as Leo Tolstoy said is laziness. So what do I do?. Sometimes I find myself multitasking, trying to fit in another job. At other times I may be preparing for the next task or planning for the day ahead; at others exercising my brain with the day's crossword or sudoku. I am not great at meditating but increasingly find myself quietly reflecting on a visual image or something I have heard or read.

All of that is a preface to thoughts on Advent, a period of waiting. But what are we waiting for? Whilst not wishing to diminish the importance of Christ's birth in the Christian calendar, it is an event with which we are all familiar and excited anticipation of a birthday is I suspect inversely proportional to one's age. Advent is also a time of preparation but all too often this has more to do with ensuring we have ordered the turkey, put up the decorations or purchased the requisite number of presents. Christ's birth is certainly worthy of celebration but Advent is also a time for quiet reflection which can be swamped by all the excitement and 'business'.

I came across the following prayer during Advent last year, attributed to St Teresa of Avila, and I have often returned to it for quiet reflection. I share it with you as we wait and prepare for Christ's coming among us.

"May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each one of us.”

May the light of the Christ child lead us to peace in our hearts, our homes, our country and His world.

**Malcolm Benson**

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## Prayers

**Please remember in your prayers the members in Charles Bennett’s pastoral group:** Phyllis & Mark Williams, Barbara & Albert Joiner, Bobbie Stormont & Tom Goss, Lynnette & Richard Wood, Frances Simpson, Annie & Dave Crosby-Williams, Elliot & Sebastian and Catherine & Robert Harding.

**Also remember members of the Finance Team:** Chris Shelley, Robert Harding, Mike Matejtschuk.

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## Christmas Cards

If you send Christmas cards to your friends at church, why not send just one, to be pinned up on the noticeboard and then send the money saved to a charity of your choice.



**Ann Hardiman**

# Advent Wreath 2022

When Theseus stood at the entrance to the labyrinth, he was armed with a sword and a clew, (ball of string). Ariadne gave him instructions to always walk forwards, never left or right and to go downhill. Theseus set out to slay the Minotaur; a half bull half human creature which had taken captive many young men and women.

We most likely remember this famous Greek myth from our school days and think of it when we encounter the word 'labyrinth'. Labyrinths were and are dangerous places. There is a risk of losing your way in the maze of passages and dying from hunger and thirst. In today's world, garden mazes are fun to enter and weave your way through, with dead ends making the puzzle more tricky but entertaining.

Unlike the familiar mazes and labyrinths of the past, and the present gaming world, labyrinths have been used by many cultures and religions to symbolise a spiritual journey or pilgrimage. Christians have used them in cathedrals for prayerful meditation since medieval times. There is a famous one on the floor of the Chartres Cathedral near Paris. These labyrinths are unicursal, meaning there is only one path leading to the centre and back out into the world.



The development of the seven circle labyrinth, meant that a cross was incorporated in the centre, providing it with a Christian symbol. The entrance represents birth, and the centre, God.

This Advent, we are incorporating a labyrinth in our wreath and decorations, as a focus for our prayers and meditations. Traditionally, each Sunday of Advent, we light a candle symbolising, Hope, Faith, Joy and Peace. In the centre is the Christ candle which is lit on Christmas Day to symbolise Christ coming into the world.

Theseus bravely fought and slayed the Minotaur with his sword. He set free the young men and women that were held captive before they were devoured by the monster. He then returned triumphantly from the labyrinth with the help of his string, to take the hand of Ariadne. (Only it didn't work out like that). Sadly, as he sailed back home, he forgot to change his sails from black to white to show his father he had been successful. His father, King Aegeus, jumped off the cliff to his death, in the belief that his son was dead. Such are the twists and turns of life!

As we stand at the entrance to the labyrinth, this Advent, what challenges will we face ahead? Climate change, rising energy bills, health problems....? The list is endless.

With God at the centre and our armour of Hope and Faith, and with Joy and Peace in our hearts, we ask God to show us His pathways.

**Pauline Shelley**

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## Can you Offer a Lift?

Several people in our community already offer lifts to those who are otherwise unable to get to Church or other community occasions. If you are able to offer lifts do please email Bobbie. - [newsletter.wheatleyurc@org.uk](mailto:newsletter.wheatleyurc@org.uk)

# News from the Falcon School

We are pleased to report that after last month's Newsletter regarding all the basic improvements required to eventually fully complete the current school 'block' (2 classrooms and staff accommodation) in early 2023 ...

....some of the pupils and staff have recently now found time for a **much welcome trip out to the Heroes Acres and the National Museum to the west of Harare.** Wilbert allowed the group to use 'his' bus, pretty crucial because the 'school bus' doesn't have any seats in it!

Here's how they enjoyed themselves.



There will be more news regarding progress at Falcon as we move towards the New Year.

Thank you for your continuing support for the Falcon school.

**Your 'Care For The World' Team**

# 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity'

## Excerpts by John Milton

This is the month, and this the happy morn,  
Wherein the Son of Heav'n's eternal King,  
Of wedded Maid, and Virgin Mother born,  
Our great redemption from above did bring;  
For so the holy sages once did sing,  
That he our deadly forfeit should release,  
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

That glorious Form, that Light unsufferable,  
And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty,  
Wherewith he wont at Heav'n's high council-table,  
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,  
He laid aside, and here with us to be,  
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,  
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

It was the winter wild,  
While the Heav'n-born child,  
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;  
Nature in awe to him  
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,  
With her great Master so to sympathize:  
It was no season then for her  
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

No war or battle's sound  
Was heard the world around;  
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;  
The hooked chariot stood  
Unstain'd with hostile blood;  
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;  
And kings sate still with awful eye,  
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.



Such music (as 'tis said)  
Before was never made,  
    But when of old the sons of morning sung,  
While the Creator great  
His constellations set,  
    And the well-balanc'd world on hinges hung,  
And cast the dark foundations deep,  
And bid the welt'ring waves their oozy channel keep.

Yea, Truth and Justice then  
Will down return to men,  
    Orb'd in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,  
Mercy will sit between,  
Thron'd in celestial sheen,  
    With radiant feet the tissu'd clouds down steering;

**Mike Matejtschuk**

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## Amnesty 'Write for Rights' Campaign

Again this year I will provide some booklets, probably on the first Sunday in December for anyone who wishes, to join in Amnesty's campaign for 2022.

**However**, if you visit [amnesty.org.uk/write-rights](https://amnesty.org.uk/write-rights) you will be able to access all you need. I have ordered just 10 booklets and if this doesn't prove to be enough I am hoping that we might be able to share them.

Hopefully lots of us will join in again this year. It is a small thing we can do that really does make a difference. The letters and cards are hugely appreciated by those imprisoned for their political beliefs and the stands that they take against unjust and often corrupt governments.

On behalf of the 'Care for the World' team - **Robert Harding**

# The Howe Trust - Christmas Hamper Appeal

The Howe Trust is a local charity with responsibility of maintaining the land known as The Howe for the benefit of the local population. In addition, when money permits, we provide help for the most needy in our community. The Howe Trust Christmas Hamper Campaign supports the families of children in receipt of free school meals, who attend Wheatley C of E Primary, Wheatley Park and John Watson Schools.

2022 will be the 3rd year we will be running the initiative with almost 200 children being eligible for free school meals across the three schools. Many of the families are suffering from a reduction in universal credit alongside dramatically increased costs of basics such as food and fuel.

The hampers which will cost approximately £40 each provide all the ingredients needed to cook a full healthy Christmas dinner for 6 - including a fresh turkey crown, pigs in blankets, stuffing, fresh vegetables and Yule log or a vegetarian equivalent.

Needless to say, this initiative makes a huge difference to some of the poorest families in our community. In previous years grateful thanks were received from many of the recipients, with one mother writing that it "was their best Christmas present ever and had taught her sons something about the kindness of strangers".

It is anticipated that most of the costs of funding this campaign will be provided by the Howe Trust but we could not do it without financial contributions from individuals and sponsors.

You can help raise the money for The Howe Trust (Wheatley) by donating online by clicking the JustGiving website. (Go to JustGiving website and enter Howe Trust)

Alternatively, payments can be made by bank transfer to The Howe Trust, sort code 30-98-90, account number 16549660 (please use your surname as reference) or by cheque delivered to the parish office or to my home address 82 High Street, OX33 1XP. Gift aid forms are available. Thank you.

If you wish to know more about the Howe Trust please contact me - [mkb@doctors.org.uk](mailto:mkb@doctors.org.uk)

**Malcolm Benson**

# Blended Service Rotas for Dec 2022

| Date                | Worship Leader                                            | Vestry            | Welcomer             | Door Steward       | Reader             | Prayers                 |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>4th</b>          | HC Rev<br>Colin<br>Thompson                               | Robert<br>Harding | Ann Gajda            | Allison<br>Towner  | Marian<br>Mole     | Ann<br>Bettess          |
| <b>11th</b>         | Richard<br>Bainbridge                                     | Chris<br>Shelley  | Moira<br>Watson      | Angela<br>Holdaway | Moira<br>Watson    | Christine<br>Bainbridge |
| <b>18th</b>         | Mark<br>Williams                                          | Ellen<br>Webster  | Charles<br>Bennett   | Ann<br>Bettess     |                    |                         |
| <b>24th<br/>6pm</b> | <b>Rev Colin<br/>Thompson</b><br><i>Carol<br/>Service</i> | Robert<br>Harding | Elaine<br>Matejschuk | Marian<br>Mole     |                    |                         |
| <b>25th</b>         | Laurence<br>Devlin                                        | Malcolm<br>Benson | Ann Gajda            | Bobbie<br>Stormont | Charles<br>Bennett | Robert<br>Harding       |

## Common Lectionary Readings Dec 2022

| Date                 | Dec 4th                  | Dec 11th            | Dec 18th                 | Dec 25th        |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>First Reading</b> | Isaiah 11: 1-10          | Isaiah 35: 1-10     | Isaiah 7: 10-16          | Isaiah 52: 7-10 |
| <b>Psalm</b>         | Psalm 72: 1-7 &<br>18-19 | Psalm 146:<br>5-10  | Psalm 80: 1-7 &<br>17-19 | Psalm 98        |
| <b>New Testament</b> | Romans 15:<br>4-13       | James 5: 7-10       | Romans 1: 1-7            | Hebrews 1: 1-4  |
| <b>Gospel</b>        | Matthew 3:<br>1-12       | Matthew 11:<br>2-11 | Matthew 1:<br>18-25      | John 1:1-14     |

**Dec 4<sup>th</sup>:** Marcus Rashford has taken on celebrity status like John the Baptist.

**Dec 11<sup>th</sup>:** Desmond Tutu said before a sermon "Can you hear the butterflies in my tummy?" Like John the Baptist he had his doubts.

**Dec 18<sup>th</sup>:** The 'BBC Sports Personality of the Year Show' is supposed to be about personality rather than winning. Joseph was not one of life's winners.

**Dec 25<sup>th</sup>:** Guido Reni the painter often depicted the stable as dark with light from the baby Jesus illuminating all around. Today we celebrate the light.

**Richard Bainbridge**

# What's On – Dates for your Diaries

## Weekly

|               |                           | Contact                                   |
|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Monday 8:45   | Mindfulness Sitting Group | Mark Williams<br>jmarkgwilliams@gmail.com |
| Thursday 8:45 | Mindfulness Sitting Group | Mark Williams<br>jmarkgwilliams@gmail.com |
| Friday 10am   | Table Tennis              | Val Farmer<br>val_farmer40@hotmail.com    |

## Monthly

|                         |                                                 |                                                |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Alternate Mondays       | Not So Young Club<br>Dec 5 <sup>th</sup> , 19th | Frances Simpson<br>frances_simpson@icloud.com  |
| 1st Sunday              | Tea, 2.30 – 4pm<br>Dec 11th                     | Ann Bettess<br>annsgoog@gmail.com              |
| 1st Thursday            | Meditation 10 - 10.30am                         | Liz Barry<br>lizbarry26@gmail.com              |
| 2nd Sunday              | Family Games Cafe<br>Dec 11th                   | Kevin Betts<br>kevin@kbetts.com                |
| 2nd Thursday            | Memory Cafe<br>Dec 8th                          | Laurence Devlin<br>laurencelanne99@gmail.com   |
| 2nd Tuesday             | Lunch Club – Dec 13th                           | Laurence Devlin                                |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday | Lunch Club – Dec 20th                           | Catherine Harding<br>hardings64@btinternet.com |

## Warm Spaces

The Mulberry room is being made available as a 'warm space' between 13.00hrs and 17.00 hrs from Monday to Friday commencing on the 1st of December. Many thanks for all who have offered to help, I hope they have all been contacted but if there are any other volunteers I am sure we can include them in the rota.

We will be offering tea and coffee and there will be some games and jigsaws available if needed. We have no idea as to the uptake at this stage but posters and fliers will be available and there is further information in the parish newsletter. If there is demand we envisage it continuing until the end of February (excluding the week between Christmas and the New Year.

**Malcolm Benson**

# A Good Read - SNIPPETS from past AGM Minutes

A selection from archived AGM Minutes will be included in the coming Newsletters. How some things change and other do not! [this is not intended as a historical record; comments in square brackets are added. *Ellen*]

## **1972**

Revd Brock said it would grieve him even to think of leaving Wheatley, but the day may soon come – 10 years was a good round figure to finish on. It would be wise if Wheatley considered what Wheatley would do if and when the time arose. “Quite naturally we have heart strings pulling us towards the USA. We don’t want to leave you in the lurch”.

The Church secretary [Bruce Shepherd] replied that the whole Church would be sad to lose the Brocks and it would be a very sad day indeed when they left up Friday Lane for the last time.

[it would be another 25 years before that day arrived.]

## **1973**

Revd Brock said it had been a difficult year for him and he had found he had run out of energy. The major disappointment was the B.Litt perhaps – tried for too much in too short a time, he said. An attempt might be made one day to write a book reconciling Marx and Froid [sic] and Christianity.

## **1974**

### **Job Description for Church Secretary**

The duties of church secretary are necessarily very different from those of a secretary in the commercial world. For apart from being responsible for all church correspondence and records, the job is more nearly akin to those of a manager of a commercial concern, except that a manager might get things done by command, the church secretary must do so by tactful request. He[!] must also be the minister’s closest friend, confidant and adviser.

## **1978**

Mr Brock referred to the discussion groups on a) Sexual Morality, b) Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage.... and two other topics for discussion during coming year 1) The National Front and its implications, 2) The denominational appeal for all church members to give 1% of their income to world development.

## 1979

Auditor's comments: 75% of the collection money comes from the people who covenant. Weekly giving (church membership 74) = 35p per member and cost to keep church going was £1 per member. The auditor asked that the church pay particular attention to the maintenance of the church fabric since only £28 was spent in the year ending.

Social Committee: a very busy year with a number of activities – some just for fund raising and some purely as social get-togethers. Pea and Pie Hallowe'en [!], slide evening, Christmas Bazaar, Barn Dance, Jumble Sales, Sunday teas on several occasions, Farewell Party, Spring Fete and a family lunch.

## 1983

**Junior Church:** It was noted that several of the children had a thoughtful and perceptive attitude to life and to the needs of others and one was encouraged by some of their comments and understandings. It was not always easy to see the rationale and justification for the junior church and its role needed to be thought about continually. It was agreed that the role of children in the church should be given serious thought in the coming year.

## 1984

**Minister's Report:** Wheatley Festival of Faith – the sad note is that the Festival did not turn the village on. I know the English aren't much interested in formal religion anymore. It is strange, but at the height of England's cultural and worldly power in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> cents, religions flourished here. This is not to say there isn't deep interest about life and death and the world to come. But when it comes to the churches, there is really very little interest. What has gone wrong?

## 1987

**Maintenance Report:** I have to say a very considerable thank you to all of you – both trousered and skirted – who have done this work. I have many vivid and amusing memories of the comradeship which we have found together and each piece of work accomplished is indelibly marked with the commitment and dedication of those who so skilfully helped. That we manage to do it is a mark of the strong sense of community in this church.

Next instalment - January 2023!

**Ellen Webster**



# LIGHT UP YOUR WINDOW FOR ADVENT!

The Advent Windows trail, also known as *ADVENTure*, has rapidly become a staple of Wheatley village life at Christmas. Whether or not you've taken part in previous years, now's the time to sign up if you'd like to light up the village this advent season.

To join in, all you need is a window that is visible from the road, and that you are happy to light between 6pm and 8pm for up to 30 days through December. We try to make the whole trail easily walkable from the centre of the village, however if this year proves as popular as last year, we may be able to offer two trails in different parts of the village.

Once you've been assigned a date, you can get designing! The window needs to contain your day number, and some references to the theme (see below). Other than that, the design's entirely down to you. If you'd like to look at some examples from last year, you can find the gallery at <https://bit.ly/3EHYkGQ>.



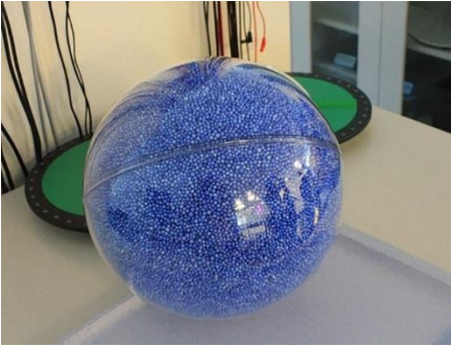
Once the bonus content has been set up, you'll be given a small laminated poster with a barcode on it, which needs to go somewhere near the window, placed so people can scan it with their phones.

Don't delay! Dates tend to get snapped up quickly, so sign up now at [adventurewheatley.org](http://adventurewheatley.org).

# Christmas Corner

Do you play favourite family games at Christmas, tell jokes, share fantastic facts, or compile a quiz together? Maybe some of the following might be helpful and fun!

## Fantastic Facts

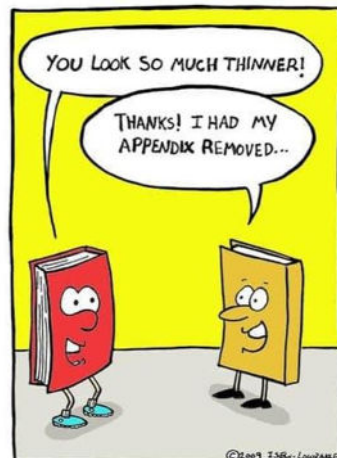


*How many earths fit inside the sun?  
1.3 million*



*Did you know that Quetzalcoatlus Northropi is the largest flying animal ever to live?*

## Fun Jokes





**Singing Emojis – Name that Song? (answers on page ?)**



# Did You Know? – (from the RSPB)

Chiffchaffs – one of our regular migrants – weigh less than a £1 coin, yet make the flight between the UK and sub-Saharan Africa not once but twice a year.

A woman sat knitting while watching a nighthawk – part of the nightjar family – an obliging bird which sat for a day on a fence in Oxfordshire. Perhaps it left with a jumper?

While most Nearctic migrants endure a bumpy transatlantic flight to reach us, there are stories every year of birds hitching a ride on ships. This October a boat north of Orkney transported a dark-eyed junco and two white-throated sparrows all the way from Canada.

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## Deadline

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 is the deadline for the January Newsletter. Please send copy to: [newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk) . Paper copy can be given to Bobbie Stormont. Please type it in Calibri font and 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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### **Christmas Corner – Emoji Song Answers**

I Saw Mummy Kissing Santa Claus

Let It Snow Let It Snow Let It Snow

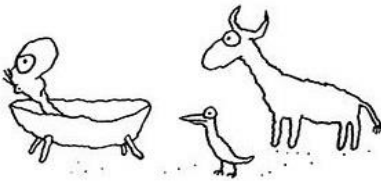
Baby It's Cold Outside

Blue Christmas

Santa Claus Is Coming To Town

All I Want For Christmas Are My Two Front Teeth

Love is born  
With a dark and troubled face.  
When hope is dead  
And in the most unlikely place  
Love is born,  
Love is always born.



Leunig





***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)*

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