

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



January 2023

Covering Thoughts

Many of you know and love the poem by R S Thomas called The Bright Field. It begins with the words:

*I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it.*

That eye catching moment stopped the poet in his tracks and caused him to reflect on life, all of which he shares in the rest of the poem.

The difficulty is that so much is eye catching. I remember doing an awareness exercise with children and one girl exclaimed that it was too much. She did not want to be aware of it all. She was right. We survive by being selective. An overload to the senses leads to sickness. We see many awe inspiring things and it may be hard to let them go without wanting to grasp onto them. Then there can be anxiety in allowing so much to slip through the fingers and be forgotten.

I am fortunate in having an outlet in painting for holding onto some eye catching moments. Recently my attention was caught by some quirky birds in the window of a Tudor house. I just had to draw them, do something with them, not let them slip away. In the end they became the focus of an Advent window, but as I worked on it I worried about how the design had any relevance to the season.

Only in the placing of the birds did a meaning emerge. I had found them all as individuals separated from each other by the lead of the casement window, but they needed to relate, each bird to another of a different kind. It reinforced for me the importance of engaging with others, not just like ourselves but across the barriers of age, class, sex and race.

So I leave this thought with you for Christmas and through the New Year to lift your eyes from the iPhone on your travels and find enrichment from engaging with those you meet.

Christine

Pastoral Letter

5,4,3,2,1, Countdown to the New Year and who we might be praying for

I am sure that most of us are familiar with the countdown to midnight on New Year's Eve. I wondered if I might use that approach in this letter, the first of 2023. I thought that perhaps there were things that moved forward in 2022 that we might want to include in our thinking and prayers this year, as they develop.

5 URC churches left in the Oxford area by the end of 2022

With the very sad closure of Summertown URC back in May, there are just five URC churches in the Oxford area now, and if not yet, then in the very near future, none will have a stipendiary minister. Are there ways, other than with our prayers, that we can support each other in the future? Maybe this could be a focus for a group at the away-day we are planning?

4 Regular worship leaders in Wheatley URC by the end of 2022

During last year it became clear that we now have four of our members regularly leading worship for us on Sunday mornings. How blessed we are. Is there a danger that we might sometimes take them for granted? Brief words of appreciation and holding them in our prayers are surely the least that we should be doing.

3 Prime Ministers in 2022

So what, I hear some of you thinking, this is a church newsletter after all. Of course we are all too aware of how we landed up with three prime ministers in the matter of a few weeks last year. However, the result of those political upheavals is that the UK has its first non-white prime minister who also happens to be a member of the Hindu faith. So in a country where there seems to be so much intolerance and lack of trust, this does seem like some sort of tentative step forward, whatever your political leanings are, and however much faith you have in Rishi Sunak to lead our country through this most difficult of times.

2 Sovereigns in 2022

One of the most momentous events across the world last year was the death of Queen Elizabeth 2nd in early September. The impact of the television

coverage during the following two weeks is probably something many of us will never forget. Putting that to one side for now, it is easy to forget how difficult it can be to follow in the steps of a successful and well-loved leader. (Ask any supporter of Manchester United). I don't think praying for members of our Royal Family is something we do naturally or regularly in our worship, and some of us may well be ambivalent about the monarchy if not opposed to it. However King Charles 3rd and his Queen Consort Camilla have much to do representing us on the world stage, it will probably consume their lives. Maybe they, and members of their wider family, should be in our prayers as they embark on this new stage in their lives?

1 Elisa arriving in Wheatley in August 2022

On the 31st August 2022, Elisa arrived from Bonn at St Pancras railway station to be met by Phyllis and Ellen. What a wonderful turn of events that has proved to be. Elisa has had such an amazing impact on the life of our church, especially but not only amongst the young people and their families, also around the village and in our Sunday worship. With her lovely smile, unassuming nature and many talents, what a blessing and a gift she is proving to be. She is young and quite a long way from home, so let's not forget her in our prayers.

A prayer for New Year:

Loving God,

We thank you for the gift and promise of a new year.

We praise you for the all possibilities it will bring,

The countless opportunities for love, for joy, to be generous, loving and kind, for supporting others and getting alongside those in need.

Help us to count our blessings as well as offering our time, talents and wealth to those in need, and may we never forget to offer our prayers for those with the most power and influence as well as the powerless and destitute and those we are close to and with whom we worship you week by week. Amen.

Love and blessings Robert Harding

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Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the members in Elaine Matejtschuk's pastoral group: Catherine & David Hughes, Pauline & Chris Shelley, Allison Towner, Martin & Emma Jee, Felicity & Jasper and Annette Wright.

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

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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

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Scottish Gritter Truck Names

Share the Smiles in January

Hansel and Grit-All

For Your Ice Only

Mary Queen of Salt

I'm Shovelin'

Creedence Clear Road Survival

Snow Connery

Polar Patroller

Snow Dozer

Carrie Brad Thaw

Salt Disney

Lord Coldemort

I Want to Break Freeze

Coldfinger

Icesweeper Willie

News from the Falcon School – End 2022

As we write this 'update' for you just before Christmas the Falcon pupils are just breaking up for their holidays with lots to celebrate from the past year. Not just the settling-in of the new classroom block and staff accommodation (almost finished anyway!) but also a junior graduation day. This was for those younger pupils who have gone through their Early Development Class and are now moving onto Grade One.

We have a few videos which we hope to share with you of the celebrations accompanied by joyful group singing of 'Wind The Bobbin Up' !

Here are a couple of photos of pupils on the day, one with their certificate:



Wilbert is visiting the school early January to welcome the pupils back in and help with current 'finishing-off' projects.

He promises to report back with more news but in the meantime has asked us to make sure we pass on the Falcon School's deepest thanks for 'our blessed support' in 2022.

A Happy New Year From the 'Care For The World Team'

Blended Service Rotas for Jan 2023

Date	Worship Leader	Vestry	Welcome	Door Steward	Reader	Prayers
1st	HC Rev Colin Thompson	Chris Shelley	Charles Bennett	Tom Goss	Ann Gajda	Liz Barry
8th	Richard Bainbridge	Elaine Matejtschuk	Ann Gajda	Peter Devlin	Catherine Harding	Ellen Webster
15th	Cara Heafey	Moira Watson	Ellen Webster	Rob Holdaway	Barbara Joiner	Ann Hardiman
22nd	Mark Williams	Robert Harding	Moira Watson	Liz Barry		
29th	<i>Joint Service</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>Christian</i>	<i>Unity</i>	<i>at</i>	<i>St Mary's</i>

Common Lectionary Readings Jan 2023

Date	Jan 1st	Jan 8th	Jan 15th	Jan 22nd	Jan 29th
First Reading	Ecclesiastes 3 : 1-13	Isaiah 42: 1-9	Isaiah 49: 1- 7	Isaiah 9: 1-4	Micah 6: 1-8
Psalm	Psalm 8	Psalm 29	Psalm 40: 1-11	Psalm 7: 1 & 4-9	Psalm 15
New Testament	Revelation 2: 1-6a	Acts 10: 34- 43	1 Corinthians 1: 1-9	1 Corinthians 1: 10-18	1 Corinthians 1: 18-31
Gospel	Matthew 25: 31-46	Matthew 3: 13-17	John 1: 29-42	Matthew 4: 12-23	Matthew 5: 1-12

Jan 1st: Do we need to be better at supporting people in their current season, especially when it is not where we are?

Jan 8th: Like John the Baptist Desmond Tutu once fell on his knees before an ageing priest to seek his blessing.

Jan 15th: Worship of Jesus is rather harmless and risk-free; following Jesus changes everything. (Richard Rohr)

Jan 22nd: Why can't there be beginnings without endings?

Jan 29th: Our pains can be the very birth pains of the kingdom of heaven. We need to be open-hearted to those around us.

Richard Bainbridge



Memory Cafe 2022



arts & crafts



games & quizzes coffee & chat



music & movement & wonderful volunteers



‘Commitment for Life’ – making a difference in Zimbabwe

Because of drought and climate change many families in Zimbabwe find it difficult to make ends meet. Jerina Nyamukondiwa and her family are one such. They used to grow food to eat and sell, but recently crops have failed and they have gone hungry. They found themselves with little food and not enough money to send the children to school. Things were so bad that after several days without food they moved to a church compound to survive.

However, things have now improved. Jerina has been working with a Christian Aid programme which has enabled her to join the Kubatana Steelworks group where she has learned to weld. Her husband already worked as a welder. She has enjoyed having a new skill and of course the income that goes with it. Learning something not traditionally done by women has been a challenge and a joy. She says, ‘Do not be intimidated by being told that this job cannot be done by women. There is no work that cannot be done by women because (they say) it is hard.’

Being part of the project has allowed Jerina to make improvements to her home and also buy livestock. ‘I have my goats and my pig project. I can see that things are surely changing for me and my family’

At the steelworks the group have designed and made a water-cart which can hold several large drums. She says; ‘We thought of making a water-cart as a group. Thinking about exactly what we wanted, so that if we put containers on it someone can go and fetch the water easily’.

All our giving is making a difference to people’s lives from day to day.

Robert Harding on behalf of ‘The One World Team’



A Good Read - SNIPPETS from past AGM Minutes

1990

Minister's Report. Steven Hoyle from Ripon College was with us for the year and it was good to have him around. Imagine the old days when an Anglican wouldn't be caught dead in our church, nor we in theirs. And Cuddesdon College was so closed off, the students were only allowed out Saturday afternoons. It has all changed now. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury calls me "Charles" – I haven't been able to pick up the courage to call him "Bob" yet.

Maintenance: A few minor emergencies were averted, such as heavy rain penetrating the church porch, a length of lorry damaged guttering replaced on the road frontage and the inner door of the Church Hall rendered reasonably childproof to foil any would-be escapees from Mothers & Toddlers Group.

1993

Minister's Report: We continue to try to be a church of the people, which is our heritage. Our forefathers fought for a non-hierarchical society and the church was to give the lead. Though we are now a small minority of the British population without much clout, we can act in ways that reflect our understanding of the gospel and hope a few others might catch the vision. It is a slow process, particularly when Britain is in the doldrums and nothing much happens in any radical and creative way for the future.

We have increased the number of our committees to 12. This may sound yawnable, but in fact it is quite important. It means more people are involved in decision making; it is the true meaning of sharing.... I thank all those people who organize our meals and fun together. What would a church, or life itself, be without the good times (like salmon and champagne at Church Anniversary)?

1996

Worship Committee: We intend to produce a card for visitors to the church, in time for the bicentenary, which will explain who we are and what we get up to (well, not everything). We are asking those responsible for the refurbishment to take account of visibility (except, of course, for what goes on behind the organ curtain) and acoustics (except for the whispered communications between organist and minister).

1997

Maintenance

As a result of an excellent day of work recently, the vestry was redecorated. It is noticeable that our sermons have been rather brighter following this!

Minister's Report

I ring out my joy to still be with you after 34 years. Every year seems to be better and better. We are glad for the fellowship on so many levels, deep and profound but fun and happy too. We like the village and we want to see churches and village more united. All of us hope our 200th anniversary will help in that direction.

Music

The Chime Ringers always add a special touch when they play. If you are under any illusion that playing a note here and there in the course of a piece is easy, please do come and give it a try!

1999

"Restore and Renew" building project – Fundraising

The Talents challenge continues to allow members and friends to use their skills in support of the restoration fund. Such a range of skills, too, from cookery and needlework via manure sales to lectures and quiz making.

2000

Young people's trip to the London Eye and Church House

I must admit the first mention of a visit to Church House did sound a bit boring. It actually turned out to be a really good day. Church House was Quite big inside, so we all crammed into an office to eat and drink and play on the flash computer. The best bit was our visit to the place where they make the Reform magazine where we saw it taking shape. The London Eye – I recommend people with a fear of heights not to look down, because it is quite breathtaking. We watched the ant-like people walking around below and I recommend it to anyone going to London.

2022

Minister's Report: The Minister felt that Wheatley URC really runs itself and that did we really need a minister? We all disagreed with him!

Ellen Webster

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Deadline

Monday 16th January is the deadline for the February Newsletter. Please send copy to: newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk . Paper copy can be given to Debi Kidd. 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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“May your coming year be filled with magic and dreams and good madness. I hope you read some fine books and kiss someone who thinks you’re wonderful. And don’t forget to make some art, or write, draw, build, sing, or live only as you can. And I hope in the next year, you surprise yourself.”

Neil Gaiman



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