

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



April 2023

Covering Thoughts

After water and earth the element this month is air. The most abstract of the elements it is difficult to visualize and can be taken for granted, even overlooked. Yet it is essential for every moment of life. So, let us focus on it for a while.

We could think of the effects of pollution on air quality, marvel at the force of gale force winds or consider the colours of the sky and the slow movement of the clouds but let us come home to our body and be aware of our breath.

In mindfulness practice, awareness of breathing is a gateway to still busy thoughts and to bringing calmness to the body. Following even just one breath from its entry into our nose or mouth, down into our lungs and then feeling the warmth of the expelled air leaving the body can provide a momentary stillness. How often do we use the expression of taking a breathing space?

Viktor Frankl who was a survivor of Auschwitz said:

Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response, lies our growth and freedom.

I have been trying to put this into practice when I am feeling negative or uncertain. In that breathing space I recognize that there is a choice, a choice to frown or to smile. I cannot change the situation, but I can choose how I respond to it.

Air is one of nature's gifts, from the gift of the breath of life to Adam in the creation story to the gift of the Spirit, breathed on the disciples at Easter. A breath of fresh air is a great thing to take, and an even better thing to be.

Christine

Pastoral Letter

Dear friends,

April! Easter! We are just getting used to winter, which seemed to take a long time to get going and seemed to cling on too long, but now the clocks have 'sprung forward' and we are in British Summer Time – so it is official, it must be the summer half of the year. Friends from warmer places tell us they envy us our seasons, without change the weather is too boring to speak of, while we are constantly checking, do we need a coat, do we need hat, gloves, scarf, sun hat, sun screen (hard yet to imagine although we know they are on their way).

Without a stipendiary minister we are told our church is in a time of transition. (The terms 'inter regnum' or 'vacancy' are very much discouraged.) I like the concept of 'transition' - doesn't that describe life for each of us, moving, changing, growing? What comes next? None of us can know, but we can set a direction of travel, and we can choose our companions, people who can walk alongside us, challenge us, have fun with us, offer a helping hand when we get into difficulty and celebrate with us when we overcome an obstacle, love us.

Next month we will get together on May 13th to spend a day together looking at our next steps along the way, a time for us as a church to check our course and reset our direction of travel.

This message to all the Wessex churches is from Clare Downing our synod moderator who is facing a personal time of transition but is also challenging Wessex Synod to a time of transition too.

Phyllis Williams

Farewell from the Moderator

I just want to take this opportunity to thank everyone - individuals, churches, committees and staff within the Synod - for your support and love over the last twelve years. It's not always been an easy ride, and there are plenty of challenges ahead for both you and me, but with God's help, we will continue to share in God's mission.

You will hear separately about the plans that are in place to cover various parts of the Synod Moderator role during this period of transition. Do please support those taking on extra work and pray too for those who will be taking forward the process for appointing a successor.

I have enjoyed my time with you and will miss Wessex - the people and the places - a great deal. I hope that I will have just as good a time in North Western Synod!

Clare

~ ~ ~

Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the members of Ann Gajda's pastoral group; Moira & Jim Watson, Ann Wild, John Kidd, Keith & Debi Kidd, Sybil Beaton, Marian & Mike Mole and Wendy & Malcolm Benson.

Also remember members of the Maintenance Ministry Team; Tony Barry, Malcolm Benson, Tom Goss, Chris Shelley and Mark Williams.

~ ~ ~

Charitable Giving

The Finance Ministry Team made their decision in February as to the distribution of the final tranche of monies for our 2022 charitable giving. This is based on our financial year, January to December. It had been reported to the January Church meeting that our main support would be to donate to charities involved in dealing with those who were most badly affected by the cost of living crisis. The charities chosen were:

Community Emergency Foodbank, Oxford - £900

Citizens Advice Bureau, Oxfordshire South and Vale which covers our area - £900

Gatehouse Oxford, where we make an annual donation - £500

Each year we give at least 12.5% of our income to charitable causes. Some of this is paid away during the year, especially when the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) launches an appeal for a country where a disaster has struck. Other specific charitable needs are also considered as they arise during the year.

At the beginning of February, DEC launched an appeal following the Turkey/Syria earthquake. £750 was donated from our Church charitable giving, to which we were able to add £950 from your personal donations.

We have also been able to send £201 to the Alzheimer's Society, from donations received at our Sunday Teas from September 2022 to March 2023.

The Falcon School in Zimbabwe remains the focus of our charitable giving for 2023, although in 2022 their needs were not as great as in previous years. Our Care for the World Ministry Team will be keeping in touch with the Reverend Wilbert Sayimani and Lauren, regarding the plans for the school's development as 2023 progresses.

Full details of our charitable giving will be shown in our annual accounts and thank you for your continued support.

Chris Shelley

A surprise visitor



This beautiful peacock butterfly was photographed by Christine outside the church building in March. It had been spotted by members of the congregation during the World Day of Prayer Service fluttering on the window sill.

~*~

Common Lectionary Readings

April 2023

Note: leaders may choose to use other readings

Date	2nd	9th	16th	23rd	30th
First Reading	Isaiah 50: 4-9a	Acts 10: 34-43	Acts 2: 14a & 22-32	Acts 2: 14a & 36-41	Acts 2: 42-47
Psalm	Psalm 118: 1-2 & 19-29	Psalm 18: 1-2 & 14-24	Psalm 16	Psalm 116: 1-4 & 12-19	Psalm 23
New Testament	Philippians 2: 5-11	Colossians 3: 1-4	1 Peter 1: 3-9	1 Peter 1: 17-23	1 Peter 2: 19-25
Gospel	Matthew 21: 1-11	Matthew 28: 1-10	John 20: 19-31	Luke 24: 13-35	John 10: 1-10

April 2nd - If you think standing up and singing in church is strange try a football match [Francis Spufford].

April 9th - When someone we love dies our healing requires both accepting death's reality and finding a place for that person in our ongoing life [Stroebe and Schut].

April 16th - There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds [Alfred Tennyson].

April 23rd - The Emmaus Road story is like a dot-to-dot puzzle where joining the dots reveals the picture.

April 30th - Ima Alarnab a Syrian refugee arrived in England in 2012. With £12 he set up a food restaurant and raised over £200,000 for an international charity called 'Choose Love'.

Richard Bainbridge

~*~

Blended Service Rotas for April 2023

Dates	Worship Leaders	Readers	Intercessors	Vestry Elder	Welcomer/ Door Steward
2 nd	Palm Sunday Service at St. Mary's				
6 th	Colin Thompson (Maundy Thursday evening)			Chris Shelley	Elaine Matejtschuk/ Liz Barry
9 th	Colin Thompson	Tom Goss	Robert Harding	Ellen Webster	Malcolm Benson/ Marian Mole
16 th	Richard Bainbridge	Christine Bainbridge	Ellen Webster	Moira Watson	Charles Bennett/ Pauline Shelley
23 rd	Mark Williams			Ann Gajda	Robert Harding/Ann Hardiman
30 th	Kate Hartford	Mike Matejtschuk	Liz Barry	Chris Shelley	Charles Bennett/ Barbara Joiner

Dates	Organist
2nd	Jeff
6th	Frances – Maundy Thursday
9th	Jeff
16th	Frances
23rd	Jeff
30th	Frances

~~~~~



# Dates for Your Diaries

## Weekly

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

## Monthly

|                                                            |                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alternate Mondays<br>(3 <sup>rd</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup> ) | Not So Young Club (contact Frances Simpson)                                                                                                             |
| First Thursday                                             | Prayer and Reflection 10:00am followed by coffee<br>(contact Liz Barry & Barbara Joiner)<br><b>Not in April because of Morning Meditation at 8.00am</b> |
| Second Thursday                                            | Memory Café (contact Laurence Devlin)                                                                                                                   |
| Second Tuesday                                             | Lunch Club (contact Laurence Devlin)                                                                                                                    |
| Third Tuesday                                              | Lunch Club (contact Catherine Harding)                                                                                                                  |

~\*~

# Easter Services

The services in bold are physically at/in the URC.

Palm Sunday, 9.45am, WAC

(Meet at the Merry Bells, joint service at St. Mary's, no service at URC)

## Holy Week

**Mon. 3<sup>rd</sup> to Thurs. 6<sup>th</sup> inclusive**

**8.00am Morning Meditation (30 mins) followed by shared breakfast**

## Maundy Thursday

**7.30pm, Tenebrae (darkness) a joint service with St. Mary's**

## Good Friday, WAC

Stations of the cross at Our Lady of Lourdes at 9.30am

**Procession of witness from Crown Square at 10.00am**

Hot Cross Buns at St. Mary's at approx. 11.00am

## Easter Day

**Holy Communion celebration service at 10.00am**

~\*~

# Planning & decision making at Wheatley URC

I have been asked to repeat the explanation I gave in church when 'The Care for the World' ministry team conducted worship on February 19<sup>th</sup>.

You will have noticed that we don't have committees here in the URC; you will not find one however hard you look. What we do have are 'ministry teams' and their function is in the title. Each team is charged with ministering to other members of the team as well as to the whole congregation in the area of their responsibility. So we have teams looking after our worship, finance, hospitality, pastoral care, communications, maintenance and our concern for peace, justice and the integrity of creation i.e. care for the world. Ideally each team has one of the elders as a member and starts meetings with prayer following by a time of listening to the concerns, interests and joys of the team members. The teams do not have the right to make major decisions, but in the interests of efficiency and the smooth running of our church, they take some things forward, for example the worship team will arrange the preaching rota, the maintenance team will organise essential repairs and the hospitality team will organise rotas and food for various events. In principle however, each team reports back to the elders (which is incidentally another ministry team), where their report will be discussed and then if necessary and appropriate taken forward for consideration at the next church meeting. All major decisions must be agreed at a full church meeting, for example, setting up our relationship with 'The Falcon School' in Zimbabwe, deciding to go ahead with 'The Mulberry Room' project, setting out on our 'Youth and Families' project and agreeing to accept new members into our church family.

Everyone is encouraged to be involved in our church life in one way or another and if you think you might contribute to one of our ministry teams, please speak to Phyllis or one of the elders. There is no need to wait to be asked.

Robert Harding on behalf of the elders.

# Easter by Edmund Spenser

Most glorious Lord of life, that on this day  
didst make thy triumph over death and sin,  
and having harrowed hell, didst bring away  
captivity thence captive, us to win:

This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin,  
and grant that we for whom thou diddest die,  
being with thy dear blood clean washed from sin,  
may live for ever in felicity:

And that thy love we weighing worthily,  
may likewise love thee for the same again;  
and for thy sake, who dost all grace supply,  
with love may one another entertain;

So let us love, dear Love, like as we ought;  
love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

This sonnet is from 'Amoretti', a calendar of sonnets largely about the poet's romantic love for the young woman he eventually married.

Underlying his description of Easter Day there is the idea that we should not let Jesus' love for us be unrequited.

Mike Matjeschuk

# World Day of Prayer, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023



*"I have heard about your faith"* was the theme for this year's service, compiled by women in Taiwan. A wonderful total of 44 people gathered at our church to attend the hour of worship, learning about the country itself and its multi-national population. We were particularly pleased to welcome a local Taiwanese family to the occasion and to have the opportunity to see the display they had brought for us to see, including dainty embroidered slippers, a delicate tea ceremony set, a dual-language Bible and children's books. We do hope everyone also took the time to read through the Order of Service booklet which provides so much background information on the country itself.

You might like to know that Christian women in Palestine have been busy already preparing the service for

2024 on the theme "I beg you, bear with one another in love."

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the service this year and also for the generous donations which will be distributed in the form of grants to a wide range of organisations in the UK and overseas.

From Liz, Marian and Ellen



# Deadline

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



***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)*