

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



May 2023

Covering Thoughts

As I walk home from church this morning the image of fire comes to mind. It is the last of the four elements chosen for the newsletter and I am reminded of a dance some of us are familiar with. The words for it are:

Let us kindle the divine fire within ourselves.

Learning how to create fire must have been one of the great discoveries for early humans. Even today the magic of striking a match or learning how to light a cooking fire at camp is fascinating for a child, and even adults seem obsessed by returning to primitive measures of cooking on barbecues.

Alongside the fire image came Jesus' words:

I have come to set fire to the earth and how I wish it were already kindled.
(Luke 12v49)

Returning home I looked this up and found warnings of conflict and great difficulties, family disagreements, legal cases, and hypocrisy. The image of fire speaks of destruction and cleansing.

We are familiar with fire used as a metaphor for the divine. In this passage as in many other instances in the bible it is linked with a feeling of fear or awe. To experience the divine carries consequences. We cannot approach without being changed. What disputes, conflicts, hypocrisy do I need to address before I think of kindling the divine fire? Is a prior cleansing necessary?

Our inadequacy to deal with our failures can leave us despondent or we may feel unmoved by something that others find inspiring. But the good news is that we are accepted as we are. Experience shows that if we wait expectantly sudden sparks of divine love will come our way, though we may not deserve them. All we have to do is to be ready to accept and appreciate those sparks when they come, to allow them to ignite that of the divine within, and to fan it into flame.

Christine

Pastoral Letter

“Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them his hand and his side.” (from John 20:19-20)

In the lectionary calendar we continue in the season of Easter right up until the end of May, when we celebrate Ascension and Pentecost. As we read and hear about the disciples’ encounters with the risen Jesus, we learn that this resurrected Christ still bears the scars of his crucifixion. It is one of the ways in which he can be recognised by his followers.

There’s something about this that feels deeply important. The joy of Easter Sunday is not superficial, but hard won. The past is not erased, it is written on the body in scars. That miraculous morning affirms that all that is broken can be made beautiful, integrated into new wholeness.

Lutheran preacher Nadia Bolz Weber writes about the risen Christ being known by his scars:

...isn’t that true for us as well? We can only really know and be known when we show our scars. I never really feel a connection to someone until they have shared with me the lumpy, broken, petty, parts of themselves. I may be inspired by the virtue and accomplishments of others, but I only feel less alone when someone shares their failures with me, the parts of themselves that have been hurt.

I’m reminded of *kintsugi*, the Japanese tradition of using decorative lacquer mixed with powdered precious metals to repair broken ceramics. In this beautiful artform the object’s fault-lines become features. The history of the object is revealed, not hidden. Its ‘scars’ are celebrated.

Let these resurrection stories remind us that God calls us not to perfection but to wholeness. We all carry scars of one kind or another. They are a part of what has made us who we are. My hope is that Wheatley URC is a place where our stories are heard and held. A place where we are known and loved. Scars and all.

I'd like to leave you with some lyrics by one of my favourite singer-songwriters, Mary Chapin Carpenter, from her song *Where the beauty is*:

The crooked line beneath the paint
From faraway it looks straight
Where practiced hands betray a shake
That's where the beauty is
The mark upon your skin revealed
Where injury and pain were sealed
But a scar's the place where you were healed
That's where the beauty is
The shattered pieces of a bowl
Filled and fused with dust and gold
In brokenness we are whole
That's where the beauty is
All that's buried in your heart
The cold and lonely, hopeless part
Dig down deeper and find the spark
That's where the beauty is

Peace and love,
Cara

~*~

Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the members of Robert Harding's pastoral group; Wendy Bailey, Charles & Sue Bennett, Ellen & Bob Webster, Angela & Rob Holdaway, Christine & Richard Bainbridge, Elaine & Mike Matejtschuk, Ann Hardiman.

Also remember members of the Worship Team; Allison Towner, Laurence Devlin, Pauline Shelley, Colin Thompson, Robert Harding, Liz Barry.

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Lent Soup Lunches for **Christian Aid** Report 2023

The five combined churches that make up Wheatley Area Churches held four very successful and well attended simple soup lunches during Lent, during Saturdays in March.

The total donations for **Christian Aid**, this year, amounted to an amazing £892. This was an impressive uplift of over £300, on last year's total.

Many thanks to everyone who participated as helpers, soup makers and of course the all-important "soup bibbers". We could not have done it without you!

As well as being a good fund raising opportunity, it always proves to be a happy social occasion, as well, sharing time with members from all the churches.

Grateful thanks on behalf of **Christian Aid** and their worldwide partners.

Tony Barry



Coronation Special - Sunday Tea May 7th 2.30 to 4 pm

Our next Sunday Tea, always on the first Sunday of the month, falls in the middle of the Coronation weekend on May 7th, so we are making a bit of a do of it, with bunting, balloons and jelly, as well as our splendid cakes (no false modesty). Our collection this month will be for Christian Aid.

At the same time there will be a Christian Aid tea based in the Mulberry Room and hopefully spreading outside the church.

Do come to support these events, and bring your friends!

Ann Bettess and the Pastoral Care Tea

New Printers for our Newsletter

Discussion for Church Meeting on 14th May

On behalf of the Communications Ministry team, we wish to propose enhancing the quality of photographs and images in our newsletter by changing the printing company we use. Contributors supply images to support their text much more regularly, but unfortunately the quality of reproducing these with our current printers is not high and not consistent, the December 2022 issue being a good example of this. We trust the following explanation will help to make you better informed before discussion at the May Church meeting.

Current Printers:

DML link, our current printers, use machines that are excellent for reproducing standard black & white print but when I queried the quality of the colour images Adam from DML responded:

'the riso printer is mainly designed for text - photos do not always come out best quality.'

We propose a change from DML to either Parchment or Print Concern, both Oxfordshire printers. We can save on P&P costs from both these companies as it is possible to pick the copies up from Garsington or Horspath respectively. I am currently awaiting a quote back from Print Concern.

Points for Discussion:

- 1.** Our newsletter is key to informing, supporting and uplifting our own church community, but it is also very much a part of our wider mission. It reflects the whole community too and is an important vehicle for conveying our sense of values, faith, breadth of offerings and support to all readers.
- 2.** We would like it to present the same high quality as we aim to achieve in other areas of our life together. Images bring our newsletter to life. They tell a story on their own, often very powerfully, without the need for text e.g. Falcon School, Advent Wreath and Memory Cafe photo pages. They also give our eyes a rest from text, but they need to be clear with good definition to tell their story well and invite us to linger and enjoy. It would

be very dull in today's culture to have only text; it is very disappointing to the editors, contributors and readers of our newsletter to see their good, sharp images poorly reproduced. Our front cover with its beautiful artwork is a wonderful invitation to open the newsletter, telling others how we value creativity and people's gifts.

3. Happily, we are receiving more contributions from members of our own community. It is good to support their stories with their own photographs, clear, bright and sharp, at the same time honouring and affirming their contribution and themselves as valuable members of our church community. People from elsewhere have on several occasions offered a contribution for our newsletter as a result of reading one of these pieces and gladly included their own photographs.

Please feel free to let us have your thoughts/queries before the Church Meeting especially if you unable to attend - wurc-communications@googlegroups.com

Communications Team – Bobbie Stormont, Debi Kidd, Ellen Webster
Christine Bainbridge.

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Easter Felted Flowers Project

Isn't it wonderful when an idea takes root and grows? Well this one certainly did that.

It all began with Bobbie asking me whether I would be happy to do some felting craft workshop with the



Memory Cafe, back in 2022. I agreed and, although a little later than originally planned, we held the workshop in March 2023.

There are two ways to make felt. One is using soap, water and plenty of rubbing to bond the fibres together, and the second way is by needle felting using barbed needles which are stabbed into the fibres many times. Given that the group have never done anything like this before, I thought it a safer option to use the soap and water method to make flat squares of different coloured pieces. This is when the idea began to grow. Easter was only a month away, and we thought it would be lovely if we could use the felt squares to make flowers with which to decorate the cross for Easter Day? We could then arrange for the members of the Memory Cafe to view the finished flowers at their next meeting.



Laurence and I, planned the morning carefully, to integrate the workshop into the morning session. Bobbie was away in New Zealand, but we had many keen helpers in addition to the carers. Wet felting is a physically vigorous activity, therefore we needed plenty of helpers to step in and take over with the rubbing and massaging when anyone became tired.

The wool we used was dyed merino tops. During the process, tiny scales on each fine strand of wool, open up then interlock with each other. Vigorous massaging of the fibres between layers of bubble wrap, speeds up this process so that after 30 minutes the fibres become bonded permanently. The pieces are then washed in hot and cold water alternatively which hardens it further, and once rinsed and dried, the sheets of felt were ready for the next stage which was to cut up and construct the flowers.



Once again, more friends became involved and the project grew. Friends from several groups that I belong to, helped me turn the felt squares into flowers by using needle felting, whilst finding out all about the project. With their help, in total, we made 40 flowers in different colours, varieties and sizes. Bobbie, who was still out in NZ, had told her sister, Vicky, all about this project and she also wanted to make some for their memory cafe. So we emailed instructions out to her. Who would have thought this could spread so far?!

Whilst making the flowers, I had been planning the next stage of how to attach them to the cross, and how we could arrange for the people from the Memory Cafe to view them in situ.



Fortunately the cafe was to meet on the Thursday after Easter which fitted in neatly with the removal of the Easter decorations. So the flowers were viewed and then at the end of their cafe, they were offered out for members to take home.

My thanks to all who supported the project, and the kind comments.

Pauline Shelley

And from the Memory Cafe Down-under Felted Poppies for ANZAC Day



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# Blended Service Rotas for May 2023

| Date                          | Worship Leader        | Vestry             | Welcome        | Door Steward    | Reader           | Prayers        |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 7 <sup>th</sup>               | HC Rev Colin Thompson | Ellen Webster      | Moira Watson   | Bobbie Stormont | Liz Barry        | Malcolm Benson |
| 14 <sup>th</sup>              | Richard Bainbridge    | Elaine Matejtschuk | Malcolm Benson | Angela Holdaway | Wendy Benson     | Ann Bettess    |
| 21 <sup>st</sup>              | Mark Williams         | Charles Bennett    | Ann Gajda      | Rob Holdaway    |                  |                |
| 28 <sup>th</sup><br>Pentecost | Tanya Rasmussen       | Chris Shelley      | Robert Harding | Peter Devlin    | Phyllis Williams | Barbara Joiner |

# Common Lectionary Readings May 2023

| Date                 | 7 <sup>th</sup> May      | 14 <sup>th</sup> May | 21 <sup>st</sup> May             | 28 <sup>th</sup> May      |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>First Reading</b> | Acts 7:<br>5-60          | Acts 17:<br>2-31     | Acts 1:<br>6-14                  | Acts 2: 1-21              |
| <b>Psalm</b>         | Psalm 31:<br>1-5 & 15-16 | Psalm 66:<br>8-20    | Psalm 68:<br>1-10 & 32-35        | Psalm 104: 24-34 & 35b    |
| <b>New Testament</b> | 1 Peter 2:<br>2-10       | 1 Peter 3:<br>13-22  | 1 Peter 4:<br>12-14 &<br>5: 6-11 | 1Corinthians<br>12: 3b-13 |
| <b>Gospel</b>        | John 14: 1-14            | John 14:<br>15-21    | John 17: 1-11                    | John 7: 37-39             |

**May 7th:** A violin was about to be sold for £10 until someone played it, at which point the auctioneer upped the bidding, when people saw the value in the instrument.

**May 14th:** In John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress those seeking the path to the Eternal City meet characters who will try to discourage or mislead them.

**May 21st:** For Jesus, his ascension witnessed to the fulfilment of his mission. His living memorial continues in his followers.

**May 28th:** In a speech on 26 June 1963, President J. F. Kennedy declared to a large crowd in West Berlin, near the Berlin Wall 'Ich bin ein Berliner'.

**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>May 15th | Frances Simpson<br>frances_simpson@icloud.com                                                 |
| 1st Sunday              | Tea, 2.30 – 4pm<br>May 7th    | Ann Bettess<br>annsgoog@gmail.com                                                             |
| 1st Thursday            | Meditation 10 - 10.30am       | Liz Barry<br>lizbarry26@gmail.com                                                             |
| 2nd Sunday              | Family Games Cafe<br>May 14th | Kevin Betts<br>kevin@kbetts.com                                                               |
| 2nd Thursday            | Memory Cafe<br>May 11th       | Laurence Devlin<br>laurencelanne99@gmail.com                                                  |
| 2nd Tuesday             | Lunch Club – May 9th          | Laurence Devlin                                                                               |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday | Lunch Club – May 16th         | Catherine Harding<br><a href="mailto:hardings64@btinternet.com">hardings64@btinternet.com</a> |



## Deadline

Wednesday 17<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. 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

# Artweeks

Dear Friends,

It is Artweeks again and for the first time since the pandemic I am having an open studio. Society has changed bringing many challenges. For me it has been a time of mastering new skills, from learning how to use a card reader, to participating in Artweeks' online presence. It is now possible to get a taster of each venue before you visit.

My exhibition begins on the Coronation weekend. While there will be many events taking place, we will still be open each day ready to welcome and provide a quiet space, and even the opportunity to watch the events should you choose to. So I do hope that you will visit and encourage your friends to come too. After two years there is a wealth of art to enjoy and while there is no need to buy anything, there is the option to purchase cards and also paintings to take away when you visit.

Friday May 5<sup>th</sup> 5pm-7pm join us for a preview party  
May 6<sup>th</sup> to May 14<sup>th</sup> we are open from 11am-5pm everyday.

3 Barns Close, Holton OX33 1QB

01865 872868

**Christine Bainbridge**



# Updates from Commitment for Life

## Time to make polluters pay

COP27, like many UN conferences of the past left mixed feelings. Whilst there was a real lack of commitment to phase out fossil fuels, a deal was agreed to create a fund to compensate those most impacted by climate disasters. Joab Okanda, Christian Aid's Pan African Policy Advisor, said: 'This is a victory for climate vulnerable countries who have been demanding this'. Right now though, all we have is an empty bucket. We need those responsible for the climate crisis to step up and provide the money urgently needed to help communities on the frontlines of the crisis.

**It's time to make the polluters pay for the damage they've caused. Join the campaign at: [caid.org.uk/riseuppayup](https://caid.org.uk/riseuppayup)**

## Another story from Zimbabwe

### Producing resilient livestock

Gilbert Butau from Mudzi, Zimbabwe is a livestock farmer who contends daily with the realities of climate change and unpredictable weather conditions. Christian Aid partner BRAC (Building Resilience through improving the Absorptive and Adaptive Capacity for Transformation), has been working to help communities like Gilbert's, to prepare and adapt to a changing climate and economic shocks.

BRAC have provided training in livestock management, worked to improve farmers' access to animal feed, provided farmers with incubators for chicken farming and has introduced young male boer goats for breeding. The boer breed develops swiftly and has a high meat yield, increasing profitability. Its successful breeding programme has meant that other villages are now benefitting too. Gilbert says, 'Each time I got male kids, I would pass on one of them to another farmer in the next village. In that way we are realising great success with the goat improvement programme'.

When assessing the health of their cattle herds, farmers identified ticks as a major cause of sickness, low market value and animal death. BRAC, helped to

support farmers to make financial contributions for buying dipping chemical for their herds. Gilbert says, 'The BRAC program taught us self-reliance. As a community we raised our own money and procured cattle dipping chemicals... Ever since the start of the sustainable dipping initiative, we no longer have ticks, and our cattle are now marketable. **Our goats and cattle now fetch good market prices.**' Another farmer in the community, Kerry Mavandiva, says, 'Before the BRAC project came, my oxen would fetch about \$250 or \$300 but now fetch about \$500 to \$600 which means we now get better returns that go a long way in sustaining our families'.

With these gains, the farmers like Gilbert can prioritise their family's own nutritional needs and bring to market their surplus

**Commitment for Life** are really grateful for all the support we give them.

**Robert Harding** on behalf of 'Care for the World.

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## Letter from Kule Refugee Camp Ethiopia

My dear 'old' friend of 57 years, Ann, has just begun working with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Kule Camp, a refugee camp on the border between South Sudan and Ethiopia. She left in February of this year, just 2 weeks after I arrived in New Zealand so I was very glad to spend a weekend with her before she left. She told me that she had always aspired to do humanitarian work in a developing country and had planned her studies and working life around this aim. As such she trained as a clinical psychologist, working for over 20 years in this field, with her last role as CEO of Refugees as Survivors New Zealand. She felt she had gained sufficient experience to be able to make a valuable contribution so in 2022 she applied to work with MSF and found herself in the role of managing the mental health team at Kule Camp!



After 2 months she says, ‘the reality of living and working in an isolated refugee camp has been challenging. I reflect daily on the difference I can make in such a different cultural context where meeting basic needs remains the top priority for the refugee families.’

I thought by sharing a little of Ann’s journey at Kule Camp in our newsletter, as we read, we are holding her and the shocking humanitarian crisis in Sudan in our prayers. Here is a little from Ann’s first letter ‘home’.



‘Kule Camp was established in 2014 and is now home for 51,500 Nuer refugees. There are 5 other camps in the near vicinity with a total of 360,000+ refugees in the region. The camp is like a small town with most people living in tukuls – round mud bases, thatched roofs and well swept,



small “terrace areas” in front of the entrances. Food is provided by the World Food Programme per household on a monthly basis. There are several schools, but facilities are extremely basic. Water taps are few and far between, so women walk long distances to fetch and carry water in large jerry cans. There are no toilets which keeps you focused while walking! Animals – dogs, goats, donkeys - roam freely, while cattle are herded in big bunches. The whole camp is covered in a permanent smoky haze - cooking is on outdoor open fires, rubbish is burned in piles or pits and the surrounding grassland is constantly being burned off. With temperatures averaging 40 degrees during the day and 25 overnight it feels like you are in a furnace much of the time. At least there are very few mosquitoes during the dry season.

The camp feels safe, although there is a curfew between 6.30pm and 6.30am for MSF staff. A small group of us walk each morning before the heat of the day and are greeted warmly. It is like being the pied piper for children – inevitably we gather a band of up to 30 kids following us wanting to say hullo and fist bump.

The women and teenage girls are beautifully elegant in their colourful dresses and long sashes worn off one shoulder. The adolescent boys are often togged



up in cool gear while most of the littlest tots run naked. There are very few older people, but it is touching to see tiny children leading blind or infirm elders with a stick.

The MSF compound is an accumulation of separate buildings – nothing is joined up. There are about 20 staff living onsite - 9 expats and 10+ Ethiopian staff, referred to as inpat. In the expat group we have people from Myanmar, USA, Canada, Italy, Jordan, UK, Holland, Japan and NZ! A varied and good group. It is a moving feast with some here short term as advisors, others on 3, 6 or 9 month contracts. Visas and work permits are an issue for everyone, no matter their rank. The staff accommodation is a series of



concrete block rooms with separate tin sheds for toilets and showers and a teeth cleaning basin. The kitchen area has an outside dining area, the only place for us to gather communally. Refugee staff are employed as cooks and cleaners for both staff areas and the hospital but receive only \$US1 a day. There are also 36 guards on duty at any one time around the perimeter of the compound - mainly in case of opportunistic theft. The food is good – plenty of



vegetables and/or beans served with rice or pasta and the occasional piece of tough goat. At the moment mangoes are in season which is very welcome. On Sunday we cook for ourselves and so far have mucked in together which is fun.

The health centre has the full range of hospital facilities – ER, outpatients, inpatients, paediatrics, maternity and mental health. While the hospital operates 24/7, my team only works 6 days a week. There are 12 in my team – one mental health supervisor, one psychiatric nurse, 9 counsellors plus an interpreter as needed. All live in Gambela (main town in the region) and travel an hour by bus each way each day. They have a range of qualifications and experience, but all are

dedicated in their approach. Alongside the usual mental health presentations, the team provides counselling and psychoeducation for HIV and TB, parent to child transmission of HIV/STIs, sexual and gender based violence and abuse, abortion, feeding programmes for malnourished and/or sick children, antenatal and post-natal care. A bonus is that my team is the only team onsite with Nuer staff so communication with patients is not an issue. There are however many challenges – the number of patients is high; there are only 2 female staff members for a population where females heavily outweigh males; a high number of patients present with psychosis but there is only one psychiatrically qualified staff member; there is no inpatient facility for psychiatric patients; the number of patients returning after the initial assessment is low – many are medicated so start feeling better, they have to walk a long distance to the health centre, and most have little extra time after attending to activities of daily living.

Sunday is a very quiet day here – nowhere to go and not much to do other than read, write and nap. Also the best day to catch up on phone calls – WhatsApp is the best means of communication. I am sure we will venture out for a walk when we muster the energy And a cold beer in the evening - very welcome! ‘



**Ann Hood**  
**Bobbie Stormont**



"The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community the virtue of each one is living."

Rudolf Steiner



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

**CHURCH CONTACTS**

*Non-Stipendiary Minister: Revd. Cara Heafey*

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*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)*