

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



January 2024

Covering Thoughts

As a child, one carol that always mystified me was I Saw Three Ships. It seemed incongruous to have the holy family sailing to Bethlehem which was far from any coast. But it became clear to me that over the years the ancient story has crossed many continents and cultures in an effort to relate its message to contemporary experience. Through art, poetry, drama and song we have been encouraged to reflect on the meaning of the story.

My mother liked the carol's sea imagery since it supported one of her favourite sayings: One day my ship will come home. I failed to understand what she meant but I gathered that something wonderful would happen when her ship arrived.

The experience of living in anticipation of a wonderful future event is one we can all share. The excited child finds sleep impossible before a birthday or Christmas, and there are several parables that point to a future event which requires us to keep alert and awake in anticipation of its arrival. However what the future event might be is unclear or its description out of our experience.

Artists of the past have painted their vision of a second coming with heavenly figures and clouds of glory. If like me you find this imagery unhelpful may I suggest another way of looking? The long awaited and anticipated ship has come home. It is no longer a future hope but a present experience. The challenge is to stay awake to that belief and to hold fast to it. Everyday holds a Christmas gift if we have hearts open to accept it.

Camille Pissarro says it simply:

Blessed are they who see beautiful things in humble places where others see nothing.

Christine

Pastoral Letter

When Cara was preaching towards the end of November last year, she used this quote in her sermon. It is from the poet Mary Oliver.

'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?'

I have been thinking about that ever since and one thing that occurred to me was that it seemed to be an appropriate question at the beginning of a new year. There are presumably, even within our congregation, as many answers as there are of us and those answers probably range across a wide spectrum. So in recent weeks I have been conscious of spotting other people's answers. You don't have to look too far. Have you ever watched the TV programme 'Saving Lives at Sea'? When their bleeper goes off volunteers to the RNLI drop everything; from attending a colleague's wedding, to Sunday lunch with the family, or forgoing a night's sleep in the early hours to venture out, in often very rough winds and cold weather, to search for a stricken vessel or a surf boarder in distress or very young children out at sea in a small inflatable. Their motivation is to save lives and their reward is knowing (hopefully though not always) they have been successful. They seem to have their answer to this question. You only have to read a newspaper or watch a news bulletin to discover other people's answers, from medics in war zones, to young women and men speaking truth to power and ending up in prison, or even worse, in countries with repressive regimes where speaking out is so dangerous, or closer to home where ordinary folk give up hours of their time in foodbanks or for small local charities. We can find other people's answers each week on 'The One Show' on our televisions, with their feature 'One Big Thank You'. Many inspiring stories of what ordinary folk have chosen to do with their 'wild and precious' life.

As Christians we have another place to look for inspiration and answers. Have you ever thought about the impact that a simple invitation to share bread with 'a stranger' had on the two travellers making their way home on the road to Emmaus? What if they had said 'good night 'at the door? Offering simple acts of hospitality is another answer to this question, which Jesus hints at when he says, 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me in'. There are plenty of other clues in that same passage in Matthew 25, from offering aid to those who are

hungry and thirsty, doing what we can to help those who are sick or infirm, seeing if someone would like a visit and a chat.

When I was walking home recently, along the Phoenix Trail near our home in Thame, I decided to smile at everyone I met and say hello or good morning. It worked, smiles from virtually everyone and a greeting from all, even though I think one was just a grunt! So there's a thought, see how many smiles we can get from others when we are out and about, and consider that if you speak to a stranger, you might be the only person to have spoken to them that day.

So my invitation to us is to consider at the start of a new year, what our answers might be to the question Cara posed. This prayer by David Adam might have one or two pointers.

A prayer for the New Year, written by David Adam.

*Good and Gracious God
Grant to our eyes wide horizons
Increase our vision to see
Beyond the obvious and into the depths
Let us walk ways that are new
Where we do not know the destination
Let us journey in joy and hope
Among so many troubles and dangers
Surround us with your protection and peace
May we know that heaven and earth are one
That nothing separates us from you
And your abiding love in Christ Jesus.
Amen.*

Love and blessings for 2024

Robert Harding

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Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the members in Robert Harding’s pastoral group: Wendy Bailey, Christine & Richard Bainbridge, Charles & Sue Bennett, Nan Hixon, Angela & Rob Holdaway, Ellen Webster, Cara Heafey.

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



What’s On – Dates for your Diaries

Weekly

		Contact
Monday 9.00	Mindfulness Sitting Group	Mark Williams jmarkgwilliams@gmail.com
Thursday 9.00	Mindfulness Sitting Group	Mark Williams
Friday 10am	Table Tennis	Val Farmer val_farmer40@hotmail.com

Monthly

Alternate Mondays	Not So Young Club 8 th & 22nd	Frances Simpson frances_simpson@icloud.com
First Sunday	Tea, 2.30 – 4pm	Ann Bettess annsgoog@gmail.com
First Thursday 10am	Meditation	Ann Hardiman Tel; 01865 873485
First Thursday 10.30am	Coffee Morning	Barbara Joiner albarjoiner2@gmail.com
2nd Thursday 10am	Memory Cafe	Laurence Devlin laurencelalanne99@gmail.com
Second Tuesday	Lunch Club	Laurence Devlin
Third Tuesday	Lunch Club	Catherine Harding hardings64@btinternet.com

Anita's Stained Glass Cross



I'm so pleased to see what I always think of as 'Anita's' cross being used increasingly as a symbol of this Church. I expect that some of our newer members have wondered where it came from and older members may have forgotten. It has been suggested to me that I should write down what I remember.

Anita (Edmundsen) was a very active member of this Church for many years and was greatly valued for her practical approach to Christianity. She was kind, a good friend and very funny. She was always ready to try anything new so when I saw advertised that in Thame there were to be classes in stained glass I persuaded Anita to join with me.

She took to it like a duck to water. One day, it was my turn to drive, I collected an unusually quiet Anita. We had just reached Tiddington when she suddenly said that that morning she was going to make a Cross for the Church. Then with large arm movements she went on to describe exactly what it would look like. She had a clear image in her mind. At no point was anything written down nor designs drawn on paper.

When we arrived at the class first of all, Anita went to see if there was a sheet of blue glass and I was given a job! Glass is expensive so everyone saves every scrap in their own 'bit' box. I went to each of the other members of the class begging a variety of small pieces of yellow. Anita, now with a sheet of blue glass, scraps of yellow, a ruler and a glass cutter retreated to a corner and hardly spoke for the rest of the morning. By lunch time the main pieces had been cut.

It took several weeks to finish, the ears of wheat being the most fiddly. Anita explained to me that the four pairs of ears of wheat represented the four Churches in Wheatley. A great supporter of the idea that all the Churches should work together, their core faith is indicated by the same colour yellow and their slight differences by the varied textures in the glass.

Once Anita moved from Wheatley I saw much less of her but we had very long telephone conversations and she frequently asked after her Cross. When she

very sadly died a couple of years ago I realised that Peter, after a short but very happy marriage had never seen Anita's Cross.

With Laurence's help we were able to send him a photo. Anita would have been so proud to see the way in which her Cross is being treasured.

Jean Boxall

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INVITATION



The Elders invite you to a Party

***on Friday 26th January 2024
from 6pm to 9pm***

FUN, FRIENDSHIP, GAMES and SUPPER

Make a note in your diary to keep the date free!



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Blended Service Rotas for January 2024

Date	Worship Leader	Vestry	Welcomer	Door Steward	Reader	Prayers
7th	H.C. Rev Colin Thompson	Charles Bennett	Ellen Webster	Ann Hardiman	Ann Gajda	Liz Barry
14th	Richard Bainbridge	Malcolm Benson	Pauline Shelley	Rob Holdaway	Alice Halliday	Robert Harding
21st	<i>Joint Service at Wheatley</i>	<i>Primary School</i>	<i>Week of Prayer</i>	<i>For Christian Unity</i>	~~~~	Catherine Harding
28th	Mark Williams	Moira Watson	Ann Gajda	Peter Devlin	~~~~	~~~~

Common Lectionary Readings Jan 2024

Date	Jan 7th	Jan 14th	Jan 21st	Jan 28th
First Reading	Genesis 1: 1-5	1 Samuel 3: 1-10	Jonah 3: 1-5 & 10	Deuteronomy 18: 15-20
Psalm	Psalm 29	Psalm 139: 1-6 & 13-18	Psalm 62: 5- 12	Psalm 111
New Testament	Acts 19: 1- 7	1 Corinthians 6: 12-20	1 Corinthians 7: 29-31	1 Corinthians 8: 1-13
Gospel	Mark 1: 4- 11	John : 43-51	Mark 1: 14-20	Mark 2 : 2-28

Jan 7th: John the Baptist did a new thing. Do you know anyone who has done a new thing? Remember Rosa Parks?

Jan 14th: How do we learn from children?

Jan 21st: The well-known prayer for generosity is attributed to Ignatius of Loyola.

Jan 28th: Watch out for truth. Some of you may remember the BBC April fool in 1957 with the Swiss spaghetti harvest with spaghetti draped trees.

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# Falcon Junior School ... New Year Focus!



*Glorious  
Bach*

**Alexandra Hewitt—Organ**  
Trio Sonata No 2 in C minor  
Chorale Preludes for Advent  
including *Wachet auf*  
Prelude and Fugue in G major (BWV 541)

**Sunday 26th November 2023  
3.30pm followed by tea and cake**  
at Wheatley United Reformed Church

Free Admission  
Donations in aid of  
The Falcon Junior School  
Zimbabwe



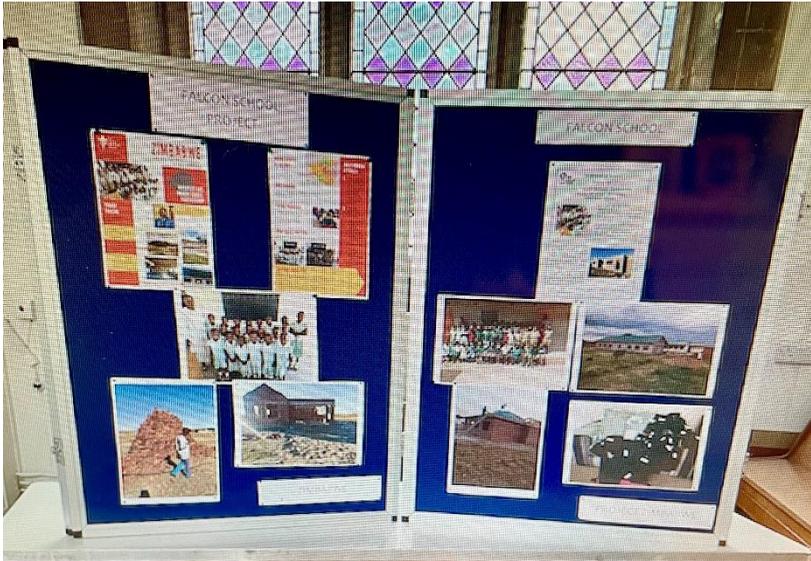
## ‘Computer Labs: Help towards 15 (Used!) Lap Tops’

Our new 6 month project actually started in November with the lovely Organ Recital by Alexandra Hewitt (thank you Alexandra!). We had a great attendance of around 40 people, broadened awareness of our project, and **received very generous donations to the tune of £408 ... thank you everyone!**

By the New Year we will already have raised around £15% towards Falcon’s overall target (i.e. 15 lap tops, approx: £3000).

There is an intention to stage a quiz in support of the Falcon School in March which, coupled with other ‘mini’ activities, should help us make a further great contribution to the target as we reach the end of April.

Thank you so much for your continued efforts of support and please thank others in the Wheatley community who have done likewise.



## Your Care for the World Team



## Deadline

Wednesday 17th January is the deadline for the February 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 size 11 & no capitalized headings. Thank you.

## Disclaimer

The Editors welcome letters, articles and announcements from individuals and organisations, but reserve the right to publish or not.



# Deep Peace

We begin a new year with the longing for peace for all creation - there is a great need for deep peace across the world. Some of our dance chapel group recently offered a version of the well-known Celtic prayer for peace as a gesture blessing in Church. You may like to use this in your own prayers. The beautiful art work is by Christine Bainbridge.

*Deep peace of the rolling waves to you  
Deep peace of the silent stars  
Deep peace of the blowing air to you  
Deep peace of the quiet earth  
Let peace, let peace, let peace fill your soul  
May peace, may peace, may peace keep you whole.*



Deep peace was written and sung by Sara Thomsen for the Abbey of the Arts recording, 'The Soul's Slow Ripening' - [www.abbeyofthearts.com](http://www.abbeyofthearts.com)

You can listen to this blessing on both YouTube and Spotify.

**Bobbie Stormont**



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

**CHURCH CONTACTS**

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*Church Secretary: Phyllis Williams*  
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