

# WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



**May 2024**



# Covering Thoughts

*Recently I have been pondering the difference between gratefulness and gratitude.*

*Definitions differ, but I feel for myself that gratefulness is a state of being and a goal to reach towards in the totality of experience. We may not actually feel grateful all the time, but to accept what is happening without complaint is a step towards living in a state of gratefulness. When it works it brings contentment, tremendous wellbeing and desire to reach out to others.*

*That is when gratitude comes into play, for it is an outgoing expression of what we experience. It goes beyond sitting back and enjoying the feeling. Instead, it inspires us to look at nature, events and people with attention and appreciation and to share what we see.*

*In a pastoral letter that Laurence wrote some months ago she said how much we need to affirm others. We all know how warm it makes us feel when someone expresses their gratitude or makes a positive comment, but it does a lot for the person who does the affirming too.*

*Having said this is not to deny the necessity for critical debate, acknowledgment of difficulties and the need for action to correct injustice. But to attempt to bring out the good in a person or situation is a small movement towards changing attitudes, and it may have benefits for both sides in situations of conflict.*

*It is hard to envisage painting an abstract entitled Gratitude. However, I realize that most of my paintings are the result of experiencing gratefulness for a multitude of things, and they are my way of sharing this with others. It was anemones on sale in Thame market that brought on a recent feeling of gratefulness. This overflowed into a painting which I share with you. The title is Go Bananas!*

Christine

# Pastoral Letter

I see a pastoral letter as one that tries to offer something. At the same time, it can be a vehicle for the request of something. I hope that this letter does both.

To provide some background I am currently a student at the Urban Theology Union which is based in Sheffield where I am working for the Certificate in Theology & Discipleship for Mission. The course is validated via the Luther King Centre in Manchester. One of the key course books is *Christ in the City* by John Vincent.

The final assignment consists in a student led plan for mission.

There are lots of assumptions here, but I will press on.

Many people belong to a church but do not always believe what it stands for. Others believe but do not belong.

I have become convinced that a significant minority in many churches want to belong but finds it hard to consent to such things as the declaration of faith. There is a mission needed for this group. The Urban Theology Union argues that people were attracted to Jesus, and it was only later that they were presented with a more formal belief. At first there needs to be a step into the unknown. Jesus first invites people to follow him with their feet, and then share a common life. Do you hear echoes of Taizé as I do? Discipleship is a walking behind, a leaving behind, undertaken with others.

There are many places in our church where the significant minority can share their thinking and express their feelings about some of the theology that they find difficult to ascribe to. We are fortunate to have many places where this can happen including: the coffee mornings; the larder; table tennis; the quiet sessions; Sunday morning coffee; just meeting in the village.

I go to most of the above and would love to talk with you if you have questions or if you think other people might have such questions. This would be a ministry to me and in turn I might be able to provide further questions to help you. Such engagement would provide material for my final assignment. For many the people on the margins consist of those with disability and refugee status. Mine is an outreach to those on the margins of the church by choice which seems to fit in

well with the ministry of Jesus. In turn those on the margins provide a ministry to those on the inside. This raises interesting issues for an inclusive church. Meeting with those on the margins can be a tricky exercise which is why I am following the course at the Urban Theology Union.

I already have a head start with all the interviews I conducted for my dissertation on the value of congregational studies. I would love to pick up some of those interviews or to start afresh. I look forward to a mutual exchange of ministry.

The Urban Theology Union sees its methodology as both that of a participant observer as well as an observant participator. I go along with this as I know many of you do because I have learnt from you and hope to continue to do so. All theology is Contextual Theology in that it is based on living the Christian existence in a particular place, time, and culture. For us it is Wheatley URC. Whether you are in the significant minority, or the majority, join me on the journey of sharing.

I offer this pastoral letter in the context of the away day for an inclusive church.

Richard Bainbridge

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## Christian Aid Lenten Soup Lunches 2024.

Following our report last month, the **final** amount raised for **Christian Aid**, over Lent, reached the grand total of **£850.48**, plus a further anticipated **£67.50 in gift aided tax recovery at 25p in the £**, from those who were able to “gift aid” their donations. This compares very favourably with the amount raised from last year’s Lent Lunches.

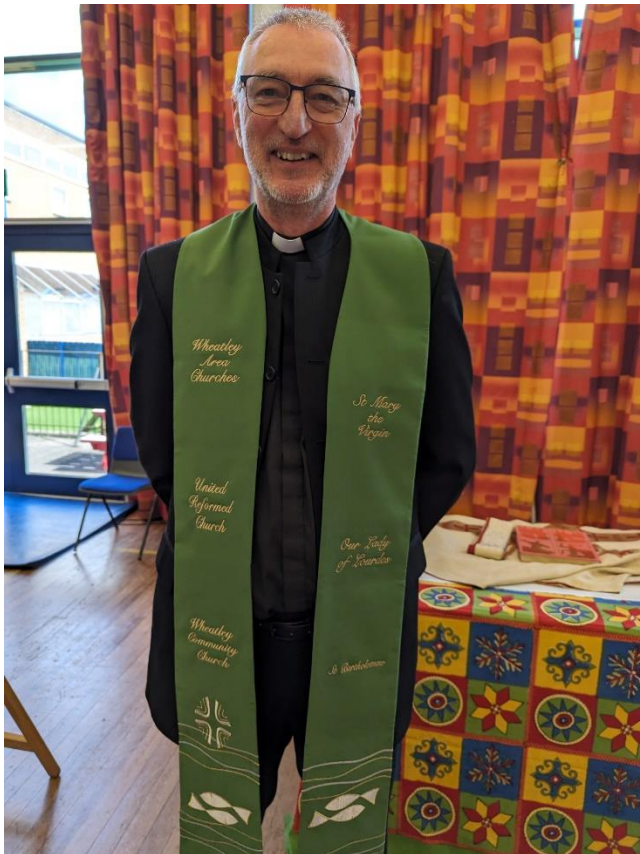
Grateful thanks to all concerned.

A breakdown of donations representing the final sums as sent to **Christian Aid**, is available, should anyone wish to see it.

Liz and Tony Barry

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# Farwell to Nigel Hawkes



Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, saw the hall at Wheatley Primary School, the home of Wheatley Community Church, packed with members of the churches of Wheatley and Holton, family, friends and past colleagues of Nigel and Julia all gathered to bid farewell to them both on his retirement. We wish them both love and blessings for the future.

Laurence Devlin and Debi Kidd



# Common Lectionary Readings May 2024

**Note: leaders may choose to use other readings**

Date	5th	12th	19th	26th
<b>First Reading</b>	Acts 10: 44-48	Acts 1: 15-17 and 21-26	Ezekiel 37: 1-14	Isaiah 6: 1-8
<b>Psalm</b>	Psalm 98	Psalm 1	Psalm 104: 24-34 and 35b	Psalm 29
<b>New Test.</b>	1 John 5: 1-6	1 John 5: 9-13	35b Acts 2: 1-21	Romans 8: 12-27
<b>Gospel</b>	John 15: 9-17	John 17: 6-19	John 15: 26-27 and 16: 4b-15	John 3: 1-17

May 5<sup>th</sup> - Pablo Casals once said, 'I am a human being, then a musician, then a cellist'. We need to remember the overarching identity.

May 12<sup>th</sup> - The world has begun to crack. But behold out of the cracks a light shines. There is a crack in everything and that is what lets the light in (second part Leonard Cohen).

May 19<sup>th</sup> - The last line of Badger's story is 'And whenever Badger's name was mentioned, someone remembered another story that made them smile'.

May 26<sup>th</sup> - Peter Brook when talking about Vietnam said, 'Nothing lets us off the hook so much as hearing a comforting lie'. Our narrow views of God may act as 'comforting lies' so we must pray that the Spirit will blow us onwards.

Richard Bainbridge

# Dates for Your Diaries

## Weekly

Mon & Thurs 9.00am Mindfulness Sitting Group  
Mark Williams - [jmarkgwilliams@gmail.com](mailto:jmarkgwilliams@gmail.com)  
Friday 10am Table Tennis  
Val Farmer – [val\\_farmer40@hotmail.com](mailto:val_farmer40@hotmail.com)

## Monthly

Alternate Mondays (13<sup>th</sup>) Not So Young Club  
Frances Simpson – [frances\\_simpson@icloud.com](mailto:frances_simpson@icloud.com)  
First Sunday Teas 2.30-4pm  
Ann Bettess – [annsgoog@gmail.com](mailto:annsgoog@gmail.com)  
First Thurs. 10am Prayers for the World  
Ann Hardiman – 01865 873485  
First Thurs. 10.30am Coffee Morning  
Barbara Joiner – [albarjoiner2@gmail.com](mailto:albarjoiner2@gmail.com)  
Third Thurs. 10.30am Coffee Morning  
Barbara Joiner – [albarjoiner2@gmail.com](mailto:albarjoiner2@gmail.com)  
Second Thursday 10am Memory Café  
Laurence Devlin – [laurencelalanne99@gmail.com](mailto:laurencelalanne99@gmail.com)  
Second Tuesday Simple Lunch - TBC  
Third Tuesday Lunch Club  
Catherine Harding – [hardings64@btinternet.com](mailto:hardings64@btinternet.com)

## **Attention all Teams**

It is that time of year again when we need your Team's annual report for the AGM.

This year the AGM will take place on Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> July.

The newsletter editor will need your reports by 14<sup>th</sup> June for them to be included in the July newsletter and so in time for the AGM.

Please send all reports to [newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk)

Many thanks!



# Blended Service Rotas for May 2024

Dates	Worship Leaders	Readers	Intercessors	Vestry Elder	Welcomer/ Door Steward
5 <sup>th</sup>	Colin Thompson	Mike Matejtschuk	Marian Mole	Charles Bennett	Malcolm Benson/ Liz Barry
12 <sup>th</sup>	Richard Bainbridge	Christine Bainbridge	Ellen Webster	Robert Harding	Ellen Webster/ Elaine Matejtschuk
19 <sup>th</sup>	Cara Heafey Pentecost HC	Tom Goss	Ann Bettess	Moira Watson	Bev Paton/ Ann Hardiman
26 <sup>th</sup>	Mark Williams			Pauline Shelley	Chris Shelley/ Allison Towner

Dates	Organist
5 <sup>th</sup>	Jeff Clarke
12 <sup>th</sup>	Frances Simpson
19 <sup>th</sup>	Jeff Clarke
26 <sup>th</sup>	Frances Simpson

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## Prayers

**Please remember in prayer all our friends far and wide.**

**Also remember members of the Hospitality Ministry Team:** Allison Towner, Tina Everett, Ann Gajda, Catherine Harding, Angela Holdaway and Barbara Joiner.

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# Being Deaf or Hard of Hearing Aware



12 million adults in the UK are deaf or have hearing loss. We can all play our part to be more deaf aware, both at work and in daily life.

People who are deaf or have hearing loss have individual communication needs and you should ask someone how best you can communicate with them. Not every strategy will be appropriate for every person who is deaf or has hearing loss.

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) have tips on their website for how to communicate more effectively with people who are deaf or have hearing loss. Please look at their website for details.

<https://rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/how-to-communicate-with-deaf-people-hearing-loss/>

The picture and some of these details have been taken from The RNID website.

Jean Boxall and Debi Kidd

# Falcon Junior School News

## Falcon School News.. an 'Overview'! ....



.....yes, this was the perfect setting for the **Falcon School Quiz evening on March 17th** .. and what a great success it turned out to be!

An amazing total of **£898** was raised from raffle proceeds and some exceedingly generous donations, including lovely food for the evening. Thank you so much to Robert and Ellen for planning and running the quiz and to everybody who attended or helped on the day.



As a result, come the end of March, we had achieved 79% of our original £3000 target, so are looking well on-track to reach our goal by early June.

We are already planning ahead with Falcon their priorities in terms of initial laptop model purchases to just get the 'Computer Lab' up and running, with Wilbert receiving a lot of welcome guidance from Kevin Snyman.

**And this latest news (Times: April 11th) is a reminder of why our support for the Falcon School is so critical:**

**'Inflation has turned education into a luxury for Zimbabwe's parents, who (themselves) grew up as the most literate pupils in Africa. Now, with families unable to fund fees, half of school-age children have dropped out.**

**And shrinking wages and the high cost of living is emptying staff rooms as well as classrooms. Teaching unions estimate 300 teachers are leaving their post each month'.**

Be in no doubt, our support for the Falcon School is highly appreciated!

Your Care for the World team

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# Our Away-Day and Christian Aid's '7 challenge'

We have been challenged by Christian Aid to raise funds (or not) during Christian Aid Week by finding different ways to challenge ourselves in response to their '*7 days in so many ways challenge*'. If you are coming to the away-day on May 11<sup>th</sup> in Thame, we are proposing to set aside some time in the afternoon for you to respond to this. Ideas might range from the extremely prosaic to the wonderfully whacky! From going for a walk of at least 700 steps, to sitting in a group and trying to remember 70 books you have read, to seeing how many examples of 7 or 70 you can remember or look up in the Bible, or whatever! Maybe some sponsoring might also be involved!

Sponsor forms, should you want one, will be available at church and also on the day.

Robert Harding and Liz Barry

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## Deadline

16<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 Debi Kidd. 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.

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# Oxfordshire's Art Festival

## 4<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> May

May is the merry month of visiting artist's studios and exhibition spaces. You will be able to pick up the festival guide at many venues such as libraries, shops and cafes, and also explore online at [www.artweeks.org](http://www.artweeks.org)

The festival spans three weeks with each of the three focussing on a different part of the county. Plan a day out with a friend and check the opening times in the guide. I have met some visitors who always take their holidays at this time as it is a free event that takes you into beautiful and interesting places not usually open. There is never pressure to make purchases and often refreshments are on offer. So, it is a friendly experience for visitors and very encouraging for artists who may not have much opportunity to show off their work at other times.

My studio, house and garden are open from

May 18<sup>th</sup> – May 27<sup>th</sup>

2 – 6pm each day

3, Barns Close, Holton, OX33 1QB

Tel: 01865 872868

I would love to welcome you with tea and cake in the garden. Come and be surprised by the variety of subject matter and exciting colours of my recent paintings.

Christine Bainbridge







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

**CHURCH CONTACTS**

*Associate 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)*