

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



May 2025

Covering Thoughts

Following Easter it is interesting to reflect on the conclusions of each of the gospels. Mark's cliff hanger of an ending describing the discovery of the empty tomb and the terrified response of the disciples was found unacceptable and neat conclusions were added later by other writers. Matthew's reassurance "I will be with you always, to the end of time" comes in direct contrast. Why not explore these endings again and reflect upon them?

In many ways the end of Jesus' ministry marks a new beginning. For his followers there is hesitancy and uncertainty, both matched with a feeling of anticipation. Nothing is completed. There is a period of waiting as a new way of living opens up, and it is by no means clear or certain how things will change. As it was new ground for those first followers of the Way, so it is for us today. We return to the stories Jesus told and re-examine his actions, then we consider how we might apply all this in the 21st century.

The tree featured on the newsletter this month is called Waiting. You can see that it is living through its dormant stage when all energy is conserved and it awaits a new season of fruitfulness.

Someone who waits can be a person with an expectant attitude who finds questioning, listening, observation and reflection important precursors to action. Actions can then be based on sound values and carried out in wise and compassionate ways. Henri Nouwen writes: "A waiting person is a patient person. The word patience means the willingness to stay where we are and live the situation out to the full in the belief that something hidden there will manifest itself to us."

All this is fine with the important things in life, but putting it into practice in the daily frustrations takes some effort. I'm working hard on knowing how to handle missing the bus!

Christine



Reflection

Thirty-six Hours in a Life

I decided to visit the University of Wales where I am a long-distance student on the MA degree in ancient religions. I started at Lampeter where St David's College was founded in 1822. The bus from Carmarthen takes you to Lampeter. While waiting for the bus a lady pointed out a stork in the river which was an unusual sight. A moment of sharing. The bus passes through Lampeter on the way to Aberystwyth. If you end up in Aberaeron you have gone wrong. There was a lovely conversation with a lady at the bus stop in Aberaeron Square in the evening sun. Another moment of sharing.

I stayed the night at the Black Lion in Lampeter and worked in the university library where I was the only person. I realised that the person on the desk was deaf as she kept looking at me. If a hotel gives you a key fob to provide the code to the hotel, make sure you know how to use it. Welsh hotels close early and you may end up outside relying on the help of a kind student. Another moment of sharing.

I had a healthy breakfast in the hotel and managed to use one of those machines that toasts the bread. I spent further time in the library before moving to Carmarthen and Trinity College founded in 1848. Walking round Carmarthen I thought of Philip Baker, a loved member of our congregation, and his wood near the town. Another moment of reflection. I had lunch in the college canteen as the oldest person. The college requires a bus ride. When on the bus make sure you take your things with you. It is tempting to be distracted by a moment of sharing directions and leave something behind.

Waiting for the bus I found a Paddington Bear toy which I was to give to a father and daughter who were doing well in the heat. Another moment of sharing, with sadness for the person who had lost the toy. I was able to buy a new baseball hat with the college emblem. A moment of replacement. And now the journey home.

A kind railway employee wondered why I was sitting on the side of the station where no trains had run for over thirty years. A moment of kindness. All went well until the last lap from Swansea to Didcot. I am an expert at filling in delay refund forms. The crowd was brought together by a common cause of getting

home. So, there we are with a few moments of sharing and helpfulness. There has been no use of theological language such as divine, creation, salvation, and forgiveness. There was depth and that is what matters.

I was grateful to be living and hope not to miss the moments that come to me. I am aware that there is a world of suffering out there that is beyond me. Brother Roger, the founder of Taizé, a community in France, used to say that it is given to us to live with simplicity and with thanks. Let us focus on the moments of sharing during the next thirty-six hours. This is the challenge for you and me.

Richard Bainbridge



Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the members in Charles Bennett's pastoral group: Wendy & Malcolm Benson, Alison Broadbent, Barbara & Albert Joiner, Bobbie Stormont & Tom Goss, Catherine & Robert Harding, Pauline & Chris Shelley, Phyllis & Mark Williams, Janet & Andrew Thomson.

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



Deadline

Tuesday 13th May is the deadline for the June Newsletter. Please send copy to: newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk . Please type in Calibri font size 11 & no capitalized headings. Thank you.

Please see the important notice on page 11 about the deadline for Team Reports for our AGM on 13th July.

Disclaimer

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

Thinking About Becoming an Elder?

Here's Why It's Worth It.

Ever wondered what it's like to be an Elder in the URC? Maybe you've been asked, or maybe you've just felt a little nudge. Here are a few reasons why saying "yes" could be one of the most rewarding steps in your faith journey.

You'll Grow in Faith

Being an Elder draws you closer to God. You pray more, think more deeply about your faith, and learn alongside others. It's not about having all the answers, it's about growing together.

You Won't Be Alone

Elders work as a team. You'll share ideas, make decisions together, and support one another through whatever comes. It's a great way to build closer friendships and feel connected to the heart of the church.

You Make a Real Difference

Whether it's helping shape the future of the church, supporting a minister, or simply being there for someone in need, Elders help hold the church family together. Your presence, your prayer, and your voice all matter.

It's Not About Being a Perfect Christian

God calls the willing, regardless of where they are with their faith. Elders come from all walks of life and stages of their faith journey. If you care about the church and want to serve, that's more than enough to begin.

A Flexible and Supportive Role

We recognise that people's circumstances vary, and there may be times when an Elder is unable to fulfil certain responsibilities. The role is shared and collaborative, with flexibility and understanding at its heart. We support one another, knowing that service takes many forms and seasons.

Like to know more?

Have a chat with one of the current Elders. We'd love to share what it's like, and help you explore whether it could be the right step for you.

Pauline Shelley

Christian Aid Lenten Soup Lunches 2025

We completed all six of our Lenten Soup Lunches last month.

Donations for **Christian Aid** from the four churches in Wheatley amounted to £950, this year (£100 more than last year). Many thanks to all who were so generous with their time, their culinary talents and their financial support.

Should anyone want to see a breakdown of donations received week on week and/or an acknowledgement of the final sum sent to **Christian Aid**, please speak to one of us.

Liz & Tony Barry (Wheatley Christian Aid Group Reps and Treasurer)



Christian Aid Week 2025 – 11th to 17th May

Christian Aid is 80 years old this year.

The person being featured this year is **Aurelia from Guatemala**. **Christian Aid** asserts that *“The climate crisis, gruelling heatwaves, savage storms and unpredictable seasons are threatening lives and livelihoods and ravaging the farms of indigenous communities in Guatemala. As plants die, food becomes scarce. But with specialist agricultural training from our partner, Congcoop, Aurelia’s leading her community to push back against the climate crisis and to grow resilient crops, conserve water and make fertiliser, to protect their farms and futures”*.

Aurelia says *“I give my life to my neighbours, sharing my knowledge with them”*.

Christian Aid are asking us to help fund vital tools and training, so farmers like **Aurelia** can support their community to escape hunger.

“SEVEN DAYS, SO MANY WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE”

What will you do this Christian Aid Week, to help **Aurelia** and the millions like her, around the world, in poverty and suffering the horrendous effects of climate change, natural disasters and violent conflicts?

Please let Liz or Tony know what **you** could do, to help raise vital funds for **Christian Aid**.

AND

< Come and hear a speaker from **Christian Aid** at our morning service on **Sunday 18th May**. >

Liz & Tony Barry

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2025 – Myanmar Earthquake Response



Following the devastating earthquake, our local partners on the ground are already providing people with essential food, water and medicine.

GAIN WW staff are also on their way to Myanmar to assess further needs and possibilities of assistance. We want to support our partnership in purchasing necessary goods, like rice, oil and drinking water.

You can give via our Disaster Fund to bring essential relief to those in need via <https://give.globalaidnetwork.org.uk/disaster/>

Liz Barry

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Blended Service Rotas for May 2025

Date	Worship Leader	Vestry Elder	Welcome	Door Steward	Reader	Prayers
4th	Kate Harford	Chris Shelley	Val Farmer	Tom Goss	Ann Gajda	Tom Goss
11th	Richard Bainbridge	Charles Bennett	Ellen Webster	Robert Harding	Christine Bainbridge	Robert Harding
18th	Neil Dymond <i>ChristianAid</i>	Marian Mole	Pauline Shelley	Barbara Joiner	Tom Goss	Marian Mole
25th	Anne Bedford	Ann Bettess	Chris Shelley	Jen Yeates	Rob Holdaway	Liz Barry

What's On – Dates for your Diaries

Weekly

Mon & Thurs 9am

Friday 10am

Monthly

Monday

12th May

First Sunday

2.30-4pm

First Thursday 10am

First & Third Thurs

10.30am

Second Thursday

10am

Second Tuesday

Contact

Mindfulness Sitting Group

Mark Williams - jmarkgwilliams@gmail.com

Table Tennis -

Val Farmer - val_farmer40@hotmail.com

Not So Young Club

Frances Simpson - frances_simpson@icloud.com

Teas

Ann Bettess - annsgoog@gmail.com

Prayers for the World

Ann Hardiman - 01865 873485

Coffee Morning

Barbara Joiner - albarjoiner2@gmail.com

Memory Cafe

Laurence Devlin - laurencelalanne99@gmail.com

Picnic Cub - Val Farmer - val_farmer40@hotmail.com



Common Lectionary Readings May 2025

Date	May 4 th	May 11 th	May 18 th	May 25 th
First Reading	Acts 9: 1-6	Psalm 30	Revelation 5: 11-14	John 21: 1-19
Psalm	Acts 9: 36-43	Psalm 23	Revelation 7: 9-17	John 10: 22-30
New Test.	Acts 11: 1-18	Psalm 148	Revelation 21: 1-6	John 13: 31-35
Gospel	Acts 16: 9-15	Psalm 67	Revelation 21: 10-21 & 22-25	John 14: 23-29

May 4th Jesus restores the relationship with Peter. It is good to look to be restored.

May 11th Peter stayed with Simon, a tanner whose work rendered him ritually unclean. Where do we meet?

May 18th Eating together can lead individuals to understand each other better and to feel more warmly towards the groups they represent.

May 25th A man came into Paul's mind but he met women.

Richard Bainbridge

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Time for God - Project Paramount / Shine

Since last summer, 2024, the URC has worked together with Wheatley Park School on their project 'Paramount'.

As the 'Time for God' (TfG) volunteer, I help with this project on a Tuesday morning. We have an hour in the morning where pupils who are affected by having a member of their family in prison, can connect with each other. They are all in similar situations which gives them a feeling of understanding.

The first two weeks of the month Kathy, an Art Therapist comes and offers different crafts for them. The last thing they did was designing their own logo to put on a bag. They did an amazing job with it.

Louise Yendol, a teacher at Wheatley Park, and I also plan sessions. Soon we will grow herbs and fruit with the group. Last May, we planned and organized a trip to Rectory Farm to pick our own strawberries to make tarts.

Louise has organized a connection with the Thame police to answer any questions the young people might have. It was a really hard session but really helpful for them to get answers to their questions.



Over the last weeks we also changed the name of the project to 'Shine'. We like the meaning of it more and the pupils even more.

Cara Schulte

Attention all Teams

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

This year's AGM will take place on Sunday 13th July after the morning service.

The newsletter editor will need your reports by Monday June 16th 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

Many thanks!

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You are warmly invited to

The Institution, Induction and Installation Service

by The Bishop of Dorchester

of

**Revd Clare Joyce**

as Vicar of Albury with Tiddington, Holton, Waterperry, Waterstock

and Wheatley

at St Mary's The Virgin, Wheatley

At 7.30pm on 8th May

Refreshments will be served afterwards.



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

***CHURCH CONTACTS***

*Associate Minister: Revd. Cara Heafey*

*Email: [caraheafey@hotmail.com](mailto:caraheafey@hotmail.com)*

*Church Secretary: Pauline Shelley*

*Email: [secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk)*

*Church website: [www.wheatleyurc.org.uk](http://www.wheatleyurc.org.uk)*