

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



July & August 2022

Covering Thoughts

In last month's newsletter Pat's description of her garden with its many Japanese features inspired me to share with you a recent visit to a Zen garden in Acton. It was open as part of the National Gardens Scheme, and included an opportunity to experience a tea ceremony and also to attend a talk given by the monk who had been involved in the garden's creation.

Together with a Christian friend this monk had journeyed to places in Cumbria and Scotland to select the rocks. As he described the challenges and traumas of bringing them down from mountains I sketched them. They became infused with meaning and mystery. In their present setting surrounded by islands of moss, or resting in a sea of stones they could be mountains, streams or forests. Smaller stones were raked in parallel rills, following the straight lines of the garden or curving graciously round the rocky islands. The most important rock is the only one to be unadorned by mossy patches. You can see it in the cover picture pointing sharply upwards.

I learned that the invisible is as important as the visible. One rock for example had four fifths of its mass submerged. I wondered at the hidden shapes below the surface and was amused that during the construction a visiting Buddhist monk had suggested some rocks be the other way up. His opinion however was disregarded.

My sketches are adorned with phrases from the talk that resonated with me. I share them with you hoping they will resonate with you too.

Space is important.

The relationship between the rocks is important from every angle.

It is and it is not.

There is being and non-being.

There is loss and no loss.

You enter and you are.

You are in the garden and the garden is in you.

Harmony in diversity.

This last phrase particularly struck me. We are familiar with unity in diversity, but the image of harmony in diversity is a very rich alternative.

Christine

Pastoral Letter

Dear friends,

It has been a delight to participate in several all-age services this year. It's given us a chance to explore new ways of worshipping, using drama and poetry as well as scripture reading and songs. From new meanings of salvation in The Repair Shop, to Pharaoh (reimagined as Trump) being defeated by feisty midwives, then seeing beneath the surface of the Mary and Martha story (as Mary tried to record Jesus on her phone), we have reminded ourselves of what new perspectives and treasures there are still to be discovered in Scripture. Thanks to all who've taken part and made these services what they are.

At the service in May, we used the Five-Finger Prayer. Here it is. Feel free to use or adapt it for your own quiet times.



The Five-Finger Prayer

Taking time to sit or lie down, and, as far as is possible, allow the body, mind and heart to become still. Open yourself to God's presence around you and within you.

When you are ready, hold one hand gently in the other; and touching each finger in turn, begin to pray.

With the ***thumb***: pray for those closest to you: your family and friends.

With the ***pointer finger***: pray for those who point you in the right direction: your teachers, instructors, ministers, healers.

With the ***middle finger*** (tallest): pray for leaders - those in government in this country and around the world, leaders in business, and leaders in the community too.

With the ***ring finger***: pray for those who need a ring of support around them: those suffering because of war, climate change or injustice; those known to you who are ill, in pain or distress.

With the ***smallest finger***: pray for yourself and your own needs; allowing your deepest hopes and fears to be held in the loving presence of God.

And if, at any time, you find your mind wanders from where you had intended it to be, there's no need to be concerned. It's not a mistake. Simply note where the mind had gone and ask God's blessing on whoever or whatever situation you found yourself thinking about. Then, when you're ready, return to the five-finger prayer.

And when you finish, you could either say the Lord's Prayer or, bringing everyone you have been holding in heart and mind into one big circle, pray Aaron's blessing ...

*May the Lord bless us and keep us;
the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace.
Amen*

With warmest wishes, **Mark**

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## Prayers

**Please remember in your prayers the members in Ann Gajda's pastoral group:** Moira & Jim Watson, Ann Wild, John Kidd, Keith & Debi Kidd, Lynnette & Richard Wood, Marian Mole and Wendy & Malcolm Benson.

**Also remember members of the Children's Education Team:** Malcolm Benson and Ann Hardiman.

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Write new words for a Hymn – have a go

Richard Bainbridge, in his last two services, has introduced some new hymns... or rather hymns with new words to well-known hymn tunes, words that are more inclusive and perhaps feel more 'modern'. These have come from PCN Britain – (Progressive Christianity Network). At our service on June 12th, Richard issued an invitation to us to 'have a go' at writing new words to a hymn tune we already know, even just one verse. So if you feel inspired do take up Richard's invitation and email them to him.

Talk Your Walk

Pendle Hill – Bob Webster’s story related by Ellen Webster

Following on from Jim’s account of Pendle Hill in June, Bob has asked me to describe his connection with Pendle, as you see him here walking in the footsteps of his ancestors. We can trace Bob’s maternal ancestry back to a certain Stephen de Merlay who was born around 1265 and lived in a settlement on the north side of Pendle Hill.

A steep walk from Clitheroe up the north flank of the hill takes you past the erstwhile Great Mearlay Hall, now replaced by a farm and the closest we can find to the original Merlay home.

Agnes, daughter of Stephen de Merlay, married one Adam Nowell whose family had arrived from France with William the Conqueror. The Nowell family’s rather notorious descendant was Roger Nowell, Bob’s 11 x great grandfather. Being the local magistrate in the Pendle area, he was commanded by the King to pronounce sentence on the infamous Witches of Pendle in 1612 and find them guilty. How surprised and shocked would Bob’s mother have been to learn about her ancestor? Maybe it was better to live in ignorance!

However, Pendle Hill, together with nearby Whalley and the hamlet of Read remain special to Bob. Whalley church contains the Nowell family box pew and their coat of arms (three black goblets) is displayed in a stained glass window.



Talk Your Walk

A Walk in Spring – by Frances Simpson

It was a beautiful spring morning when I decided on a proper walk after a static period. Thinking of bluebells? A wood perhaps? The nearest wood is Holton Wood and after a dry spell the path across two ploughed fields from the first Holton corner would be easily passable. As it turned out, the ground was so dry that the oil seed rape was only three inches high over a large area of the field with the ground like concrete.

I was greeted at the first clump of trees by a bird singing persistently in spite of my presence and it was not a song I recognized. What an opportunity to use my new app which should tell me the name of the bird. Unfortunately it failed spectacularly, telling me it was a blackbird when I knew it was wrong.

Towards the end of the second field, a surprise awaited...the little stream which I expected to be dry like everywhere else, was still babbling along merrily. Entering the wood I felt a different atmosphere, a calm, restful place with fresh green leaves showing on the branches of the trees, wild flowers along the path and a carpet of bluebells under the trees.



At the end of the wood I came through a gate into a grassy field where I recognized a dead tree standing like a huge sculpture which supported us for a photo, recording a URC walk of several

years ago. Then after a hesitant sense of direction crossing the next meadow, I found a stile leading into Polecat End Lane which leads into Forest Hill (perhaps someone can tell me the story of Polecat End Lane). As I approached the lane I heard voices - others enjoying the lovely weather, I thought. How wrong I was! It was one man chatting on his mobile. The lane wound its way between trees on either side with a scattering of bluebells, primroses and

other wild flowers until it emerged onto the road and the pub at the centre of Forest Hill.

The final section of the walk was behind the houses which lie along the Wheatley road. This was easy walking with interesting views into the back gardens of these houses. After several gates leading from field to field I emerged into the road, taking the direct route home rather than the path which leads back to Holton.

I arrived home hot and tired but having thoroughly enjoyed my “escape to the country “.

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Christian Aid Week Results 2022

Thanks to all those who supported **Christian Aid Week** this year.

St Mary’s undertook a short street collection outside the Merry Bells on the second Saturday of the week which raised about £100. We at the URC, raised £800 following a **Christian Aid Week Service** at which we welcomed a speaker from **Christian Aid**, The Rev. Elizabeth Mason, who gave us a lively presentation, updating us about the work and current issues facing them.

The total collected for **Christian Aid**, this year by St Mary’s and Wheatley URC, amounted to a figure **in excess of £2,500**. (Final figures are being confirmed at the time of writing.)

Liz and Tony Barry - Wheatley Christian Aid Group, Organiser and Treasurer

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Church Bible

Does anyone know the whereabouts of the very large King James Bible which hasn’t been seen since everything was packed up, pre Mulberry Room?

It would be good to find it again.....

Allison Towner

Pauline's Farwell Service



What Uplifts You? What delights you?

Beauty – by Liz Barry

I find beauty uplifting – beauty of scenery, music, people, art. I think of specific things in my home like furniture, paintings and fabrics.

Jubilee Pentecost Sunday, Tony & I sat among the tables in the hall laid for afternoon tea - crisp embroidered linen, fine bone china of Wedgwood, Aynsley, Royal Doulton and Minton. Light glows through the cup as I lift the fine porcelain to my lips; it is light and delicate to the touch, often with unusual detail on the handle. The milk jugs are all different – slim or rounded, a pronounced spout or decorative edge hinting at how beautifully they might pour. The colours are strong, and brightly patterned, the saucers may be gold rimmed and deep enough to secure my teaspoon.

Paddington and the Queen had it exactly – the tinkle of the teaspoon on fine china. As for the tea itself, surely, the aroma, the translucence of colour are enhanced by good company... and we leave feeling uplifted.



Blended Service Rotas for July 2022

Date	Worship Leader	Vestry	Welcomer	Door Steward	Reader	Prayers
3rd	H.C. Rev Colin Thompson	Robert Harding	Malcolm Benson	Allison Towner	Rob Holdaway	Malcolm Benson
10th	Richard Bainbridge	Moira Watson	Ann Gajda	Tom Goss	Robert Harding	Barbara Joiner
17th	Mark Williams	Liz Barry	Elaine Matejtschuk	Angela Holdaway		
24th	Jack Belloli	Malcolm Benson	Moira Watson	Marian Mole	Catherine Harding	Tom Goss
31st	Laurence Devlin	Ann Gajda	Robert Harding	Peter Devlin	Ann Gajda	Robert Harding

Common Lectionary Readings July 2022

Date	July 3rd	July 10th	July 17th	July 24th	July 31st
First Reading	Isaiah 66: 10-14	Deut 30: 9-14	Genesis 18: 1-10a	Genesis 18: 20-32	Eccles 1: 2 & 12-14 & 2: 18-23
Psalm	Psalm 66: 1-9	Psalm 25: 1-10	Psalm 1	Psalm 138	Psalm 49: 1-12
New Testament	Galatians : 1-6	Colossians 1: 1-14	Colossians 1: 15-28	Colossians 2: 6-15	Colossians 3:1-11
Gospel	Luke 10: 1-11 & 16-20	Luke 10: 25-37	Luke 10: 38-42	Luke 11: 1-1	Luke 12: 13-21

July 3rd: Perhaps, as Marx says, we have nothing to lose but our chains, but we are accustomed to these chains of habit and they have become cosy [Lionel Blue].

July 10th: The Church is like an umbrella [Daniel Berrigan].

July 17th: There is a place near to feet that have walked our dusty ways [Dorothy McRae McMahon].

July 24th: If children are allowed to be children, we have to ask about what prevents adults being adults [Rowan Williams]

July 31st: The teacher's [Ecclesiastes] search for truth leaves no assumptions unchallenged.

Blended Service Rotas for August 2022

Date	Worship Leader	Vestry	Welcomer	Door Steward	Reader	Prayers
7th	H.C. Rev Colin Thompson	Robert Harding	Liz Barry	Bobbie Stormont	Charles Bennett	Ann Bettess
14th	Richard Bainbridge	Moira Watson	Malcolm Benson	Rob Holdaway	Barbara Joiner	Ellen Webster
21st	Mark Williams	Liz Barry	Elaine Matejtschuk	Ellen Webster		
28th	Cara Heafey	Malcolm Benson	Ann Gajda	Barbara Joினer	Ellen Webster	Christine Bainbridge

Common Lectionary Readings August 2022

Date	August 7th	August 14th	August 21st	August 28th
First Reading	Genesis 15: 1-6	Jeremiah 23: 23-29	Isaiah 58: 9b-14	Proverbs 25: 6-7
Psalm	Psalm 33: 12-22	Psalm 82	Psalm 103: 1-8	Psalm 112
New Testament	Hebrews 11: 1-3 & 8-16	Hebrews 11: 19 - 12.2	Hebrews 12: 18-29	Hebrews 13: 18 & 15-16
Gospel	Luke 12: 32-40	Luke 12: 49-56	Luke 13: 10-17	Luke 14: 1 & 7-14

August 7th: What does it mean to be given the kingdom and to live in open-handed generosity in a world of rising bills and prices?

August 14th: Gareth Southgate consoled Bukayo Saka after England's defeat by Italy. How do we react to moments of vulnerability?

August 21st: During the first lock down a woman from Falmouth arranged to use technology to help people with shopping and medication.

August 28th: The issue is not who will you meet with but who will you eat with?

Richard Bainbridge

A Life Time in the Shadows

Not the shadows really but definitely in the shadow of Wheatley URC or the Congregational Church as it was back in 1955 when I was first introduced to the “Chapel” as we referred to it in those days. My mum and dad, Malcolm and Lilian Hodgkinson, moved into “One Chimney”, our bungalow opposite Jackie’s Lane in Crown Road in 1954. I was just three at the time but still have clear memories of our moving day and my delight in the giant sandpit that the builders had left in the front garden.



My parents got involved with the church very soon after moving in and I remember being introduced to Sunday school by the time I was five years old, making me, I believe, one of the longest attending parishioners. In the early days I remember visiting the family of one of the early ministers who lived in a caravan where the new extension now is. I do not remember their names but know they left Wheatley to be missionaries somewhere in the Pacific Islands.

The next minister I remember was Mr Thomas who moved into the new Manse almost opposite our house and his son who also attended Wheatley Infant School in Bell Lane where we were looked after by Miss Wren, Mrs Richards and my favourite Miss Costain in the old school house. The giant coke boiler was kept burning all through the winter to keep us nice and cosy.

Later I moved into the Junior School presided over by the mighty midget Welsh master Mr “Taffy” Evans who my Dad remained friends with for many years long after I left the village.

Memories also of the Jackson family, Bill and Marjorie with their sons Michael, Stewart and Geoffrey, we used to leave church on a Sunday lunchtime to go to their Grandpa Fred Shepherd’s to watch television. We did not know anyone



Outside the schoolroom with the church ladies circa 1955 the lady at the opposite end of the picture is Vera Shepherd with her daughter Alison.

else that had one. I had to be careful because we used to watch Roy Rodgers cowboy series and my Mum did not approve of six guns on a Sunday.

I am not sure of the exact date but it must have been around 1961 when Charles and Carolyn Brock arrived again starting a family friendship that would endure for decades. Charles introduced the kids of Wheatley to American leisure activities with us playing baseball and playing with Frisbees at youth club evenings on Shotover with Bruce Shepherd as club leader. Carolyn was a superb cook and I used to be allowed to accompany mum and Dad to the Manse for dinner parties with all sorts of exotic dishes, pumpkin soup, cinnamon toast, smoked turkey and beef burgers, unheard of in Wheatley at the time. We left Wheatley as a family when I was 13 and moved to Haddenham but we always came back to Crown Road. Dad went walking with Robert Bailey and the Harding`s and always had close relationships with so many people in the church, Malcolm Benson also springs to mind and Richard and Christine Bainbridge, Phillip and Jane Baker and many more. Moving again quite quickly to Chalgrove, they kept up their links with Wheatley even when moving again to Long Crendon in 1971. They should have stayed where they were in Wheatley. We never made any serious links with anywhere else.

My contact became less frequent after leaving home in 1967 to work on the farm at Yattenden estates near Newbury and then attending The Berkshire College of Agriculture at Burchetts Green near Maidenhead but ten years later I came back to the area to run The Bear and Ragged Staff in Stadhampton and then The Red Lion in Tetsworth until 2001. All through this period Mum and Dad used to come to the pub to visit me directly from church on a Sunday and never breaking the link, my own contribution being reduced considerably but



I still used to visit probably half a dozen times a year and was always made so welcome.

When my Mum went into the nursing home at Nettlebed in 1999 quite a few of her friends still used to go and visit her even though she was not always fully aware of their presence. Mum died in July 2006 at the grand old age of 99. Dad then moved in with me and we had two fantastic years before he also died. We held services for both of them in Wheatley URC and were so pleased to feel the bond from the church. Janet, my wife and I

having been together for many years decided to tie the knot in July of the same

year, where else but Wheatley URC. Colin Thompson held the service for us and we felt the welcome from all of our acquaintances old and new. Our attendance in recent years has not been regular but consistently infrequent having purchased a small olive farm in Catalonia in 2010 and then a narrow boat called Freedom No1 in 2016. Our schedule was pretty full with Janet maintaining a full time nursing career and me with my own newly formed travel and tour business Sho4Travel keeping us fully occupied. Five years ago we moved out of our house in Towersey and onto a canal boat to become permanent travellers still calling in whenever possible. However in 2018 we came back again to have a blessing and retake our wedding vows in Wheatley and again with Colin carrying out the service, a bit like coming home.

Now however, all that is going to change. We are keeping the boat for the moment but have just accepted an offer on our house so the next part of the plan will be to find a new smaller house somewhere close to the south coast where we can live out our dotage close to the sea. Andrew our boy has just informed us that we will be grandparents in September so we need to be as accessible as possible to maintain our grand responsibilities. So, this is a resume of our time spent in conjunction with all of you in Wheatley, we hope to be able to call in sometime but at present do not know how often that may be. Thank you to everyone old friends and new. All the very best and congratulations on your own Jubilee celebrations.

Steve and Janet Hodgkinson



Falcon News

Milestone at Falcon ... taking a short 'breather'!

We have been **supporting** the Falcon School in Zimbabwe for exactly **18 months now**. How time flies.

With your kind support in terms of fund raising and prayerful thoughts during that time we have help them extend from their first teaching space to a second classroom and teaching staff accommodation.

They have running water (with even limited hot water) and some cooking facilities and pupil numbers have increased to over 80 pupils at times (up and down during 2 disruptive bouts of Covid).

We have organised a Walk Quiz, run a book sale, sold tasty 'preserves' (thank you RHSA Bournemouth URC) and even gathered up 'spare' (!) US \$ from generous travellers.

So now is a good time for a (very) momentary 'breather', **time to step-back and assess** any finishing touches or improvements that are needed, as well as **deciding the 'focus' for the future**.

Wilbert (with **Lauren's 'support'!**) is planning a visit to Harare in the last week of June for this purpose after which **they will share their thoughts as to the direction they may be taking**.

We've agreed to await their considerations but in the meantime let's hold them in our thoughts and reflect on what has been **achieved**.

Our journey together





Thank you so much for all your help and support for what we have helped to achieve so far at Falcon School!

Care for the World Ministry Team

*Summertown
United Reformed Church*

warmly invite you to join us for a

Service of Thanksgiving

for the life and ministry of our church.

Saturday 30th July 2022, 3pm
at Summertown URC, 294a Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7ED

followed by refreshments in the rear church hall.
RSVP by 11th July to Hannah: hannah.masterson7@gmail.com



Dates for Your Diaries

Weekly

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

Monthly

Alternate Mondays	Not So Young Club (contact Frances Simpson) July 4, 18 & August 1, 15
First Sunday	Tea, 2.30 – 4pm (contact Ann Bettess 874353)
First Thursday	Meditation 10:00am, 10.30 Coffee (contact Liz Barry & Barbara Joiner)
Second Thursday	Memory Cafe (contact Laurence Devlin)
Second Tuesday	Lunch Club (contact Laurence Devlin)
Third Tuesday	Lunch Club (contact Catherine Harding)



Deadline

Wednesday August 17th 2022 is the deadline for the September Newsletter. **The ministry team and other reports are due on Wednesday 10th August.** Please send copy to: newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk Paper copy can be given to Bobbie Stormont. If you type your contribution and send via email, 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.



Are you Getting Enough Exercise?

Beating around the bush...
Jumping to conclusions...
Climbing up the wall...
Swallowing your pride...
Passing the buck...
Throwing your weight around
Dragging your heels...
Pushing your luck...
Making mountains out of molehills
Hitting the nail on the head...
Wading through paperwork...
Bending over backwards...
Jumping on the bandwagon...
Balancing the books...
Running around in circles...
Blowing your own horn...
Climbing the ladder of success
Pulling out all stops...
Adding fuel to the fire...
Opening a can of worms...
Putting your foot in your mouth
Setting the ball rolling...
Going over the edge...
Picking up the pieces...

Whew! That is some workout!
Now **SIT DOWN**, and...
Exercise Caution !

Anonymous

~*~

Save the Date
Sunday 25th September 11:30am
Wheatley United Reformed Church
Annual General Meeting
and
Church Meeting



High Street, Wheatley, OX33 1UE

CHURCH CONTACTS

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