

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



November 2025

Covering Thoughts

There is a colourful exhibition at the RA at the moment by a black American artist Kerry James Marshall. At first I found the flat black featureless faces of the people in the paintings disconcerting in contrast to the detailed treatment of their clothing and surroundings. Then I began to understand the artist's view. Black Americans have been invisible and their contribution to society overlooked.

Last month I threw out a challenge to learn something new from observing how another person acted and it was at this exhibition that the friend I was with became my teacher. She had observed that the attendant in the gallery was black and stopped to talk with him about the paintings and his reaction to their message. Attendants in galleries are mostly invisible to the public, but he was not invisible to her. His appreciation of her interest in him was obvious.

This is the month of the red poppies of remembrance, but less noticeable are the white ones worn since 1933 by a small minority across the UK and beyond. They are much misunderstood and some hesitate to wear them lest they cause offence. Their purpose however is to focus on all victims of war – civilians and the armed forces, as well as all nationalities. They show respect for those killed or imprisoned for refusing to fight and ask hard questions about the manufacture and sale of armaments. The Quakers have always been at the forefront of this peaceful approach, and I think that all of us are concerned about the negative effect of war on whole societies and on our planet.

I leave you with this thought: Nothing is black or white. We may find a richness in searching out the hinterland between them and recognizing the value in making the invisible visible.

Christine

Reflection



**This Advent we are all invited to enter into the story with the theme -
Interwoven**

Martin Luther King wrote 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied to a single garment of destiny - whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.'

Martin Luther King's quote has become a universal symbol of interdependence and is one of many similar quotes which prompted my ideas for this year's theme for our Advent wreath: 'Interwoven' - and I have used the metaphor of weaving to illustrate how God is at work, weaving the fragile threads of our lives together. It also reminds us that we are part of a larger fabric. None of us stands alone and our lives and freedoms are bound together with the lives of others, family, friends, community and the people who God places on our path. Through Christ, we become the living tapestry of God's people, bearing witness to creativity and love, and through the Church, we respond to injustice with love, compassion and prayer.

Advent is a season of waiting, watching, and wondering...

Imagine God at the loom, the master Weaver. In His hands, each of us is a thread, fragile on our own, yet chosen, precious, and full of colour. Slowly, patiently, the Weaver draws us together, binding thread to thread, life to life, until something greater begins to emerge.

The Advent story reveals to us how God weaves Himself into the fabric of our world through the child of Bethlehem. Heaven and earth are interlaced; the

eternal is bound to the ordinary. We may not always see the pattern. From the underside of the cloth there can seem only tangles and knots, threads pulled too tight or hanging loose. Yet the Weaver sees the whole. What feels messy and unfinished to us is, in God's vision, part of a tapestry which is more beautiful than we will ever know.

As we journey through Advent amidst all the glitter and busyness, may we awake in the knowledge that each of us is uniquely woven with care, we are held in the hands of the Weaver, and our lives with all its colours, knots, and loose ends, is part of a pattern that is both purposeful and beautiful in God's sight.

A Prayer for Advent

Master Weaver,
take the threads of our lives—
the bright and the frayed,
the smooth and the tangled—
and weave them into your pattern of love.

As we wait for Christ's coming,
help us to see your hand at work,
binding us together in hope,
holding us fast in peace,
and colouring our world with joy.

Amen.

Pauline Shelley

~*~

Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the members in Ann Bettess's Pastoral Team: Sybil Beaton, Marian & Mike Mole, Moira & Jim Watson, Ann Wild, Sophie Block, Val Farmer.

Also remember members of the Youth & Group: Mark Williams, Brenda Bell, Lucy Betts, Peter Devlin, Keith Kidd, Bev Paton, Sophie Block, Chris Shelley, Phyllis Williams.

Christian Aid at 80 - 2025

Anniversary Service of Thanks and Hope

June 12th was a sunny morning when Tony & I joined the queue for security outside Westminster Abbey whose cleaned stonework was gleaming in the sunlight. We were greeted by Philip Evans, the Co-ordinator for Beds, Berks, Bucks & Oxon, and we were seated in the main aisle.

There was an air of excited anticipation as the Abbey gradually filled up with the great and the good, and awe-struck schoolchildren waiting to sing “When I needed a neighbour”.

The congregation was welcomed by Dame Sarah Mullally, then Bishop of London and chair of Christian Aid. She is now Archbishop. All stood for the procession of banners the whole length of the aisle, each banner representing a decade in the work of Christian Aid. The Kingdom Choir sang “We are marching in the Light of God”.

The service continued with a recommitment liturgy, and address led by Rev Dr Jerry Pillay, General Sec of World Council of Churches. The prayers were offered by Rev Kate Bottley.

Storm Cecile, an international spoken word artist performed “The Unstoppable Power of Hope”- a bold, beautiful, and unflinching poem inviting us to see hope as urgent and alive, something carried by communities, sustained by faith, and made real through actions.

I was fascinated by the Christian Aid timeline depicted in the banners. We’d love to find a way of displaying this in Wheatley, maybe for Christian Aid week next year: May 10-16 2026.



You can read Storm’s poem on the CA website:

<https://staging.christianaid.org.uk/resources/unstoppable-power-hope-storm-cecile>. Simply click on the Poem’s title.

Liz Barry

Oxon Historic Churches – “Ride & Stride”

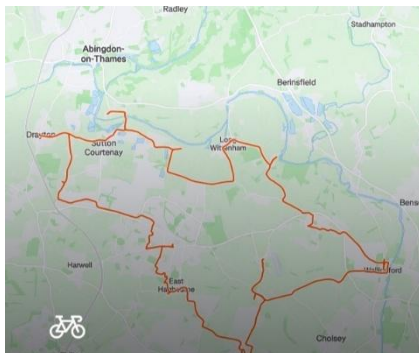
On Saturday 13th September five stalwarts set out from Wheatley - Gordon & Gill Ewbank on bikes and Tina Everett & John Hall and Tony Barry on foot for the historic ‘Ride & Stride’ fundraiser. The sixth stalwart, Graham Bell, topped and tailed his holiday by cycling on a separate occasion over two separate days.

Graham visited 44 churches, covering a total of 71 km in and around Oxford and out into the surrounding countryside and villages, to the East of Oxford, as far flung as Cuddesdon and Chiselhampton. He raised a magnificent **£685** sponsorship for his efforts.



Graham Bell

Gordon and Gill from the Community Church, cycling on behalf of Wheatley URC, visited 32 churches in the Wallingford/Didcot/South Abingdon area and covered 60 km, raising **£100** in sponsorships. Gordon writes, *“It was, on the whole, a lovely day, although we had to dodge one or two heavy showers along the way. The rain finally got us as we cycled into Wallingford towards the end of the day and we arrived at our first point of call, the Friends Meeting house, very wet and feeling a bit sorry for ourselves! However, the Quaker ladies came up trumps with the most amazing array of home-made cakes and fresh tea. We left feeling reinvigorated, a little dryer and reenergised to push on to the end of our route. Never underestimate the value of home-made cakes!”*



Gordon & Gill Ewbank

Tina organised a splendid, almost rain free, walk, with John and Tony trailing in her wake, which embraced the village churches of Wheatley, Holton, Forest Hill, Stanton St John and Beckley, where we were grateful to be retrieved by Liz in her car. At Forest Hill, Julia had provided us with home-made cookies and freshly brewed tea from bone-china cups and saucers, whilst delivering a very comprehensive history of the church. We ate our picnic lunches in the pretty church yard at Stanton St John. All-in-all, a very enjoyable day out in the countryside, which raised a rewarding **£165** in sponsorship.

Welcomers: Not to forget the faithful 12 who stayed behind in Wheatley, keeping our church open to welcome visitors (7 folk and a horse!) from other parishes, whose Ride & Stride routes brought them through Wheatley.

Thank you so much to everybody who took part in this event again this year, in whatever role and an special thanks to those who generously sponsored our “riders and striders”, enabling us to raise **£950 + Gift Aid** for OHCT, half of which will come back to Wheatley URC for future church maintenance.

Tony Barry

(Retiring Wheatley URC OHCT Co-ordinator)



Blended Service Rotas for November 2025

Date	Worship Leader	Vestry Elder	Welcome	Door Steward	Reader	Prayers
2nd	Colin Thompson HC	Marian Mole	Ann Bettess	Ann Hardiman	Rob Holdaway	Ellen Webster
9th	Richard Bainbridge <i>Remember-ance</i>	Rob Holdaway	Pauline Shelley	Barbara Joiner	Christine Bainbridge	Ann Bettess
16th	Cara Heafey	Marian Mole	Phyllis Williams	Elaine Matejtschuk	Ellen Webster	Barbara Joiner
23rd	Noémi Roy	Ann Gajda	Debi Kidd	Allison Towner	~~~~~	~~~~~
30th	Laurence Devlin	Pauline Shelley	Rob Holdaway	Jen Yeates	Liz Barry	Robert Harding

What's On – Dates for your Diaries

Weekly

Mon & Thurs 9am

Mindfulness Sitting Group

Mark Williams - jmarkgwilliams@gmail.com

Friday 10am

Table Tennis -

Val Farmer - val_farmer40@hotmail.com

Monthly

Monday

Nov 10th, 24th

Not So Young Club

Frances Simpson - frances_simpson@icloud.com

First Sunday

Teas

2.30-4pm

Ann Bettess - annsgoog@gmail.com

First Thursday 10am

Prayers for the World

Ann Hardiman - 01865 873485

First & Third Thurs

Coffee Morning

10.30am

Barbara Joiner - albarjoiner2@gmail.com

Second Thursday

Memory Cafe

10am

Laurence Devlin - laurencelalanne99@gmail.com

Second Tuesday

Picnic Cub - Val Farmer - val_farmer40@hotmail.com

Common Lectionary Readings Nov 2025

Date	2 nd	9 th	16 th	23 rd	30 th
First Reading	Isaiah 1: 10-18	Job 19: 23-27a	Malachi 4: 1-2a	Jeremiah 23: 1-6	Isaiah 2: 1-5
Psalm	Psalm 32:1-7	Psalm 17:1-9	Psalm 98	Psalm 46	Psalm 122
New Test.	2 Thessal 1:1-4 & 11-12	2 Thessal 2:1-5 & 13-17	2 Thessal 3: 6-13	Coloss 1: 11-20	Romans 13:11-14
Gospel	Luke 19: 1-10	Luke 20: 27-38	Luke 21: 5-19	Luke 22: 33-43	Matthew 24: 36- 44

Nov 2: Do we ever boast about our friends when they are transformed?

Nov 9: Celtic spirituality speaks of 'thin' places. These are often associated with people of faith.

Nov 16: Jesus encouraged his disciples to accept that bad things will happen but they were to live in the present.

Nov 23: 'Resentment is like drinking poison and hoping that it will kill your enemies' (Nelson Mandela).

Nov 30: In May 2019 there were varied reactions when at a 50th anniversary service, Trident missiles were brought into Westminster Abbey to be blessed.

Richard Bainbridge

~ ~ ~

The Bailey Bench



On Saturday 20th September at 1.00pm a number of us from the church met up with Robert and Wendy Bailey's family for the official unveiling of the bench made especially in their memory and in memory of David their son, who died in the summer of 2018, and donated to us by the family. It is a large and very special family, Michael, Fiona and Sally, the remaining siblings and as many of

their partners that could make it and all their children and in David's case his two grandchildren as well.

Robert and Wendy were pillars of strength and stalwarts of this congregation from when they arrived in the 1970's until they moved to live near Fiona in Cheshire. As many of you know Wendy spent her last few years in St Andrew's care home in Headington, and Robert his last few weeks with Catherine and me in Thame and finally in Headington. They came back to where they felt they belonged.

Wendy was a wonderful friend to many but also a most generous hostess, a thoughtful and wise counsellor and the kindest and most gentle person you are ever likely to meet. How we missed her when everything got too much and she had step back from all those tasks and activities she so enjoyed.



Robert, like Wendy, was a faithful and committed member of our church through all those years. Always ready for a theological discussion, for many years a serving elder and ready to share his views and give sound advice. He had an excellent singing voice and was in Carolyn Brock's choirs, both here in church and in Oxford.

Like Wendy he left a big hole when he stepped down from the roles he had filled. David was a truly loved brother, a wonderful nurse eventually working at the JR until the time of his death and an amazing single father to his three children, all of whom are a real credit to him.

The bench is place for anyone to sit quietly and remember not just the Baileys, but any loved and treasured people from our past or indeed our present.



Robert Harding

~*~

Deadline

Saturday November 14th is the deadline for the December Newsletter. Please send copy to: newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk . Please type 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.

Online House Group Opportunity

I am Françoise Roy living in Pas-de-Calais (France). Visiting our daughter's family in Oxford, I became a 'regular' visitor of your church which touched me very much by the welcoming of its members and the very inspiring and nurturing services.

Last July 8th, Noémi and I became members of the Wheatley URC. Since then I am an Internet happy person, so glad of this unique modern possibility of belonging to a church community.

I know that I now belong to a small group of members unable to come to church physically. Would you be ready that we start to know each other as closer 'out of space' members? After getting in touch with Ellen, Phyllis suggested that I could bring this idea in the newsletter and that we could include anyone who would like to join- even those who normally come to church in person!

We could set up a monthly Zoom call for anyone who would like to join online for a chat. What do you think? Maybe it is a bit too early to start right away as I realize that ahead of us will be some trips, an annual letter to achieve for about 150 family and friends and very nice visits at home from our family on the occasion of my 80th birthday (January 1st....). So it is in the very beginning of 2026 that I could be available to this plan.

If anyone is interested please let me know at this address:

lerivage@familleroi.com

We can decide the logistics (frequency, days/times, etc) once we know who is interested.

May God bless you.

Françoise Roy

~*~

Harvest – Community Life down on the Farm







We are so grateful for the beautiful flowers in church every week, arranged with love by a goodly number of people.... sometimes a very simple display with a little greenery, other times blooms bursting forth in all their glory. We appreciate them all and the part we all play in the life of our church.



High Street, Wheatley, OX33 1UE

CHURCH CONTACTS

Associate Minister: Revd. Cara Heafey

Email: caraheafey@hotmail.com

Church Secretary: Pauline Shelley

Email: secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk

Church website: www.wheatleyurc.org.uk