

# WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



**June 2019**

## **COVERING THOUGHTS**

*Deeply hidden in a Gloucestershire valley where the old woollen mills still stand, we discovered one that had been converted into a college for educationally challenged youngsters. It was a remarkably happy and welcoming place where visitors were welcome to wander through the gardens and share meals in the canteen and café. It was a place where difference was seen as a creative challenge. There was an acceptance and a positive hope for the future for those whom society might otherwise overlook.*

*It is with sadness therefore that we learn that Oasis of Peace, which seeks to heal the differences between Palestinians and Israelis, is losing the support of the American government. Several of our members have visited this village and its school over the years and been inspired to support this venture towards reconciliation, which is why its logo appears on the cover of this month's newsletter.*

*Supporting such ventures towards healing is important but a greater challenge to us I think is to try to open ourselves to differences in the places where we live. It is easy to engage with those who are attractive and outgoing, articulate and generous but what about those who are shunned and judged by society?*

*In many situations the elderly become invisible and those younger are oblivious to the wealth of experience and wisdom they have to offer. Yet one of the most uplifting conversations I have had recently was with a frail lady in her nineties who was quite deaf. The delight in her face as she chatted made her appear a good ten years younger.*

**Christine**

# Pastoral Letter

As I write, it is a few days since Summertown URC celebrated the opening of their new entrance and facilities. It was a very happy and encouraging occasion. I had assumed a trickle of people at around 4 o'clock, with others gradually arriving for the service, but we had a flood! Former members and friends, folk from our Oxford URCs, including some friends from Wheatley, from the Partnership Churches, from the Synod, representatives of the builders and architects ... all turned up to wish us well.

Summertown URC waited a long time for its refurbishment works: they were already a twinkle in people's eyes when I began my ministry there, nearly twelve years ago. The wait at times was very frustrating, battling with planners, adapting ideas in the light of available funding and what the planning authorities would accept, and so on and so on. And there is still much more to do, if funds can be found.

Wheatley's Cogwheel project has not been so long in the gestation, but has still needed much hard work from Mark and the Cogwheel team to get it off the ground (as it were!), and the generosity of so many, and we look forward in the fullness of time to a similar celebration in the autumn.

All this reminds us of the need to be patient. God's timetable does not always coincide with ours: we remember for instance that the Israelites spent 40 years in the wilderness, when, after leaving Egypt they must have felt that a better life was only just around the corner.

We may also notice that the Israelites were not afraid to complain to God about the situation he had led them into. My father used to tell me about the British Israelites, a movement which held the view that the British were the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. I've mentioned in a sermon, I think, that there is a certain Britishness about the Israelites in the desert ... we have a summer which is cold and wet and we say "*where is the sun*", whereas with lots of sunshine, we grumble about the lack of rain. The Israelites are rather like this – God has delivered them from their hard lives in Egypt, but they are soon looking back longingly and complaining.

I'm being rather tongue in cheek of course. The Israelites in the desert are not the only ones in the scriptures who berate God (they moan to Moses, but the

underlying complaint is to God). The Psalms are full of laments, with complaints to God and even about God; Abraham argues with God; Job eventually complains about all that has gone wrong in his life. In the Hebrew scriptures, people are not afraid to tell God what is going wrong, and to ask what he is doing about it. I'm sure that many of the members of Summertown URC (and the Minister!) put their views to God in no uncertain terms in their prayers, as delays and frustrations continued. Sort it out, God!

We can feel guilty about this, but I read recently a helpful comment, that at its core, complaint is a turning, not away from God, but towards God, trusting that God is listening, that he does not ignore, dismiss or punish those who call out to him in this way. From this we can take that it is fine to air our grievances to God – about our own “wilderness” times and about the problems of the world.

For the Israelites, the wilderness is a place of danger, but also becomes a place of learning, as the people begin their long sojourn in the desert, and learn to trust and depend on the God who has delivered them, that his care will continue. God is there, in the wilderness with them. It was a long and a rocky road. Perhaps it is for us too, during our own hard times. But the message is that God does not abandon us, God knows and cares, and is there in the midst.

So, here at Wheatley, may we look forward to the future, knowing that God is with us as we try to serve him.

**Every blessing, Pauline**

### **Prayers**

**Please remember in your prayers** the members Malcolm Benson's pastoral list: Graham Dobson, Ann and Fred Hardiman, Ann Gajda, Barbara and Albert Joiner, Sue and Charles Bennett.

**We also ask you to pray for** John Kidd, and other members of the family and friends of Joan Kidd who died on 20th May. *Well done thou good and faithful servant - Matthew 25:21.*



## Quiet Time (The Kenyan Tractor Parable)

Lord  
You have said  
That all things  
Will pass away,  
And as you have guided me  
Through my life  
On this beautiful  
But hard earth,  
So, now,  
As I rest here awhile,  
I praise and thank you  
For your gentle, loving hands  
Steering me on my way,  
Every day,  
Through times and seasons,  
Ups and downs,  
Ins and outs,  
Storm and calm,

When I run well,  
And when I am hesitant.

Lord,  
I can do nothing  
Without you.  
I'm a little rusty now,  
On the outside,  
But I know  
You're more concerned  
With the heart,  
And you and I know  
That I'm still yours,  
And you're still mine,  
Till journey's end;  
Forever friends!  
Thank you, Lord,  
Amen.

*Poem (c) 2017 David Herring  
Photo (c) 2017 Rachel Herring*

## CHURCH CALENDAR FOR JUNE 2019.

**Everyone is invited to stay for coffee or tea after 10 am Sunday services.  
Traidcraft stall on occasional Sundays.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> June</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> June</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> June</b>
<b>Service</b>	Morning Service with H.C.	Anniversary Service	Morning Service at St Mary's	Morning Service	Morning Service
<b>Time</b>	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am
<b>Worship Leader</b>	Rev. Pauline Main	Rev. Clare Downing	Rev. Colin Thompson	Pauline Main	Laurence Devlin
<b>Vestry Elder</b>	<b>Catherine Harding</b>	Pauline Shelley	<b>Tom Goss</b>	Laurence Devlin	Charles Bennett
<b>Welcomer</b>	<b>Malcolm Benson</b>	Peter Devlin	<b>Moira Watson</b>	Catherine Harding	Phyllis Williams
<b>Steward</b>	Bob Webster	Christine Bainbridge	Ann Bettess	Liz Barry	Sybil Beaton
<b>Reader</b>	Joel Rasmussen	Catherine Harding	Tom Goss	Angela Holdaway	Chris Shelley
<b>Prayers</b>	Liz Barry	Ann Bettess	Richard Wood	Ann Hardiman	Tom Goss
<b>Flowers</b>	Moira Watson	Anniversary	TBA	TBA	TBA

Elders' names in **Bold** are on Communion duty

Simple evening worship in the style of Taize at Barns Close 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June

## COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS FOR JUNE 2019

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> June</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> June</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> June</b>
<b>First Reading</b>	Acts 16: 16-43	Acts 2: 1-21	Proverbs 8; 1-4, 22-31	Isaiah 65: 1-9	1 Kings 19: 15-16, 19-21
<b>Psalms</b>	Psalms 97	Psalms 104 24-34, 35b	Psalms 8	Psalms 22: 19-28	Psalms 16
<b>New Testament</b>	Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21	Romans 8: 14-17	Romans 5: 1-5	Galatians 3: 23-29	Galatians 5: 1, 13-25
<b>Gospel</b>	John 17: 20-26	John 14: 8-17	John 16: 12-15	Luke 8: 26-39	Luke 9: 51-62

## OCCASIONAL EVENTS IN JUNE 2019

2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Sunday	2.30 to 4.30 pm 6.30 pm	Food Bank Afternoon tea in Hall Pulse Group games in Hall
3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Monday	2.00 to 4.00 pm	Not So Young Club
6 <sup>th</sup> June	Thursday	10 am to noon 7.20 pm	Coffee Morning, Church open Elders Meeting
9 <sup>th</sup> June	Sunday	6.30 pm	Pulse Group discussion, 17 Bell Lane Taize Service, Holton
11 <sup>th</sup> June	Tuesday	1.00 pm	Lunch Club Two
16 <sup>th</sup> June	Sunday	8.00 am 6.30 pm	Morning meditation and breakfast Pulse Group games in Hall
17 <sup>th</sup> June	Monday	2.00 to 4.00 pm	Not So Young Club
18 <sup>th</sup> June	Tuesday	1.00 pm	Lunch Club
23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Sunday	6.30 pm	Pulse Group discussion 17 Bell Lane
25 <sup>th</sup> June	Tuesday	2.15 pm	St Mary's Guild
30 <sup>th</sup> June	Sunday	6.30 pm	Pulse Group Trip out Taize Service, Holton

## WEEKLY EVENTS

(NB several activities are term-time only)

<i>Mindfulness Sitting Group</i>	<i>Monday 8.50 to 9.40 am</i>
<i>Brownies &amp; Rainbows (Term time)</i>	<i>Monday 5.30 to 7.00 pm</i>
<i>Choir Around the Piano (Term Time)</i>	<i>Monday 7.30 to 9.00 pm</i>
<i>Wheatley Singers (Term Time)</i>	<i>Tuesday 7.10 to 9.00 pm</i>
<i>Pre-School Music Group (Term time)</i>	<i>Wednesday 9.30 am and 10.30 am</i>
<i>Guides (Term time)</i>	<i>Wednesday 7.00 to 8.30 pm</i>
<i>Prayers and Breakfast</i>	<i>Thursday 8.00 am</i>
<i>Mindfulness Sitting Group</i>	<i>Thursday 8.50 to 9.40 am</i>
<i>Table Tennis</i>	<i>Friday 10.00 am to 12 noon</i>
<i>Hymn Practice</i>	<i>Sunday 9.30 to 9.45 am</i>

## Bi-blog by Laurence Devlin

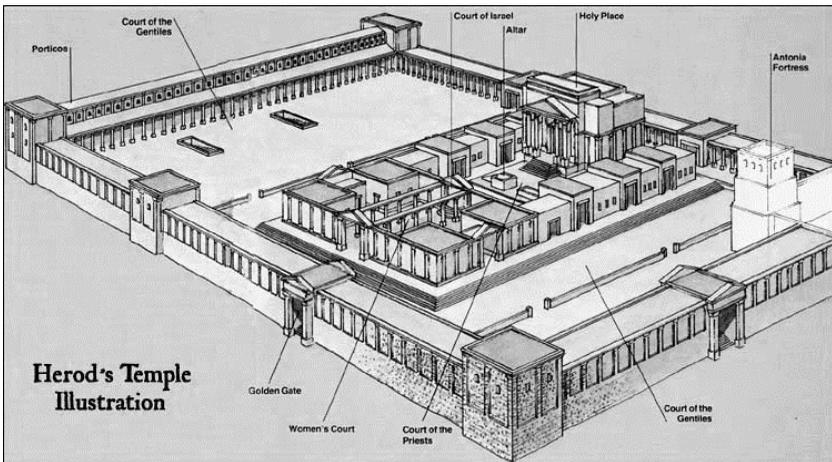
Most of us have seen, on TV or during a trip to Israel, orthodox Jews praying and rocking their body in front of what is generally known to us as the “Wailing Wall” in Jerusalem. That wall, that 11 million visitors come to see every year, is what remains of an ancient retaining wall situated on the western side of the Temple. It is called the “Wailing Wall” because of the practice of Jews weeping at the site over the destruction of the 2 Temples. It is however a term almost exclusively used by Christians as Jews consider it derogatory and prefer to call it the “Western Wall” as do now most historians and archaeologists.

**The Jerusalem Temple** was the centre of Jewish religious life in ancient Israel and a number of important episodes in Jesus’s life happened there: his presentation as a baby when Simeon first hails him as the Messiah, his conversation with the Scribes during the yearly pilgrimage of Passover when he is 12, the so-called “cleansing of the Temple” when he accuses money changers of turning it into “a den of robbers”, the story of the widow’s mite, the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax collector praying in the Temple and of course his trial at the beginning of the Passion. Jesus often refers to the Temple as the “House of God” which indicates how Jews and Jesus himself, naturally cherished its sacred status because they believed that God dwelt there.

The Temple in Jesus’ time was the *second temple* which had replaced the one which had been built by Solomon but had been totally destroyed by the Babylonian invaders in 586 BCE, when Jerusalem was conquered and the population of the Kingdom of Judah was taken into exile to Babylon. When the people returned from exile 70 years later, one of the first things they wanted to do was rebuild their Temple. That structure was fairly small and even if it had been enlarged and repaired regularly during the following 500 years, it remained, when King Herod came to power, a modest building quite inferior in beauty and grandeur to Solomon’s first Temple and to some of the pagan temples which were around. That did not sit well with Herod who loved grand architecture and who also wanted to show his piety to his Jewish subjects by making their Temple more beautiful than anything they had ever seen. The leading scribes were very suspicious at first and opposed his plan. They believed that once he pulled the old building down, he would never replace it! Herod had to promise that he would not touch the old building until he had built the new one around it and under no circumstances were the worship services to be interrupted. Herod had also to

promise that his skilled craftsmen would train **1000 priests** to work on special religious areas of the Temple forbidden to Gentiles.

Herod hired workmen by the thousands and the work began in 20 BC. As Solomon had done earlier, Herod imported the best stone masons and architects from Phoenicia to direct the construction. Only the finest materials were used: cedar from Lebanon, marble, white limestone and gold. The new **Temple** was much bigger (35 acres!) and taller than Solomon's Temple and the white stone gleamed in the bright Palestinian sun and could be seen from miles around. As the illustration below shows, the Temple was divided into very specific areas:



- The 2 **Courts of the Gentiles**, wide terraces on the eastern and western side surrounded by double colonnades of white marble where Gentiles could come and mingle but no further under penalty of death.
- The **Court of the Israelites** was divided into a court for men and a **Court for Women**. The treasury was located there and consisted of thirteen chests (called “trumpets” because they were narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom like trumpets) destined to receive the voluntary offerings of money and animals for sacrifices. This is where Jesus was sitting when he saw the widow put her offering of two copper coins which was all she had.
- The **Court of the Priests** where public worship happened with blessings chants and sacrifices on the altar of burnt-offerings located in the middle.
- And finally, the Temple proper, a rectangular building which was the most beautiful part of the whole compound and covered in gold: It contained a large room which housed the **Golden Menorah**, the Table of the Shewbread (on which 12 cakes or loaves of bread, each representing one of the tribes of

Israel, were placed as an offering to God) and the Altar of Incense. There was also a much smaller room called the **Holy of Holies** where the High Priest entered once a year only, on the Day of Atonement, to sprinkle blood on the stone designating the place where once the Ark of the Covenant had stood, to atone the sins of the people of Israel.

By all accounts, the Jerusalem Temple was one of the architectural marvels of the ancient world. Remember what one of the disciples says to Jesus in Mark 13:1: "Look, Teacher at those wonderful stones and wonderful buildings!" But as Jesus predicts in response, those "wonderful buildings" would soon be no more as the Roman army destroyed both the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 BCE, during the first Jewish-Roman War.

**POSTPONED - Parker Palmer:  
A Hidden Wholeness Towards an Undivided Life.**

This taster session to introduce Parker Palmer's book and his way of helping us listen more deeply to our inner teacher, as outlined in the May newsletter, is now postponed until the Autumn.

More information will follow in due course but if you are interested and would like to know more do chat with  
Cara or Bobbie.

**Disclaimer:** The Editors of this Newsletter welcome letters, articles and announcements from individuals and organisations but reserve the right to publish or not, and to edit.

**Deadline:** Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June is the deadline for the July-August Newsletter. Please send copy to [newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk) and not to individuals AND ALWAYS use A5 layout. Paper copy can be given to Jim Watson – again A5.



## **Prayer Tree made by the Congregation 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019 service**

### **Prayers of Thanksgiving**

- For good health
- For the people I love
- For the love of my family and friends
- For little children
- For human connection and shared love
- For unconditional love
- For all the blessings God provide for us every day
- For my health and the love of my family
- For medical staff
- For the love of my family
- For love
- For the talents of others (art, music, leading worship and prayers, thinking etc) which enrich our lives
- For a blessed wonderful family
- For the Risen Lord
- For the joy of family and friends
- For my family and friends and for my home and for enough to eat

- For the beauty of the earth in springtime
- For the love I have received and given and for the joys and blessings shown to me
- For a long and happy marriage
- For my wife
- For the blessings of family, friends and new acquaintances
- For our health, joys and life
- For family, friends and health
- For a wonderful mother and the joy of a home
- For life and the love of God and the love of many for me
- For the blessings of family and friends
- For the gift of friendship
- For the colourful greens of early spring
- For meaningful work
- For the gift of community and our connection through the uniting Spirit of Christ
- For warmer weather on its way
- For friends, health and light
- For good health
- For family and good friends

## **Prayers of Intercession for others**

- For world peace and understanding
- For all those suffering from lack of basic human needs
- For understanding and compassion by all who negotiate for our nation
- For understanding of those with whom we differ
- For those helping the poor
- For all those who suffer at the hands of others
- For hope for those who don't have any
- For forgiveness
- The people of Sri Lanka and all those who lost family members from terrorism

- For the healing of the nations and for an end for violence and injustice
- For loving kindness to all
- For all those who are persecuted for their beliefs
- For reconciliation for all opposing factions
- For peace and understanding among different cultures and faiths
- For help for the homeless
- For more forgiveness in the justice system and rehabilitation
- For an end to racial and religious disharmony
- For those less fortunate than we are
- For those affected by hatred, intolerance and violence either in words or deeds
- For more spirit of sharing in our community and in the world
- For those bent on violence that their hearts might be turned
- For my brother that he may die peacefully and soon
- For peace and harmony into this world
- For my grand daughter suffering with leukaemia
- For those who feel isolated, alienated, deprived of love, community or connections
- For peace in areas of strife in the world
- For the roof over our heads
- For forgiveness accepted and ALL homeless people
- For those whose lives are filled with hate
- For people who struggle with difficult relationships
- For those who love us and those we love and for those we have loved
- For more tolerance and understanding between divided communities
- For the lonely and those who find friendship difficult due to mental illness
- For those suffering from cancer
- For the people of Sri Lanka

# **Wheatley United Reformed Church**

## **Discernment Process for choosing Elders 2019**

### **Introduction**

The fundamental body by which we in the URC govern ourselves is the Church Meeting. All members of the church are entitled to attend and vote at Church Meeting.

As was the case in the earliest days of the church, we choose some of our number to work on our behalf, ensuring worship is held regularly and properly, providing pastoral care to members of the church meeting and friends of the church, and taking care of the resources of the church (money, building and so on).

These people we call Elders and we believe their role is sufficiently important in the life of the church, to hold them in that esteem which we recognise by using a process of 'ordination'.

Elders are called to serve actively for three years, after which time, whilst they remain an elder, they retire from actively serving for at least a year.

The serving Elders due to complete their current terms in September 2019, are, Pauline Shelley, Charles Bennett and Robert Harding who is standing down as church secretary. We are very grateful for all that they have contributed during their service as elders.

Those continuing as elders are: for another year – Malcolm Benson, Peter Devlin, Tom Goss, Catherine Harding, Moira Watson, and for 2 more years – Laurence Devlin plus the Church Secretary (Phyllis Williams) and the Church Treasurer (Chris Shelley).

### **How we choose our Elders is important.**

The process, which is designed to encourage all of us to take part, focuses on discernment and a sense of call.

The whole Church community is challenged to consider whether they have the gifts, talents and skills to enable them to fulfil the role of Elder and all are encouraged and given time to take part in the discernment process. If anyone would like to discuss a nomination or find out more about what it means to be an elder, then please speak to your elder or the

minister. A leaflet outlining the role and responsibilities to Wheatley URC is available and training can be offered.

We do not have a fixed number of active elders, but it would be good to maintain the eldership at about 10 so we are seeking 3 or 4 returning or new elders.

### **The process for 2019 is as follows:**

#### **JUNE**

- During the month of June, the congregation will be invited to consider prayerfully who they think God may be calling to the role of Elder for the next three years.
- The only criterion is that the person nominated must be a member of Wheatley URC.
- Any who worship with us may be part of this process and along with church members may complete one of the slips to be found at the back of the church. This slip does not need the signature of the person being nominated, **but please speak to them first and ask them to give at least a week before replying.** This is to allow for a reasonable period of reflection.
- The deadline for nominations will be Sunday 30th June 2019.

#### **JULY**

- At their meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> July, Elders will prayerfully consider the names of all who have been nominated and bring these before Church Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July so that we may all pray for guidance during the months of July and August in discerning those who are being called at this time. In this way the whole church with God's help will share in the prayerful discernment of our Elders over the summer.

#### **SEPTEMBER**

- At the Annual Church Meeting on 1st September church members will be invited to consider the names of those whose call to Eldership has been discerned, and, after an opportunity for prayerful reflection, to approve those whom they have discerned are called at this time.



Oasis of Peace    واحة السلام    Wahat al-Salam  
Peace    נווה שלום    Neve Shalom

**SIX O’CLOCK SUPPER**  
**FRIDAY 28<sup>th</sup> JUNE at Wheatley URC**  
***A feast from the Middle East***

In our April church newsletter, the Care for the World Ministry Team highlighted the situation facing the *Oasis of Peace* village in Israel. You might also have seen our display and activities at the church fête. From our village of Wheatley we are reaching across 3,126 miles in a gesture of solidarity. We wish to raise funds towards the on-going training programme for conflict resolution between Israelis and Palestinians. Children and adults alike are offered the opportunity to come to a better understanding of the two cultures by daily interaction and sensitive awareness programmes.

For our part, we invite you to a Six O’Clock Supper of Middle Eastern canapés, a buffet and dessert, plus tea/coffee and drinks. There is no set charge but donations will be gratefully received during the evening for the *Oasis of Peace* programme. We are also hoping to show some film clips with your canapés, so you can have a little flavour of how the organisation operates its peace-building outreach. Places can be reserved on a first-come-first-served basis by contacting Ann Bettess.





Members and friends recently enjoying a healthy walk in May.







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

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