

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



July - August 2019

COVERING THOUGHTS

My experience of the Westminster Interfaith Pilgrimage in south west London this year was very enriching. I was free to approach many different pilgrims on the way and to ask about their faith and others felt free to come to me. In all there was a very inclusive feeling, perhaps because those electing to come were already open to the value of a wide range of spiritual experience.

We learned from a Buddhist monk in the Buddhapadipa Temple in Wimbledon that free meditation classes are offered regularly to everyone and when he was asked if the intention was to encourage people to become Buddhists he replied: Not at all, they may find the Buddhist teaching helpful for their own religious path, but we hope that they will become better Christians, Hindus or Muslims.

After a wonderful day where we had been welcomed and given generous meals by Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus we ended in a Hindu Temple which Richard and I remembered as a very humble place back in 1979 when it resided in a rented church hall. Today the community is thriving and their new building nearly finished. While its decoration and rituals are distinctly Hindu it was interesting to find the community in so many ways like our own. The women's role is that of elders, giving pastoral care in the community and there is much support for local ventures giving gifts and meals to those in need. Their youth take part in conservation projects, and entertain the elderly. But most encouraging of all is their spiritual education programme. Not only do they host many school visits but their own children from 4-15 are taught not only about Hinduism, but the other major religions of the world too and encouraged to uphold the 5 human values of truth, love, peace, non-violence and right conduct.

Our day ended with two small children – perhaps 6 and 8 years old – singing prayers by heart from the religions. Their enthusiasm, confidence and respect was something that will remain with me for a long time.

Christine

EXPERIENCES and SAYINGS by Richard Bainbridge

Sayings that have impressed me:

Walking down Cornmarket I was given a tract suggesting I looked at the Martyrs Memorial and remembered what they stood for. I did this but on the same day I looked at the memorial to the Catholic Martyrs in Longwall Street. Nothing is perfect.

I am attracted to what Cromwell stood for. There is a memorial to some Levellers in Gloucester Green who were shot on his orders. Freedom only goes so far. Nothing is perfect.

During art week I saw a collage of train tickets in Harris Manchester College. It was in memory of Lucy Harrison who WAS the first female train driver and became high up in the train drivers union. She came to Oxford in later life and read for a degree in Law. She died soon after and is remembered in the college. We hope for more.

Perhaps there is the seed of an answer in the following: I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love [George Fox 1624-1691].

Smooth seas do not make for skilful sailors [African Proverb]

The life in the Spirit is not about admiring a river. It is an encounter with the water. And it often begins with stillness and waiting [Michael Milton]

A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul [Therese of Lisieux]

What matters is living our lives in the power of love and not worrying too much about the results [Wolf Mendl]

Only two colleges pay the recommended Oxford wage of 9.69 per hour

The first century Jews had a blessing that beautifully expresses the commitment of a disciple to stay in the presence of the one he followed: "May you always be covered by the dust of your rabbi." That is, "May you follow him so closely that the dust of his feet kicks up what cakes your clothing and lines your face." Every activity was an opportunity to learn from the rabbi how to be like the rabbi.

Look for sayings during the holiday period. Let me know what you find.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2019

Once again the generosity of the people of Wheatley raised over £2,000 . Our thanks go to organisers, deliverers and donors enabling us to be part of the support for clinics and ante natal care in Sierra Leone.

Jebbeh, who was pictured on the posters and envelopes, has been safely delivered of her baby boy and is grateful to Christian Aid for their help towards building her community's health clinic.

For the future, Christian Aid is moving towards safer and more modern ways of fundraising; majoring on big events as well as more traditional methods.

Thank you. Liz & Tony Barry

The Hard Times

Guide me on the path before me;
In the darkness, be my light.
When I stumble, reach and catch me,
Save me, free me, set me right.

Help me to obey your will, Lord,
Take my cross, and follow you;
Still dependent on your mercy,
Speak me steady, teach me true.

May I find the life in dying;
Through your kindness, let me give;
Self-denying, calm, rejoicing,
Share your stand, and learn to live!

Amen.

David Herring © 2019

Sharing our Faith Journey – through a book, Bible verse, hymn, poem, image or music

Earlier this year, a few people from our worshipping community, wrote a small piece for our newsletter, sharing a book they had read that had helped them on their faith journey, perhaps shaping their faith in some way, or given them something to ponder about their faith, helped them to pray, or brought them closer to God. An invitation to share a book you have read is always open but Peter Devlin has opened this up to include ‘My favourite Bible verse and why’. So maybe we can open this up even more to include a Bible verse, hymn, poem, book, image or music. If you have a favourite that has helped you on your faith journey and would like to share this then do please chat with Bobbie Stormont or Peter Devlin or send your contribution to newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk. Your experience just might help, support or affirm someone else on their faith journey and as we share in this way, so we grow closer together.

Bobbie Stormont

A Biblical verse that I love and why – by Peter Devlin

Hebrews 13.2: “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” As a child our home was often full of guests; relations, colleagues and students of my parents for a party, friends for a meal or people just “dropping by” as they so often do in Ireland. As far as I knew we had never entertained an angel. If we had, I would have known as they would be dressed in white with a halo and their faces radiating light. And yet one of them may have been in our home all along and I wondered who it might have been! Someone quiet perhaps who sat in the corner or maybe my parents’ vicar? He lost his temper sometimes so it couldn’t be him. Angels weren’t like that. Maybe they were like Father Christmas: only the good well-behaved child saw them.

As an adult this verse continues to resonate. It reminds me of the absolute and unbreakable obligation in many societies to offer hospitality to strangers and even to enemies. In the early church, entertaining a stranger meant inviting them to share a meal which became a sacred act as the Gospel of Luke often shows. The radical nature of early Christianity meant including everyone round the same table regardless of class or wealth, which was in itself revolutionary. The origin of the word “hospitality” is from the Latin word for guest (“hospes”). The verse suggests the possible depth of an encounter with a stranger; they may not be who they seem. But if we actively engage with them by listening and talking, then they will cease to be a stranger: The traditional Irish saying, “a stranger is a friend you have not yet met” illustrates this very well. There is a part in all of us which longs to meet an angel. Perhaps they will choose my house to visit and be my guardian-angel and that in some way I shall be touched by God’s presence.

CHURCH CALENDAR FOR JULY 2019.

Everyone is invited to stay for coffee or tea after 10 am Sunday services.

Date	7 th July	14 th July	21 st July	28 th July
Service	Morning Service with H.C.	Morning Service	Morning Service with H.C.	Morning Service
Time	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am
Worship Leader	Rev. Pauline Main	Richard Bainbridge	Rev. Colin Thompson	Nigel Appleton
Vestry Elder	Pauline Shelley	Tom Goss	Charles Bennett	Catherine Harding
Welcomer	Peter Devlin	Malcolm Benson	Moira Watson	Laurence Devlin
Steward	Ann Hardiman	Ann Gajda	Zena Knight	Ellen Webster
Reader	Mike Matejtschuk	Richard Wood	Ellen Webster	Moira Watson
Prayers	Bobbie Stormont	Christine Bainbridge	Barbara Joiner	Malcolm Benson
Flowers	Ellen Webster	Pauline Shelley	Allison Towner	Christine Bainbridge

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

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

COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS FOR JULY 2019

Note: leaders may choose to use other readings.

Date	7 th July	14 th July	21 st July	28 th July
First Reading	Isaiah 66: 10-14	Deuteronomy 30: 9-14	Genesis 18: 1-10a	Genesis 18: 20-32
Psalms	Psalm 66: 1-9	Psalm 25: 1-10	Psalm 15	Psalm 138
New Testament	Galatians 6: 1-6	Colossians 1: 1-14	Colossians 1: 15-28	Colossians 2: 6 - 15
Gospel	Luke 10: 1-11, 16-20	Luke 10: 25-37	Luke 10: 38-42	Luke 11: 1-13

Taizé style evening worship at 3 Barns Close, Holton, 14th July at 7.30 pm.

CHURCH CALENDAR FOR AUGUST 2019.

Everyone is invited to stay for coffee or tea after 10 am Sunday services.

Date	4 th August	11 th August	18 th August	25 th August
Service	Morning Service with H.C.	Morning Service	Morning Service with H.C.	Holiday Club Service at St Mary's
Time	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am
Worship Leader	Rev. Pauline Main	Richard Bainbridge	Rev. Colin Thompson	
Vestry Elder	Malcolm Benson	Pauline Shelley	Peter Devlin	
Welcomer	Robert Harding	Catherine Harding	Moira Watson	
Steward	Ann Hardiman	Barbara Joiner	Angela Holdaway	
Reader	Wendy Benson	Christine Bainbridge	Malcolm Benson	
Prayers	Ellen Webster	Bobbie Stormont	Robert Harding	
Flowers	Barbara Joiner	Phyllis Williams	Frances Simpson	??

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

COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS FOR AUGUST 2019

Note: leaders may choose to use other readings.

Date	4 th August	11 th August	18 th August	25 th August
First Reading	Ecclesiastes 1: 2, 12-14 and 2: 18-22	Genesis 15: 1-6	Jeremiah 23: 23-29	Isaiah 58: 9b – 14
Psalm	Psalm 49: 1-12	Psalm 33: 12-22	Psalm 82	Psalm 103: 1-8
New Testament	Colossians 3: 1-11	Hebrews 11: 1-3 and 8-16	Hebrews 11: 29-12:2	Hebrews 12: 18-29
Gospel	Luke 12: 13-21	Luke 12: 32-40	Luke 12: 49-56	Luke 13: 10-17

Taizé style evening worship at 3 Barns Close, Holton, 11th & 25th August, at 7.30 pm

OCCASIONAL EVENTS IN JULY/AUGUST 2019

1 st July	Monday	2.00 to 4.00 pm	Not So Young Club
4 th July	Thursday	10 am to noon 7.20 pm	Coffee Morning, Church open Elders Meeting
7 th July	Sunday	11.30 am 2.30 to 4.30 pm 6.30 pm	Food Bank Church Meeting Afternoon tea in Hall Pulse Group discussion, 17 Bell Lane
9 th July	Tuesday	1.00 pm	Lunch Club Two
14 th July	Sunday	6.30 pm 7.30 pm	Pulse Group family BBQ, 82 High St Taize Service, Holton
15 th July	Monday	2.00 to 4.00 pm	Not So Young Club
16 th July	Tuesday	1.00 pm	Lunch Club
21 st July	Sunday	8.30 am	Morning meditation
23 rd July	Tuesday	2.15 pm	St Mary's Guild
29 th July	Monday	2.00 to 4.00 pm	Not So Young Club

1 st Aug	Thursday	10 am to noon	Coffee Morning
4 th Aug	Sunday	2.30 to 4.30 pm	Food Bank Afternoon tea in Hall
12 th Aug	Monday	2.00 to 4.00 pm	Not so Young Club
13 th Aug	Tuesday	1.00 pm	Lunch Club 2
18 th Aug	Sunday	8.30 am	Morning meditation
20 th Aug	Tuesday	1.00 pm	Lunch Club
27 th Aug	Tuesday	2.00 to 4.00 pm	St Mary's Guild

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 & 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>

SUNDAY MORNING MEDITATIONS

3RD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH. 8.30am

Come and join us for a quiet time of thoughtfulness, prayer and reflection on readings, poetry, art and music. Followed by Tea and Toast at 9am
Lead by: July Christine Bainbridge, August - Liz Barry

Bi-blog by Laurence Devlin

We all know of course that the Old Testament is the story of Israel, but many other peoples and kingdoms are mentioned in its pages, **some as allies of Israel, some as enemies**. However, within the Bible itself, we learn very little of substance about these peoples and their culture and it is only thanks to the discoveries of modern archaeology that a bit more is now known. Let's have a look then at some of them starting with the 3 enemy kingdoms who ruled east of the Jordan river, **Ammon, Moab and Edom**.

The **Ammonites** were the descendants of Ben-Ammi, the son of Lot and of his younger daughter, while the **Moabites** were the descendants of Moab, the son that Lot fathered with his oldest daughter. When Lot and his family had to flee the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot's daughters, thinking they were the only people left on the earth, got him drunk and had incestuous relations with him to produce children (Gen. 19: 37 and 38). The most famous Moabite in the Bible is of course Ruth. The **Edomites** were the descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin brother and Isaac's eldest son. The name "Edom" comes from a Semitic word meaning "red," because Esau was a red head but also because of the red sandstone so prominent in the topography of Edom, modern day Jordan. As they were close relatives, the Israelites were forbidden to hate the Edomites (Deut. 23:7) but the Edomites regularly attacked Israel, and the two nations continued to battle through most of their history.

God commanded the Israelites not to marry any of these "pagan" people because intermarriage would lead the Israelites to worship false gods. Solomon disobeyed and married Naamah the Ammonite (1 Kings 14:21), and, as God had warned, he was drawn into idolatry (1 Kings 11:1-8). In fact, Israel and the 3 Transjordanian kingdoms were very similar in many respects: Each had its own national god (Yahweh, Molech, Chemosh and Qos), each was a tribal kingdom, and each battled against the others over territory and boundaries with the same fury and violence: for example, like ancient Israel, Moab's practices of ritual warfare included "Herem", the execution of whole populations in devotion to the vanquishing deity as described in Deut.13:15 and 20:16-17 or in Joshua 6:17-19.

But no doubt, the most notorious enemies of Israel were **the Philistines**. The very name "Philistine" has come down to us through the centuries as a synonym of someone who is boorish, crude, uneducated and deficient in aesthetic sensitivity.

But this reputation does not seem to be fully deserved. Undoubtedly the two most famous Philistine characters who appear in the Biblical text are portrayed in a less than flattering light: Goliath, a big oaf of a giant, vanquished by David in dramatic fashion and Delilah, the personification of the femme fatale who relies on deceit and guile to defeat Samson. More generally, the Philistines are always portrayed as a bellicose society of unrefined pagans ruled by powerful tyrants, whose raison d'être was to annihilate Israel. One famous episode showing this in the Bible is the battle of Mount Gilboa recounted in 1 Samuel 31 where Saul and three of his sons are killed. When the Philistines found Saul lying among the dead, they cut off his head and hung his body stripped of its armour (therefore shaming him) from the walls of Beth Shean. Not a nice thing to do for sure but quite a few Hebrew leaders did more or less the same to their enemies... live or dead!

So Philistine military power was indeed brutal but Philistine culture which dominated southern Palestine from 1200 BCE to 900 BCE was less primitive than Biblical sources would have us believe. For example, their pottery is according to the experts, the most interesting and richly coloured among those found in the entire region, demonstrating high artistic abilities. The Philistines were allegedly part of the "Sea Peoples" whose origin remains mysterious, which explains why they were not related in any way to the native Canaanite population of the region. Philistia consisted of five cities called "Pentapolis": Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and Gath (birthplace of Goliath) on the south-eastern shore of the Mediterranean, between modern-day Tel Aviv and the Gaza Strip. In Ashdod, archaeologists discovered massive defensive brick walls and elaborate private dwellings as well as grain pits, silos, presses, storerooms containing jars for wine and oil and farm tools made of iron.

Now for the most famous allies of Israel: **the Phoenicians and the Hittites.**

The Phoenicians were undoubtedly among the most interesting peoples in the ancient world and Israel had high respect for them. They were a maritime people, who had developed very high skills in shipbuilding and were able to navigate the often-turbulent waters of the Mediterranean transporting copper and tin, wine and oil, precious glass, gold and silver jewellery and glazed earthenware. As their name indicates ("Phoinikes" in Greek means purple) they had the monopoly of trading the precious purple dye from the "Murex" snail, used for high status clothing. The Phoenicians are also responsible for the spread of the alphabet, upon which all major modern western alphabets are derived. Their most powerful cities were Tyre and Sidon (where Jezebel was born) while Baalbek was their most important religious centre. Their city of Gebal called by the Greeks 'Byblos' gave

the Bible its name (from the Greek *Ta Biblia*, the books) as Gebal was a great exporter of papyrus (*bublos* in Greek), the paper used in writing in ancient Egypt and Greece.

The Hittites for their part were descended from Heth, the son of Canaan and great-grandson of Noah and ruled the area of northern Syria and eastern Turkey and battled with Egypt and Babylon for territory. Abraham was well acquainted with the Hittites from whom he bought the burial cave for Sarah (Gen. 23). Esau took wives from among the Hittites (Genesis 26:34), and Uriah the Hittite was one of David's mighty men (2 Samuel 11:3) that David sent into battle to get killed, to allow him to marry Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. For centuries, historians thought the Hittites were of little interest and of inferior culture but archaeological discoveries, beginning in 1876 proved that the Hittites were a powerful people in the 15th and 16th centuries B.C. with an advanced mastery of stone and metal work, including gold that they transformed into exquisite jewellery, some examples of which can be seen in the Louvre and the British Museum.

Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the members in Charles Bennett's pastoral list: Catherine and Robert Harding, Wendy and Malcolm Benson, Pauline and Chris Shelley.

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.

Deadlines: Wednesday 14th August 2019 is the deadline for the September Newsletter and for the **Annual Reports**. Please send copy to newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk and not to individuals and please try to use A5 layout. Paper copy can be given to Jim Watson – again A5.



High Street, Wheatley, OX33 1UE

CHURCH CONTACTS

*Minister: Revd. Pauline Main 01865 513581
email: minister@wheatleyurc.org.uk*

*Associate Minister: Revd. Dr Colin Thompson
email: colin.thompson@stcatz.ox.ac.uk*

*Church Secretary: Phyllis Williams
email: secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk*

Church website: www.wheatleyurc.org.uk