

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

CHILDREY

GROVE

WANTAGE

SECTOR

NEWS

  
The Methodist Church



October 2020

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Contributions for the **November Newsletter** should be sent to the editor by email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2020** to  
[wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com)  
Tel : 01235 766655 / 07710 214601  
Editors : Gill & Gordon Skidmore

### **Sunday Services and Church Activities**

All worship services, business meetings and church activities have been suspended. During October there are plans to begin meeting for worship in some of the churches in our Circuit.

**Texts for Services at home for each Sunday are posted on the websites.**

**There is a Circuit Zoom Service at 10:30 each week:**

(for access to these please contact Rev Keith Underhill)

**Keith is posting regular reflections which are on the websites.**

**Grove web site** is found from [www.wantab.org.uk](http://www.wantab.org.uk)

**Wantage web site** [www.wantagemethodist.org.uk](http://www.wantagemethodist.org.uk)

**Circuit web site** [www.wantab.org.uk](http://www.wantab.org.uk)

**Circuit YouTube channel**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBpMj71hDzpMhVj6t\\_ZQt0w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBpMj71hDzpMhVj6t_ZQt0w)

Each week Wesley's Chapel in London will continue to live-stream worship, adapted for no physical congregation.

Service times: Wednesday 12:45, Thursday 12:45, Sunday 9:45 and 11:00.

All these services will be available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA>

More information about all of this can be found at  
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/seasons-and-themes/worship-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

## **From the Manse.....**

As we move into October having enjoyed some glorious weather through September, our thoughts as usual turn towards harvest.

Like so much of this year, we will not be able to celebrate or to do what we have customarily done in the past.

Smaller numbers in church (where open), donations for food-banks to be isolated for 72 hours and those great harvest hymns internally hummed under our breath as opposed to being gustily sung and proclaimed.

It won't be the same, yet our need to celebrate and give thanks for the harvest home is as important, if not more so this year.

Earlier in March in the first stages of lockdown, we recall how the supermarket shelves were stripped bare of pasta, toilet rolls, yeast and bread flour, to mention but a few items. All this despite the supermarkets' assurance that there were no shortages and if everyone bought as they usually did then there would be enough for everyone.

Those images forced us to think about not only our food, but the process of getting the produce from farms to the shelves and an awareness of those who worked so hard and selflessly through those months to enable us to have food in our baskets and on our plates.

We gave and continue to give thanks for the Ray Collins Trust's initiative and for all those who helped out in that amazing outpouring of help and assistance to our community.

We are conscious of the amazing work that the food-bank does, liaising with others such as the Community Fridge in 'The Mix' that seeks to avoid food waste even as it supports those in need.

As we have seen the tractors on our roads and through our town and villages as the farmers get this year's harvest in and make the most of the good weather we are experiencing as I write this, we give thanks for their constant work and toil on the land.

Harvest, however it is celebrated, is always about giving thanks. This year is no exception.

We give thanks to all those who are part of that long and complicated chain that begins with sowing and ends with us serving up the meal we have prepared.

Harvest is also about remembering those less well off than ourselves. The need to share and support millions around the world, whose suffering is even more acute this year because of Covid-19, is immense.

We continue to support aid and relief agencies and in our case, focus on the work of All We Can, with whom we have worked so closely over the past few years.

Grateful thanks and reaching out to others in need must always be our response to harvest.

Above all we give thanks to God for his goodness and bounty, even as we offer him our prayers of confession for the way in which his gifts and blessings are not equally shared and so many go hungry.

With love and God Bless

*Keith*

### **Good News**

We are pleased to share the news that the Circuit Meeting has confirmed the extensions of invitations to Rev Keith Underhill and Rev Ian Griffiths to serve in the circuit until August 2025 and August 2024 respectively.

The Northampton District Prayer Diary is available on the district website :  
<https://www.northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/worship/district-prayer-diary/>

### **Dates this month**

- |               |   |                         |
|---------------|---|-------------------------|
| October 4-11  | - | World Homeless Week     |
| October 11    | - | Homeless Sunday         |
| October 10    | - | World Mental Health Day |
| October 11-17 | - | Prisons Week            |
| October 12-18 | - | Challenge Poverty Week  |
| October 18    | - | Anti-Slavery Day        |
| October 18-25 | - | One World Week          |
| October 25    | - | Bible Sunday            |

## Wantage & Grove Street Pastors

Registered charity number 1134429

Just a little update. Exciting news as we have had our first team go back out on the streets. After months of not being able, and everything being shut because of COVID19, the first patrol went back out on Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> of September. This was a socially distanced patrol and people were pleased to see us back in town.

As pubs in Wantage are closing earlier with The Swan being the latest opening pub which closes at midnight the patrols are finishing earlier too.

### Help Needed

Wantage & Grove Street Pastors are looking for:

- Two new trustees including the role of Chair
- A Safeguarding Officer
- Street Pastors and Prayer Support Volunteers for patrols on Fridays, Saturdays and Weekday Afternoons

To find out more or if you can help, please contact:

- your Street Pastor Church Representative, Zack Smith or
- Marj Lunn at [secretary.wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk](mailto:secretary.wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk)

Thank you for your help and ongoing prayerful concern for these positions to be filled and please do get back to us if you're interested and have any questions.

*Zack Smith - Church rep      Wantage and Grove Street Pastors*

[ZachariahLusmith@gmail.com](mailto:ZachariahLusmith@gmail.com)

## Wantage & Grove Food Bank



We are looking forward to the possibility of Harvest Festivals in the Autumn - assuming they will be allowed - and below is a list of the items we will be collecting. It would be helpful if you could let us know if (and when) you are planning your harvest festival to help with co-ordinating collection of the items.

We do have a website: [Wantageandgrovefoodbank.org.uk](http://Wantageandgrovefoodbank.org.uk) and a Facebook page - do visit those if you'd like to - or direct people there if they'd like more information.

*D Townsend - on behalf of FoodBank*

Harvest Festival suggestions:

Tins :- soup - fish - meat - vegetables - baked beans - rice pudding / custard - fruit

Packets :- rice - tea bags - sugar - biscuits - treats - cereals

Jars :- jam - pasta sauce - coffee - hot chocolate ( make with water )

Cartons :- long life milk - long life fruit juice

Hygiene items :- sanitary products - shampoo - shower gel - deodorants - tooth brush - tooth paste

## **Childrey**

Childrey are planning to meet for worship on **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October**. Please contact Keith if you wish to attend as there is a strict limit on the numbers that can be present.

### **Prayers:**

Prayers are asked for Amy Rose Legge and her family, Keith & Leonora, David, Barbara, Shirley, Jean and all those unknown to us who are in need of our help.

Christian Love to all.

## **Grove**

A big thank you from the couples who celebrated their Golden Weddings recently, for all the lovely cards and good wishes they received. They really appreciated that so many people were thinking of them and wishing them well, especially at a time when getting together wasn't possible.

We continue to remember those of our church family who are in poor health or have other difficulties and problems compounded by the coronavirus situation. Especially we think of Jim and Cathy Voller, David and Mirella Phillips, Katie and Alex King and Sheila Hall and her family.

Recent news of the Thomas family is that Paul is making steady progress after his heart bypass operation in July. Eric is having to visit hospitals (J.R. and the Churchill) frequently as ongoing questions are being investigated. Our thoughts are with them both and with their family at this worrying time for them all.

The **Wednesday Zoom Coffee mornings** are a good chance to keep in touch and if you would like to 'come along' please let Keith know and he will arrange for you to be included. You will then receive a weekly 'invitation' by email and can join in as and when you are able to.

**Ride and Stride Day:** Good to see from the sign-up sheet that 16 'Ride and Striders' visited our church at Grove on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> September. Visitors were from Kingston Lisle, the Letcombes, Hendred, Wantage and Grove.

**Project Ecuador** (a Scottish Registered Christian Charity) was set up in 2008 by Dr Andrea Gardiner and her husband, Vladimir Portilla, in a very poor area in the outskirts of Quito in Ecuador. The Charity is providing sponsorship for schooling for local children. The women are being taught sewing/baking skills to enable them to feed their families and they have been able to help with housing and sanitation which in some cases is almost non-existent.

Katie and Alex King introduced us to the charity and have encouraged us to support it over a number of years now. Recently Katie received news from them, which she would like to share, of how they have been affected by the coronavirus situation and how they are responding to it.

“As in much of South America, Covid has proven difficult to control in Ecuador, and the number of cases rose quickly in the cities. Hospitals were overwhelmed. People could not keep to lock down, because they needed to work to be able to eat. The virus is still circulating unchecked really, and people are trying to continue with life regardless. This month the national state of emergency came to an end. Now the individual councils decide on local restrictions.

It was announced that children will not be returning to school this academic year- which finishes in February 2021. So for sponsored children, as for all others, that means continuing the online studies which began at the beginning of June. For many that is very difficult, as they have only a mobile phone with which to access the internet and no money to pay for data. Parents have very little education, so cannot explain things to their children.

As children are not going back to school this academic year, the charity has decided, in conjunction with the teachers of the schools we support, to give our sponsored children some every day clothing and shoes, instead of uniform, and a basic stationary kit for homework and a hygiene pack including toothpaste, toothbrushes, lots of soap, sanitary towels, toilet paper, etc. This will help keep them healthy, and enable them to complete the studies they have access to.

The charity has received donations for food parcels through our Covid appeal on the website. This has enabled us to give regular food parcels to the elderly and most vulnerable people in two villages in our area. The families receiving this help are most grateful for this life line in what is a very difficult year. We also gave food parcels to the families of the girls who attended the girls club. And Alison and Johana have been giving some Bible teaching over the internet and handing out craft packs to the girls to do at home. We also gave food parcels to the families of the sponsored children.”

If you would like to read more about Project Ecuador then you can find their website at [www.projectecuador.co.uk](http://www.projectecuador.co.uk). They are always appreciative of more donations to continue the work they are doing and fundraising links are available on the website if you would like to help.

# Wantage

## Keeping in Contact

We are trying to maintain various ways of keeping in touch.

There is always our internet website, and our Facebook presence, but it is understood that many of us cannot access the internet easily, if at all.

We will continue to publish a monthly newsletter and weekly notices and post those on the website. We will also do our best to distribute copies to those who would wish to receive them.

**Regular Zoom: Tea@Three** at 3:00 pm every Tuesday - a chance to see people for a chat. Please contact Keith for access.

Please watch for the latest information which will be posted on the website.

<https://wantagemethodist.org.uk>

## Where next?

### Sunday Worship

We are working towards starting to reuse the chapel for worship with a service on **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October at 10:30 am**. This of course is dependent on developments in the general situation.

### Worship on Wednesdays.

On the first Wednesday of the month, June Grunwald, has offered to prepare and project a short (30 - 40 min) powerpoint with prayers, bible reading, hymn(s) and images at 2:00 pm in the Chapel. During these continued strange times, it will be another opportunity to meet in our Chapel (with all the social distancing etc in place) for those who would like to attend.

**The first one will be on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October** on the theme of Harvest and people are welcome to bring any tinned goods for the local food bank.

If there is a continued wish for this style of worship, then June is willing to prepare something similar on the first Wednesday of the month on a different theme: **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November** (Remembrance); **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December** (Advent).

One of the things we have learned over the past months is that we can share worship with those who cannot attend by the use of "Zoom" and we are committed to ensuring this will continue either from the service held in church or alongside service held in church.

Sadly we are going to have to remain closed to community users for the time being.



## Harvest

Little did we think last year when we celebrated harvest that 2020 would find our church closed! Happily this will not be for much longer, but we should not miss the opportunity for marking this special time of year and to have the chance to be thankful for the food we put on our tables.

The current situation has not prevented us from worshipping in our homes, whether on the TV, radio or through Zoom and we continue to be aware of all those people less fortunate than ourselves and especially those who are facing extra difficulties during the pandemic.

On **October 4<sup>th</sup>** Keith's Zoom service will be on the theme of **harvest**, but of course this year we will not be able to bring our usual harvest gifts, not to mention enjoy the church being decorated with flowers, fruit and vegetables. However you are invited to **support the local Foodbank** by making a donation and Alison Phillips will be at church on the morning of **Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>** from **10:00 am until 12 noon** to receive them.

There will also be an opportunity on **Wednesday October 7<sup>th</sup>** when June Grunwald has a harvest theme for Worship on Wednesday at 2:00 pm.

Any of the following items would be very much appreciated;

TINS: soup, fish, meat, vegetables, baked beans, rice pudding, custard, fruit.

PACKETS: rice, teabags, sugar, biscuits, treats, cereals.

JARS: jam, pasta sauce, coffee, hot chocolate (to make with water).

CARTONS: long life milk, long life fruit juice.

HYGIENE ITEMS: sanitary products, shampoo, shower gel, deodorants, toothbrush, toothpaste.

Thank you in advance from all those who have found themselves depending on the good will of others through no fault of their own.

## Pastoral

*Ann Barber*

Before we are able to begin worshipping together in church again, Jane Robinson will have celebrated a special birthday – her 80<sup>th</sup>. Even though we cannot do so in the usual way, we assure Jane of our congratulations, and the warmest good wishes of the church family as she marks this milestone occasion.

I learned recently, by a chance meeting, that one of our members who, I assumed, had been accessing the church website, and hence receiving the monthly Newsletter, hadn't been able to do that. It's an easy problem to resolve as I can deliver a hard copy to anyone in that position. So, I hope there's not many others missing out on church news for this reason. If you know of anyone who is, please **let me know** and they can receive all future editions.

In October the people listed below, who are on Celia Roser's pastoral list, will be included in the **Praying for each other** prayer time during which all of the members of Eileen's House-group join together to pray in their individual homes: Joan Kidd, Margaret Watts, Pam Paine, Irmgard Roberts, Margaret Merryweather and Dorothy Andrews.

In addition to the names listed above, those in our church family, who through frailty or ill health would no longer be able to worship with us at our usual Sunday morning Services, will also be prayed for by name by the members of Eileen's house-group.

## Prayer list

*Eileen Rennie*

Loving God, we praise and thank you for the ways in which you have held us together in love during the past difficult months. We thank you that we have been able to come to you in quiet prayer to pray for all those people and situations that are on our minds knowing that you hear our prayers. Your Holy Spirit has supported and guided us and we pray that we will be faithful in trusting in your love for each one of us to carry us forward. Your promise never to leave us holds us together and we pray that you will make us more aware that you are always there with us. Faithful God, you alone know what lies ahead for us, may we know your peace that passes all understanding.  
Amen.

Please pray for:

Jean M, Bethan Grant, Jane, Alan Bunn and family, Carl, Carol Mackinder, Anne, Emma Wright and family, Alex and Brian, Gordon & Marina, Betty, Sheila Hall, Caroline, Adrian, Jenny, Linda, Kathy, June Coppock, Margaret Watts, Edwina and Simon, Sarah Holt, Jinnie Brown and her sons, Charlie and Ty Lee and their families as they mourn the loss of their grandfather George Weaving, All at Bullingdon Prison, staff, prisoners and visitors, YMOSES, kids@church and Street Pastors. Those members of our church family who, through frailty or ill health, can no longer worship with us.

If you or the person/people you have put on the prayer list would still like to be in the November Newsletter, please let Eileen know by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October in order for her to meet the newsletter deadline.

Telephone: 01235 224284; email: m.rennie50@ntlworld.com

## YMOSES

*Jane Kent*

I am delighted to say that YMOSES (Youth meeting on Sunday evenings) will be meeting once again in person in the church hall on **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October** between 7 and 7:40 pm. Anyone of secondary school age is really welcome - please give me a ring if you have any questions. Jane Kent, 01235 765421



## **Knit & Chat**

*Carolyn Roche, 01235 764310*

Angels are very much on my mind this month. I have been in contact with the printers to check that they are still able to print any labels we need – they can! Now I need to find out how many angels we have made so far this year. If you can get in touch with me and let me know that would be great. We also need to work out where, how, when and even if the angels can be distributed. Hopefully we will find a way, and if not, they will wait until the time is right.

Do let Helen Carter know if you wish to join in with Knit & Chat on Zoom. It's not the same as meeting together in the church hall but it is lovely to see friendly faces and have an opportunity to catch up with what we are currently making. There is also the opportunity to be part of our Facebook group. Please let June Grunwald know if you wish to join this. Many thanks to both of them for organising these. So carry on knitting and crafting and please phone me if you fancy a chat or are short of anything.

## **Tuesday Afternoon House Group**

*Eileen Rennie*

Sadly yet another month has passed in which we have not been able to meet as a group. Unfortunately at the time of writing it is still not possible to predict when that is likely to happen.

Although we have missed meeting as a group we do give thanks for the few opportunities we have had to meet in a small group of four to catch up with each other and share our experiences over this prolonged break. We have been keeping in touch by email and telephone and pass on news of each other.

I will continue to email the group each Monday with details for our prayertime that week, when each Tuesday, although apart, we have united in prayer at 3:00 pm. It is good to know that Zoom Sunday Services will continue even when we are eventually able to be back in Church in smaller numbers for those who wish to attend. It is always a joy to seeing smiling faces after we have enjoyed worship together each Sunday. People have really appreciated these times as well as the opportunity for "Tea @ Three" on Tuesdays and all the material on the Church website and on you tube.

We will all have to keep careful watch on updates from our government to know how we can continue to plan. In the meantime, as we get out a little, we hope that we will meet up with some familiar faces to catch up whilst still socially distancing. We do all look forward to the time when we can all meet together again. In the meantime pleased be assured that you are all held in prayer.

If you have any queries you can contact me (Eileen Rennie) by telephone on 01235 224284 or e-mail: [m.rennie50@ntlworld.com](mailto:m.rennie50@ntlworld.com)

## **Community Drop In Café**

*Eileen Rennie*

We are sad to relate with the passing of yet another month we are still unable to open the Cafe and to date have no idea when that is likely to be, due to the current Coronavirus situation.

We are pleased to have been able to keep in touch with some of you through phone calls and also meeting up in town by chance whilst socially distancing. It has also been possible for individuals to arrange to meet for a coffee somewhere within the current size groups allowed. We know from these contacts that many people are missing the joy of their Monday morning weekly visits. Pleased be assured that as soon as we have some definite news on re-opening we will be letting you know.

We continue to look forward in faith to when we are able to meet again and enjoy each other's company. Meanwhile, be assured that you are being held in prayer. When we are able to meet again the donations will be going to Clean Slate, a low cost, long term listening and support service for all victims of abuse and mental illness. Our sincere thanks to our 22 willing volunteers who have served us so well. They too have missed seeing your friendly faces and hearing your news. When normal service is resumed we look forward to welcoming you all back. For further information contact either Eileen Rennie or June Grunwald.

## **Riders & Striders**

*Clive & Alison Phillips*

Saturday September 12<sup>th</sup> was a lovely day for Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust annual fundraising event "Riders & Striders". The weather was ideal for walking or cycling around Oxfordshire's churches.

June and Alan Grunwald walked with Alison Brown and Heather Wells, starting off in Wantage and then walking along the old canal to East and West Challow churches. They then visited the churches in Childrey before walking across the fields to Letcombe Bassett and Letcombe Regis, where they stopped at the Greyhound for refreshment. They thought it a lovely day with beautiful views across the Downs, spotted 20 red kites at one point, and walked about 14 miles.

Gill and Gordon Skidmore cycled about 24 miles around the Vale visiting fifteen churches in the villages of East and West Challow, Childrey, Goosey, Charney Bassett, Lyford, Hanney and Denchworth, as well as in Grove and Wantage.

Altogether the church riders & striders raised about £255 in sponsorship money which will be divided between OHCT and Wantage Methodist Church. Visiting riders & striders were welcomed at our church by Ann Barber, Kelvin Rose, Carolyn Roche, Sue Haithwaite, Alison & Clive Phillips. Social distancing measures were in place as required by regulations.

The church had 20 visitors compared with an average of about 32 over the last few years. Across the county fewer churches were open than usual and there were fewer participants because of Covid, but it was an enjoyable day and it was good to make a move to normality. A big thank you to all who rode, strode, welcomed and sponsored.