

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

CHILDREY

GROVE

WANTAGE

SECTOR

NEWS


The **Methodist** Church



September 2020

Minister : Rev Keith Underhill – Tel: 01235 763321
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Should you need a Minister when Keith is not available, please talk to one of the Stewards listed below, who will put you in touch:

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Contributions for the **October Newsletter** should be sent to the editor by email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 20th September 2020** to
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 for the time being. This means that until we are advised otherwise, there will be no Sunday services in any of the churches in our Circuit.

Texts for Services 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

Wantage web site www.wantagemethodist.org.uk

Circuit web site www.wantab.org.uk

Circuit YouTube channel

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.....

The beginning of September has always marked the start of a new Methodist Connexional Year. A time to look back and reflect on what has been but above all else, a time to look to the twelve months that lie ahead.

This year, is no exception - although it is a Methodist New year unlike any that have been before. The way ahead seems uncertain and so much remains up in the air as we seek to discern the way forward and plan for an unknown future in a constantly changing landscape. We feel all of this so keenly as we struggle to change and adapt to this new world order.

Yet, we are a people of faith and hope.

Whilst it is sad that so many of our buildings are closed, the church is nonetheless alive and kicking and doing great things as it continues to serve and minister in God's world. We have found new ways (and re-discovered old ones) to stay in touch and to reach out to one another in order to do this. From Zoom services and meetings, to sending hand written letters and cards, we proclaim and demonstrate God's love.

Many from our churches have been involved in community initiatives that have been set up to help others during this time of crisis and in doing so have modelled care and compassion.

Whilst the church in this country has lived through times of great peace and stability since 1945, perhaps that is the exception rather than the rule and those who have gone before us grappled with faith in times of great upheaval, war, disease, unrest and rapid social change.

I am reminded of some words from the hymn writer Samuel John Stone, where he says:

*"In toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation
of peace for evermore"*

From the laments of the Psalms to the Book of Job, we hear the cry of how can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

Yet we are also a covenant people and take heart and find strength in the rainbow of God's promise. We are discovering a new song to sing as we are reminded of truths we have forgotten.

That the world is not ours to control, that the church is not committees, agendas and buildings, but is us, in homes, streets, hospitals throughout the world, and that we only have today with those we love, today is the day to say, 'I love you', to mend an argument, to hold on tight.

God is teaching us a new song, for a new land. May we all know that to be true.

With love and God Bless

Keith

Methodist Prayer Handbook 2020/2021: The Earth is the LORD's

The Earth is the LORD's, inspired by Psalm 24:1, recognises how human activities are having a major impact on the life systems of our world.

Use these prayers of thanksgiving, penitence and intercession to resolve that, with God's help, we may take responsibility for our actions and, as stewards of God's gift to us, participate in the healing of creation.

£4.15 each plus postage.

If you want a copy and have not ordered one, please contact Gordon (07710214601) to order your copy. There are a couple of copies available.

2020/2021: A Year of Prayer for The Methodist Church

The Conference has declared 2020/2021 a Year of Prayer to support the new Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth. Districts, circuits, churches, and individuals are invited to pray for the Methodist Church as we deepen our commitment to be a growing, evangelistic, inclusive, justice-seeking Church of gospel people. Simple guidance around different ways to pray, as well as information for a weekly online Churchwide prayer meeting, is available at www.methodist.org.uk/yearofprayer.

This will draw on the rich diversity of Methodist traditions and leadership to help the whole Church journey deeper into prayer together.



Wantage and Grove Church Partnership

Annual General Meeting
A gathering of members of the Wantage and Grove Church Partnership to reflect on the past year and to look ahead at what is to come.

- Refreshments
- Sung Worship
- Annual General Meeting of WGCP
- Guest Speaker

 **John Green, the Community Minister at Wantage Christian Fellowship, will share his experience of being a police chaplain.**

Save the date!
Sunday
20th Sept
Refreshments
from 4pm
Meeting starts
4:30pm
at St John's
Church, Grove
(or on Zoom)

For more info
secretary@wgcp.org.uk

From our website

Little People

Some of you may have seen on Facebook that Little People are cutting back on their work. We do intend to continue to support families who we have been working with, but will not take on new clients. Please see the weekly notices and separate notice on the Wantage website for current needs.

Cornerstone Coffee Shop

We will be opening the cafe and bookshop on 1st September from 11:00 am – 2:30 pm, Monday -Thursday and Saturday. We are looking forward to welcoming our customers back. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page & our shop window for updates as we get nearer opening. We hope to increase the hours by October.

We had to say goodbye to Anita after 18 years just before the start of lockdown, so we will be looking to recruit another member of staff soon after we open.

We have been delivering bible notes to regular subscribers during lockdown and if you have received your notes this way, we are happy to organise payment online, by cheque or in person when we open.

Clearly the challenge of having been closed for over 6 months by the time we re-open, has been difficult financially but we praise God for the continued donations by our loyal friends, for the rent holiday our landlord gave us and for the small grant we received from the council, without all of which we would not have been able to keep up our obligations for so long.

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 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

Circuit and District Dates

There will be a **Circuit Meeting (Zoom) on Wednesday 9th September at 7:30 pm.** Details for access will be distributed by Keith nearer the date.

Autumn Synod (by Zoom) will be held on Saturday 12th September from 10:00 am until Noon.

Childrey

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

Prayers

We continue to remember Jim and Cathy Voller and David and Mirella Phillips in our prayers.

We ask your prayers for all the Thomas family. Paul had a 5-way heart by-pass operation on Friday, 24th July. Eric had an operation for oral cancer on 3rd August. It was good to see Eric at Zoom services in August and wish them both a speedy recovery. Our thoughts are with them and with Judy, Jackie, Jenny and Dean and the girls 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.

There will be a **Church Council** held **via Zoom** on **Tuesday 8th September** at 7:30pm. The main item of business will be to look to the future and consider when/if we might wish to re-open the church for worship and lettings etc. All those who are church members are welcome to take part. Keith will send out the meeting invitation shortly.

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 shall 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.

With the current situation with regard to the Coronavirus we have to cancel future events including the lunches. Up to date information will be posted on the website.

<https://wantagemethodist.org.uk>

World Day of Peace

Monday 21st September

Subject to approval by Church Council, we are hoping to be able to have the chapel open for reflection and private prayer from 10-12 noon.

Pastoral

Ann Barber

As we begin a new Methodist year, the uncertainties about the coming twelve months probably outweigh what we definitely know will happen. For the time being we continue most activities as we have since March, and real, face-to-face contact with each other cannot be taken for granted, however much we look forward to when it can. It was certainly good to celebrate, whilst adhering to all of the restrictions necessarily in place, some happy occasions like special birthdays and anniversaries during the summer. With no services in church, there's no weekly flowers for distributing as we would normally do. That doesn't mean that we cannot offer flowers on those occasions, sad or happy, when it seems a thoughtful way of letting people know we care about them in both good and difficult times. I am concerned that there may be times when members of our church family have experienced events or concerns which have not been acknowledged pastorally because neither Keith nor I, nor their Pastoral Visitor, has been aware of them. This, then, is a request: please get in touch with me by any means you choose, to let me know about occasions or situations in which pastoral recognition or support would be valued. When we are able to be together again in church, passing on these messages easily will once again become a reality. Until then, I hope that we can assure everyone in our church family that they are cared for in our thoughts, in our prayers and by whatever means of contact is appropriate and welcomed.

Praying for each other:

Ann Barber

In September the people listed below, who are on Carole Robbins's and Carolyn Roche's pastoral list, will be included in the prayer time during which all of the members of Eileen's house-group, join together to pray in their individual homes: Margaret Wilson, Linda and Rodney Tillotson, Pru Cathcart, Andrew Holley and Catherine, David & Christopher Worth

In addition to the names listed above, those in our church family, who through frailty or ill health would be unable to worship in church on Sundays, will also be prayed for by name during Eileen's house-group's time of collective praying in their own homes.

Prayer list

Eileen Rennie

Loving Father, we praise and thank you for your steadfast love and care for each one of us. Give us eyes to see you as you truly are, and help us to worship you as you rightly deserve. We thank you that you sent your Holy Spirit to be with us for ever. Make us willing to listen to your Holy Spirit. Guide us to turn away from all that is wrong and do all that is good. Help us to hear, read, mark, learn and personally respond to your living Word day by day and help us to experience in all its fullness the wonder of your love, forgiveness and peace. Loving Lord, help us to depend upon your Holy Spirit to bring more of his fruit in our lives. Father, help us to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with you (Micah 6:8). We pray for our nation and all who govern that they may act according to your will. Heavenly Father, bring peace to your world and courage to all who strive for peace. May your Holy Spirit teach and guide us as we come to you in prayer and make us diligent in praying for those people you have placed on our hearts. We pray that your Spirit will equip, empower and encourage us day by day in Jesus' name. 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, John Morton, Jenny, Symons family, Linda, Kathy, June Coppock, Margaret Watts, Edwina and Simon, 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 October Newsletter, please let Eileen know by Friday 18th September in order for her to meet the newsletter deadline.

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

Richard George is pleased to share the good news that his grandson Matthew's family is expecting a child in January. This will give Richard a seventh great grandchild. He has 7 grandchildren.

Thanks

Gill and Gordon would like to thank all of you who contributed to making their golden wedding in July a very special occasion, in spite of totally revised plans, thanks to lockdown. A special thank you for the beautiful flowers and the wonderful bunting greeting "card" – which is still hanging between the lights in the living room! – and to Ann Barber for facilitating all this. We feel very privileged to belong to such a loving and caring church community.

Tuesday Afternoon House Group

Eileen Rennie

The weeks during restrictions imposed due to Coronavirus have meant we have not been able to meet on Tuesdays and at the time of writing it is still not possible to predict when that is likely to happen.

We are missing meeting together but we have been keeping in touch by email and telephone.

I email the group each Monday with details for our prayertime and each Tuesday although apart we have united in prayer at 3:00 pm. It has also been good to see some of the group on the Zoom services and on "Tea@Three". People have really appreciated these times as well as all the material on the Church website and on you tube.

In the last few weeks I have been able to invite three people from the group to meet with me for tea and catch up at my home, socially distancing of course! When weather permits this can be in the garden. I have concentrated on people who have not much opportunity to meet others. The day has varied week to week to fit mine and others availability.

As we are gradually able to get out more we hope that we will meet up with some familiar faces 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

Community Drop In Café

Eileen Rennie

Yet another month has passed and sadly due to the current Coronavirus situation we are still unable to open the Cafe and to date have no idea when that is likely to be. We know from messages and phone calls we have had 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. It has been really wonderful in more recent days, with the lifting of some of the restrictions in lockdown, that as we are out walking we have actually been fortunate enough to catch sight of some friendly faces we have not seen for some time and so we have been able to chat and catch up while socially distancing! 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. 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.



Knit & Chat

Carolyn Roche, 764310

So here we are in September and heading into autumn. I have to admit that very little knitting has been done in my house during the warm weather but hopefully as the evenings draw in and the temperature drops I will pick up the needles again. I know that plenty of angel knitting has been taking place but this year the angels are residing with members of the group rather than being stored in one of my bedrooms. Next month I will need to begin to find out roughly how many labels we will need this year.

It was lovely to chat with some of the Knit & Chat group on Zoom. Many thanks to Helen for organising and hosting this. Helen hopes to do this again on the first and third Mondays in September so please let her know if you wish to join in. Meanwhile keep enjoying your knitting or other projects and please phone me if you fancy a chat or are short of anything.

Wantage 175

June Grunwald

This year we planned to celebrate 175 years of Methodism in Wantage. We had planned various events, including an exhibition at the Museum. Instead I will post some memories on our church web-site from the past 175 years. Some memories have been taken from the booklet which Keith Robbins edited for the 150th Anniversary, with some added text and some photos. If you have any photos or memories you would like to be posted on the web-site, please get in touch with me.

Riders & Striders

Clive Phillips

This year's Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust annual fundraising event "Riders & Striders" is planned to take place on Saturday September 12th. It will of course be rather different than in previous years because all participants will have to follow government advice with regard to social distancing and it seems probable that fewer churches will participate – although that won't stop Riders & Striders visiting the outside of non-participating churches! Wantage Methodist Church will participate and we will have a manned welcoming station at the front door – albeit socially distanced from any visitors, and visitors will not be able to enter the church. If anyone wants to take part either as a rider or strider or as a welcomer, please let me know. "Welcomers" and "Riders & Striders" can be sponsored and the money raised will be divided equally between OHCT and our church. If the weather is good this could be a good way to relieve self-isolating in a (relatively) safe way.

What is the way ahead?

Church Council will meet (virtually) on Thursday 4th September.

We have purchased sanitiser dispensers and thermometers and there should be an internet connection installed at church by the end of August. The next months will be challenging as we try to find ways that are sustainable to use our buildings safely and fulfil our mission of service to our wider community.