

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

CHILDREY, GROVE & WANTAGE SECTOR


The Methodist Church

CGW NEWS

happy
new year!

Best of all, God is with us

January 2021

Minister : Rev Keith Underhill – Tel: 01235 763321
keith.underhill@methodist.org.uk

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:

Alison Phillips : 01235 760335
Ian Sturt : 07426 772761
Doug Legge : 01235 751463

Please send material for the **Weekly Notices** to :

Grove Jenny Marriott : 01235 767624
Wantage Gill & Gordon Skidmore : 07710 214601
email : wntgmethodistnotices@gmail.com

Contributions for the **next Newsletter** should be sent to the editor by email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 7th February 2021** 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.

There is a Circuit Zoom Service at 10:30 each week:
(for access to these please contact Rev Keith Underhill)

Texts for Services at home for each Sunday are posted 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.....

It was Queen Elizabeth (the Queen Mother) who brought to her husband's attention a little known poem by Minnie Louise Haskins, entitled "God knows". Written in 1908 and privately published in 1912, it was part of a collection entitled "*The Desert*".

As a result, [King George VI](#) quoted it in his [1939 Christmas broadcast](#) that first December of the Second World War.

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

These words have understandably been used many times these past weeks as we looked to the dawning of 2021, wondering what the future might hold and surrounded with all the uncertainty, anxiety and worry of these days.

That though, is not the end of the poem - for it continues.....

So heart be still:

What need our little life

Our human life to know,

If God hath comprehension?

In all the dizzy strife

Of things both high and low,

God hideth His intention.

God knows. His will

Is best. The stretch of years

Which wind ahead, so dim

To our imperfect vision,

Are clear to God. Our fears

Are premature; In Him,

All time hath full provision.

Then rest: until

God moves to lift the veil

From our impatient eyes,

When, as the sweeter features

Of Life's stern face we hail,

Fair beyond all surmise

God's thought around His creatures

Our mind shall fill.

Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957)

Here, we find resonances to passages and sentiments of scripture, St. Paul and Isaiah being but two who immediately come to mind.

Echoes also of the words we have so recently shared in our Covenant service where we have handed over everything to God and placed our hope and trust in him, culminating in the acknowledgement and affirmation that “*we are no longer our own but yours*”.

Whatever this year may bring we are not alone and we do not face it by ourselves. We are in this together; together as a community of faith and together as daughters and sons of God, (acknowledged or not).

We find comfort in the words of the hymn writer:

“*But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day*” and acknowledge as we do, that this too shall pass.

Until then, we commit ourselves to holding the Christ light for others even as they hold it for us.

With much love and God Bless

With love and God Bless

Keith

Sunday Worship

With the restrictions of Tier 4 now in place, along with the rapid increase in Covid infections, particularly those linked to the new variant, we have taken the decision to suspend worship in the churches for the time being.

Recognising our duty of care, the need to do all that we can to help keep the wider community safe and play our part in trying to minimise the spread of the virus, we feel that this is the right thing to do.

The Church Stewards, Church Councils and I continue in our commitment to ensure that we keep everyone as connected and as in touch as we possibly can, through emails, texts, WhatsApp, letters and phone calls.

We will continue to send out weekly orders of service to use at home, have a weekly Zoom service each Sunday at 10:30 am and put acts of worship on the Circuit YouTube Channel. Please contact Keith directly for further details.

keith.underhill@methodist.org.uk

From the Editors:

Happy New Year to everyone. Thank you for your contributions to the Newsletter for that rather special year that has been 2020. We are trying to keep the publication of the Newsletter relevant to the rather different world we are experiencing at present. Please keep feeding any material you would like to have shared. The preferred email address remains wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com

Publication Dates

Because of the volatility of the Covid19 situation, we are planning to publish as follows for the immediate future:

February	Deadline	Sunday 7 th February	Publish	Wednesday 10 th February
March	Deadline	Sunday 28 th February	Publish	Wednesday 3 rd March
April	Deadline	Sunday 21 st March	Publish	Wednesday 24 th March
(Including Wantage Annual Report)				
May	Deadline	Sunday 25 th April	Publish	Wednesday 28 th April
June	Deadline	Sunday 16 th May	Publish	Wednesday 19 th May
Early Summer	Deadline	Sunday 6 th June	Publish	Wednesday 9 th June
July	Deadline	Sunday 27 th June	Publish	Wednesday 30 th June

Wantage & Grove Church Partnership

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity : 18 - 25 January at 8 pm each evening

About 20 minutes of reflection and prayer on Zoom based on

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity booklet 'Abiding in Christ'

Material available from the Newsletter or Notices page on our web site .

Zoom access detail is available from Keith, Ann Barber, Alison Phillips, Ian Sturt and Gordon Skidmore.

Monday 18th led by Wantage Methodist Church

You did not choose me but I chose you John 15:16

Tuesday 19th led by Wantage Parish Church

Abide in Me as I abide in You John 15:4

Wednesday 20th led by St John's Church Grove

Love one another as I have loved you John 15:12

Thursday 21st led by St John Vianney

I do not call you servants any longer ...

but I have called you friends John 15:15

Friday 22nd led by Grove Free Evangelical Church

You have already been pruned by the Word John 15:3

Saturday 23rd led by Grove Methodist

Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last John 15:16

Sunday 24th led by Wantage Community Church

I am the vine, you are the branches John 15:5

Monday 25th led by Wantage Christian Fellowship

So that my joy may be in you

and that your joy may be complete John 15:11

Cornerstone Newsletter

Welcome to 2021 and a happy new year

Of course we are not starting the year as we would have liked to. We are closed again for the foreseeable future but give thanks that despite all the times we have had to close over the last few months our finances have held up due to donations, the furlough scheme, and a period of rent holiday for which we are most grateful.

Orders

I will be in the shop occasionally to monitor post and emails. If you wish to order a book then please email your request and I will arrange for collection or delivery once it arrives.

If anyone has not collected their bible notes for January we may be able to arrange delivery and would ask for payment online.

Christmas

We provided a much reduced number of Christmas lunches this year over three days rather than the four or five as in previous years. We served 47 people in house and provided 12 takeaway meals – of the 47 eaten in, nine were people invited by us who would normally have been invited to our special ‘family’ Christmas meal.

We did also donate a large amount of Traidcraft biscuits and chocolate to the gifts organized by Beverley who runs the Launderette. More than half of those gifts went to people we know who would be alone or isolating at Christmas.

Brexit

Although we won't be directly affected Traidcraft and other wholesalers could be and we may indirectly struggle to get some items. Please pray for Traidcraft that they will still be able to obtain their stock.

Prayer breakfasts

As we are unable to meet in person, details of items to pray for as well as a thought for the month is sent round for the second Saturday in each month. I have sent out this month's today, so do let me know if you didn't receive it and would like to.

We very much look forward to re-opening when we can, but in the meantime we will keep you updated.

Blessings

Sarah.

Childrey

Prayers:

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

Christian Love to all.

Grove

As we all go through lockdown once again and are missing our contact with so many people, why not join us on the Wednesday Zoom Coffee mornings, which Keith arranges. They are a good opportunity to keep in touch, find out news, share your thoughts, listen to what other people have to say and have a laugh together – and include a recent special feature ‘the picture gallery’, which has made interesting viewing and brought forth anecdotes and memories. Anyone who has photos of times past in Grove and is willing to share them, Keith will be pleased to hear from you. If you would like to join us on Wednesday mornings (usually 10:30 am) 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.

We continue to remember all of our church family who are in poor health or have other difficulties and problems compounded by the coronavirus situation. We remember especially Jim and Cathy Voller separated by ill health after their long life together, and all who are missing close contact with their family and special friends.

Wantage

What is happening?

Worship

During the lockdown periods we have been meeting with others in the Circuit for worship each Sunday at 10:30 am on the Zoom platform. About 100-110 connections are made to each service with about 150 people involved each week. Whilst this has been good for many with internet access, we have been aware that this does not work for everyone. We know that some have been sharing virtual services from other places, YouTube on the internet or on the radio. For those who preferred reflective worship Keith and the circuit staff have been creating worship materials which have been distributed by email or in print form through pastoral visitors or friends. The Methodist Church nationally have also been publishing services for worship at home, online and through the Methodist Recorder.

If you have not been getting access to any of these resources and would wish to in the future, please contact Rev Keith Underhill, Ann Barber or one of the stewards and they will try to ensure you get access to what you need.

In the short periods between lockdown, we have held services in the chapel and broadcast that on Zoom for those not physically present. As you are aware those present are not permitted to sing or mix socially. It is our intention even when restrictions are lifted to continue to make Wantage morning worship available on Zoom each week for those unable to attend in person and we are working hard to make this as good an experience as we can. Proper internet access is now installed in the church buildings which allows transmission and reception of resources and services throughout the buildings.

Worship in the Chapel will only resume when the area is in the equivalent of Tier 2 or below. We are not expecting this to be before Easter at the earliest.

June Grunwald has led an initiative to have a “Worship on Wednesday” monthly afternoon event when it first seemed that there was a possibility of restarting some activities. However the almost immediate restoration of restrictions has made this impractical.

Notices & Newsletter

We have continued to publish Notices every week to the Wantage Methodist Church website. These can be downloaded, printed and distributed by anyone.

The monthly newsletter has also been published each month and we will continue to do so in 2021 at a slightly higher frequency (see page 5) to share news from the local churches, Circuit and wider church. This is posted on both the Wantage Methodist Church website and the Wantage and Abingdon Circuit website. Paper copies are distributed to all who request them and we are grateful to Ann and Andrew Barber as well as the Pastoral Visitors for making this happen.

If you do not see the Newsletter but would like to please contact Ann Barber.

Church Life

One of the real challenges of the pandemic has been how to keep social contact with everyone. Our pastoral visitors have worked hard to do this.

Knit & Chat meet on Zoom at 2:30 pm on the first and third Monday each month and have succeeded in the creation and distribution of about 1800 angels this year. If you wish to be part of this please contact Helen Carter.

Tea @Three meets weekly at 3 pm on Tuesdays on Zoom just to chat. If you wish to be part of this please contact Keith.

Thanks to Eileen for continuing to email the **Tuesday House Group** each Monday with details for our prayer time that week, when each Tuesday, although apart. we have united in prayer at 3:00 pm.

It was an absolute joy to meet with **YMOSES** in December (despite the fact that we were sitting 2 metres apart with masks on!). We looked at the Christmas story from a different angle reflecting on the diverse group of people who were brought together in the stable around Jesus. We thought and talked about how we could share that love and good news Jesus brought to earth in our daily lives.

In January Kyla Rowlands, who has come to the group for years, offered to prepare something for all the young people and made a wonderful, thought-provoking video and shared a favourite song.

We have tried to keep in touch with all the families who are part of **kids@church** as we have been unable to meet since February. We delivered an advent calendar and Christmas greetings to each home at the end of November and really look forward to welcoming the families back when it is safe to do so.

Please continue to hold all our young people in your thoughts and prayers as they navigate their way through this uncertain time.

Wednesday Fellowship and **Drop in Café** are both sadly suspended for the time being. June and Eileen have been able to keep some contact going with some regulars to the Community Cafe who don't attend our chapel.

We all deal with the various lockdowns differently. If you know of any church folk who are feeling isolated or unwell, please let Ann Barber or Keith Underhill know. And also let Eileen Rennie know of any prayer requests.

Property & Finance

While our church buildings are closed for worship, we are very grateful to the Property team for calling in on a regular basis to make sure that all is well and that any necessary maintenance work is carried out.

The Church treasurer is glad to report that many have continued their regular giving since the beginning of the Pandemic, mainly by cheque or standing order, and he is very grateful to all those who contribute to our church life in this way. A summary report of church financial situation will be available for the Annual Church Meeting in April.

Service in the Community

Members continue to contribute to the wider community.

A number of people have been involved with Ray Collins' coordination issues doing phone minding duties and driving.

We have had teams involved in the Food Bank work particularly over the Christmas period when we also had our building used for storage and packing. Street Pastors have had a limited activity over the past months.

On top of this voluntary effort there are also our people professionally involved in retail, transport, medical support, social care and teaching and child care.

News

Pastoral

Ann Barber

As we reflect on the year which has passed with a mixture of thoughts, and in wondering about the unexpected and unfamiliar experiences through which we have emerged into the new year, the words on the front of our current membership tickets, linking 2020 and 2021, seem to be so aptly chosen: *"The best of all is God is with us"*. What greater reassurance for everything which lies ahead can there be? I am writing this shortly after our annual Covenant Service. Of all our services of collective worship throughout the year, this is the one which bears the deepest significance for us. As we respond to the usual, the unexpected and even the seemingly almost impossible challenges which we may face, the words of our covenant re commitment can be spoken assuredly, because we can trust God to be beside us as we step into every new situation.

In his address, Keith spoke of the importance of words - those which we sing and those which we speak. For our team of Pastoral Visitors during the last ten months, words have been, almost exclusively, the means by which we have sought to fulfil the role which we are privileged to hold. We all regret that the restrictions of the Coronavirus deny us permission to add a comforting hug, a warm handshake, an encouraging smile or even shared tears when we want to convey the warmth of our care and love for each other. Similarly, we cannot meet physically, offer help in as many practical ways, or share celebrations as we could until essential lockdown rules came into force nearly a year ago. However, the absence of home visits or social meetings has not suspended our contact, or withdrawn our support for each other. Thankfully we've used other means by which carefully chosen words have communicated to those on our pastoral lists our continuing prayers and concern. Phone calls, emails, cards and notelets are some of the ways in which words have expressed our thoughts, and hopefully offered some comfort, encouragement and reassurance of God's unending love.

As Pastoral Visitors recommissioned to God's service through this responsibility, we will try to sustain this practice, and with God's help, to offer care and support in every way we can during the coming year.

Praying for each other: In February the following people on **Nicky Atkinson's Pastoral List:** Linda and Alan Chipperfield, Diane and Peter Preston, Moreen Webber, and on **Ann Barber's Pastoral List:** Margaret Fordham, Lizzy Horton, Julie Horton, Amy Lancaster, Alison and Clive Phillips, Kelvin Rose, Mary Spalding and Marjorie and Colin White, will be included in the prayer time at Eileen Rennie's house-group.

In addition to the names listed above, those in our church family, who through frailty or ill health can no longer worship with us on Sundays, will also be prayed for by name at Eileen's house-group.

Prayer list

Eileen Rennie

Loving God, at the beginning of a New Year we bring you thanks and praise. You have been with us through all the uncertainty of 2020 and for that we offer our heartfelt thanks. We ask that you will remind us daily of your great faithfulness and encourage us to share that love and support with all those we come in contact with by whatever means. May we particularly be aware of the many people struggling at the moment and be prepared to offer help in whatever way we can. A listening ear can be a real support to those struggling. We pray that all we do we will do in your 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, Caroline, Adrian, Jenny, Kathy, June Coppock, Sarah Holt, Jinnie Brown and her sons, Margaret McAlpin, Diane Barton, Alastair Wright and family, Sharon and her family, Pauline Hawkins, Charlie Webb, Emily, Eric and Judy Thomas and family, Margaret Watts, Nigel, Julie and Jill, Alan Smith, 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 February Newsletter, please let Eileen know by Friday 5th February in order for her to meet the newsletter deadline.

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

Holocaust Memorial Day

For a number of years our Chapel has been open to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. Because of the virus rates our chapel won't be open, but the UK Ceremony for Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2021 will be streamed online. This will be the first fully digital commemorative ceremony.

The ceremony will feature personal testimonies from survivors of genocide, films, readings and music. We will really miss being together in person for HMD. Yet the online format enables even more people to join HMD and learn from genocide for a better future. Behind the scenes, HMD are working hard to create a special Ceremony for everyone, with survivors at the heart of it all.

To receive information about how to watch the ceremony at 7 pm on 27th January, please look on the HMD web-site www.hmd.org.uk. Once found, please share the registration link widely as HMD would like as many people as possible to watch the ceremony.

Tuesday Afternoon House Group

Eileen Rennie

Sadly yet another month has passed in which we have not been able to meet as a group.

Who could have predicted, when we went into the first lockdown, that so many months would pass and things still be so very uncertain? We must continue to pray for the current situation and that we will all act responsibly and so look forward to a brighter future ahead. With two vaccines now available it is hoped that everyone will seriously follow all the restrictions and so help our overwhelmed NHS and all other support services.

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. It is always a joy 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 YouTube.

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 for a little exercise, 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.

We wish you many blessings in the New Year.

If you have any queries you can contact me (Eileen Rennie) by telephone on 01235 224284 or email: m.rennie50@ntlworld.com



Knit & Chat

Carolyn Roche, 01235 764310

Thank you to everyone who helped with the angel distribution. Once again they were really appreciated by everyone who found or was given one. There were many pleased and positive responses on various Facebook sites – in fact in one we were referred as a Wantage Christmas tradition! Some people have already begun knitting angels for Christmas 2021.

I am currently working on my crochet skills and am just about to embark on making two cushion covers. On Zoom Knit & Chat it is interesting to see the various projects that are going on – jumpers, hats, cross stitch to name but a few. Whatever you are doing please keep in touch and hopefully we will be able to meet in person at some point this year.

Meanwhile, just to remind you that to join us on Zoom Knit & Chat please contact Helen Carter and to be part of the Facebook group please contact June Grunwald. Do call me if you have any queries or just fancy a chat.

Happy New Year to you all.



A note of appreciation for an angel received this year.

Many thanks for
your gift of an
angel eey eey,
which I will treasure
as a gift of
kindness

Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year

Maïorie Dunning.

Community Drop In Café

Eileen Rennie

With the passing of yet another month we are sadly still not in a position to predict when we may be able to reopen the Cafe due to the current Coronavirus situation. The current lockdown has set things back again. However with a second vaccine now available we pray that the current restrictions and people seriously adhering to them will improve matters. Especially we pray for all those working in the NHS and other support services at this time, all of whom are under great stress.

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. 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. We will keep you updated.

Our good wishes to you all for this New Year.

For further information contact either Eileen Rennie or June Grunwald.

HMP Bullingdon news

Helen Carter

The chaplains at HMP Bullingdon have asked me to say a huge 'THANK YOU' for the 400 cards we sent for them to distribute to the men to send to their families. Those were distributed to all the wings at the prison, with many men being able to send cards to their family. The prison also has youth offenders held there and they were enabled to send cards out too.

The pandemic has hit the prisoners hard as they spend more time locked in their cells and social activities have been curtailed. Church services cannot be held as before with the chaplaincy team being restricted to holding a service for just one wing at a time. Hence the men do not get the weekly support they were used to through going to those services. No chapel volunteers have been allowed into the prison since March and there have been no Alpha or Sycamore Tree (victim awareness) courses and no counselling or bereavement counselling. It has been extremely difficult for visitors to book a slot as so few people have been allowed at any one time in the visitors' hall.

As you can gather, life is not easy in Bullingdon for anyone. All at the prison are on our weekly prayer list and those prayers are much needed and also much appreciated.

Property News

Internet at Wantage

We have internet available on the Wantage premises thanks to PlusNet. This is now fully commissioned.

Users

We remain closed to our community users. We shall not reopen before Easter.

Wantage Annual Church Meeting - Wednesday 21st April at 7:30 pm.

Again this will be on Zoom and Keith will issue access information in due course.

In preparation for this, an **Annual Church Report** will be published and **contributions** for this should reach Gordon Skidmore **by March 14th** at the email address wmcannualreport@gmail.com

We would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in finding more about the role of Church Treasurer, Church Council Member or Church Steward. If you are prepared to consider any of these opportunities and would like to know more, please contact Keith or one of the Stewards.

DIARY

JANUARY

Monday 18th to Monday 25th Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity

Wantage & Grove Church Partnership - a period of prayer at 8:00 pm every day:
details on page 7.

Wednesday 27th 7:00 pm Holocaust Memorial Day see page 13

FEBRUARY

**Thursday 4th 7:30 pm Church Council will meet on Zoom.
Keith will issue access information in due course.**

Sunday 7th DEADLINE for FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Sunday 28th DEADLINE for MARCH NEWSLETTER

MARCH

Sunday 14th DEADLINE for ANNUAL CHURCH REPORT

Sunday 21st DEADLINE for APRIL NEWSLETTER

**THE BEST
OF ALL IS
GOD
IS WITH US.**