

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

CHILDREY, GROVE & WANTAGE SECTOR

  
The **Methodist** Church

# CGW NEWS



February 2021

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Contributions for the **next Newsletter** should be sent to the editor by email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021** to  
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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](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.....

What to make of Valentine's Day in the light of living through a global pandemic, I wonder?

Well, magazines, newspapers and social media are full of suggestions as to how to adapt February 14<sup>th</sup> to make it more Covid-19 safe this year.

Eye-catching headlines abound in an attempt to make the most of our current situation;

“How to celebrate Valentine's Day 2021 in lockdown”

“Valentine's Day 2021: Date ideas during COVID-19”

“17 Quarantine Valentine's Day Ideas - Virtual Valentine's Day”

Like every other aspect of life since we first became aware of Cov-19, adaptation and innovation have come to the fore.

However, I'd like to think that perhaps in this of all years things might be a bit different. That society might be aware of a much wider understanding of love, one that reaches out to all.

That we would celebrate love not simply in a narrow insular and inward looking way, something secretly shared between two people, but rather love that is outward facing and all encompassing, that seeks to embrace all and in doing so reminds us that everyone is valued and special and important.

We recall how in the early days of the first lockdown there was a shift of perception towards those who had in the past been overlooked. Undervalued, hard working and low paid employees were at last being appreciated and valued in their roles as key workers and that those who had often been 'invisible' and taken for granted before, were now rightfully being thanked.

Christian Aid in a recent article talked about love equalling physical distancing plus social solidarity.

The word 'love' in the time of Covid-19 has become “*the love of life: our own life, the life of others, the life and the well-being of everyone we know and those we do not know*”, Archbishop Michael Jackson.

This year, Valentine's Day falls on a Sunday, which is most apt - for as we all know it is love that is at the very heart of our faith and the message that we seek to share.

As St. Paul reminds us;

*If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

*Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

*Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*

With much love and God Bless

*Keith*

## **Thank you**

I would like to say a huge, heartfelt ‘Thank you’ for all the support that Liz, I and the family have received following the death of my dad at the end of January.

For all the flowers, cards, emails, ecards, phone calls, prayers, thoughts and good wishes that we have received, thank you!

We feel very much loved, cared for and supported at this time.

As many of you will know, Dad celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday last November and his and mum’s 65<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary the previous month.

I will have the privilege of taking his service at Garford Crematorium later this month when we will be celebrating a long and well lived life, sharing many happy memories and playing plenty of Glenn Miller!

With much love and God Bless to you all,

Keith, Liz, Amy, Becca, Dan and George

## **Ash Wednesday**

There will be a service for Ash Wednesday at 7:30 pm on 17<sup>th</sup> February on Zoom. Joining details will be available from Rev Keith Underhill.

## **Sunday Worship**

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.

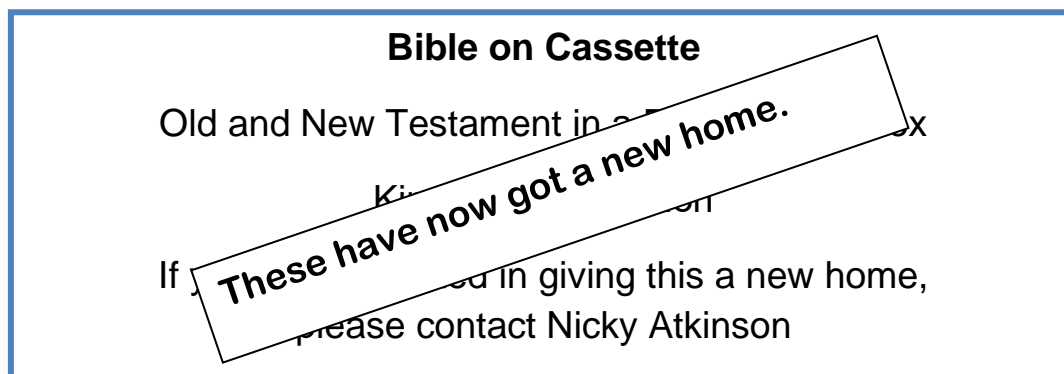
We will continue to send out weekly orders of service to use at home, have a weekly Zoom service each Sunday at 10:30 am and put acts of worship on the Circuit YouTube Channel. Please contact Keith directly for further details.

[keith.underhill@methodist.org.uk](mailto:keith.underhill@methodist.org.uk)

## Guided meditations

Eileen Appleyard has been leading some guided meditations on Zoom for the last few weeks. Those have now finished but she intends to start again on April 15<sup>th</sup> with some post Easter meditations. She is keen to offer these sessions, which happen weekly on a Thursday evening via Zoom, to as many around the Circuit who would like to join in.

If you are interested please email Eileen on [eileenappleyard13@gmail.com](mailto:eileenappleyard13@gmail.com) and she will be happy to give you more information.



## Cornerstone News

Cornerstone remains closed. Post and emails are monitored weekly and orders can be dealt with this way.

Lent Books are in stock and includes the Archbishop of Canterbury's lent book which is "Living his Story" by Hannah Steel.

Bible Notes dated March – April that have been ordered have arrived and should be sent out in the next few days.

Easter Eggs – Because the major supermarkets are not stocking the product of The Meaningful Chocolate Company, if people make orders with Cornerstone, they will order them.

Toilet Refurbishment – Cornerstone hope to get this work done before Easter while they are closed. Any donations to help cover the cost expected to be over £10,000 will be welcomed. They are grateful for money already received (over £2,500).

Community Fridge – Operating as a satellite to The Mix Community Fridge every Thursday evening has been a success with 44-46 bags being given out each week.

Website – Anybody prepared to refresh and maintain the website? If you know anyone please contact Sarah.

The next Prayer Breakfast will be on 13<sup>th</sup> February. Details of subjects for prayer with a thought for the month are sent round for the second Saturday each month.

## **Fund for Human Need**

THANK YOU We are very grateful to all who are supporting us in what is for everyone a very difficult time. Regular donations are especially helpful as we seek to meet a demand for help that is likely to be greater than ever in the coming months.

### **January 2021**

#### **Covid Impact.**

2020 has been a year of serious ups and downs for FHN, a most serious “up” saw monthly applications reach nearly 200 in June, the continuing “down” being our income stream.

Normally in a year we would be out and about promoting the work of the Fund, at small church groups and services and bigger events such as Spring Harvest, Greenbelt and, of course, the Methodist Conference, and this contact with people is what helps with our income. Fortunately, a reduction in income was partly offset in the summer by our wonderful sponsored walkers and, more recently, new advertising in the Church Times.

The level of applications remains high. We have had several new organisations finding us each month, many of them desperate for ways to help clients where other sources have dried up.

Like most charities we have had a serious drop in income. As churches and other groups try to adapt, with meetings in different forms, we know many are wondering about their own financial future but can you help us to help the most desperate?

### **The need**

#### **November 2020.**

Becky\* was recently allocated a house in a new area after suffering domestic violence. However, there are no carpets, bed, furniture or oven/microwave. A community engagement worker has obtained bedding, a wardrobe, kitchen utensils and basic items, but we are mindful that she still can't move in to sleep without a bed. Becky is working with the step-up service who are taking steps to get her a job and gain more independence. She is willing to learn, return to work and access training.

We have issued bus tickets to help her get to the house to clean and decorate it, for which she shows strong motivation. We are also supporting her with information, advice and guidance. (\* name changed)

After an emergency payment from FHN was made we received the following acknowledgement:

December 2020: I can confirm the cheque has arrived and we have managed to find a single bed discounted to £80. Becky asked that I pass on how delighted she was that you were able to help and she will now be ready to move to her home for Christmas. Kind regards, Senior Family Mentor, Groundwork.

Groundwork is a federation of charities mobilising practical community action on poverty and the environment across the UK.

## **The need**

We work with many different organisations; 'Gilead' treat and counsel those battling with addictions in a residential setting where they can also retrain for employment. The cost of residence, treatment and training takes all of a client's benefits etc, so they apply to us for a payment to help fund small personal and hygiene items to boost self-esteem and foster self-reliance. We made such a payment (£80) to help this lady\*:

'I have been battling with addiction to alcohol and prescription medication for over 10 years and have found it very challenging to come to terms with some deep-rooted issues over those years.

The love and faithfulness of God never ceases to amaze me and he directed me here in May to a place where all you receive is love and kindness. I am truly grateful to be with these women, it is a very special place. I am working through the Process with my counsellor which is really digging up those roots and helping me realise some key things, which I believe will lead to the unlocking of the chains that have kept me bound for years. I now have a real passion for gardening and how therapeutic it can be and what a great source of wellbeing it is. I now have a hope for a good future." (\* name withheld / changed)

## **Working with others**

At the Fund for Human Need although we will accept personal applications it is preferable and, in some cases, necessary that an application is made through an organisation. These are charities, community groups, churches, housing associations and increasingly NHS trusts or local authorities. We now have a list of over 120 such organisation that we deal with, and applications from them accounted for over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our 2019/20 applications. These local experts know the clients and their situations well, how difficult things are and how everything is affecting them and their families. They are also in a position to get whatever it is the clients need once the funds are provided.

These organisations are working at the sharp end personally trying to help people in desperate circumstances with nowhere else to turn, often even their own systems cannot provide the type of individually tailored, flexible help we can as our small amounts of money can provide just what the individual / family needs.

## **Thanks to you**

Many thanks. We hope this email finds you well. We are writing to acknowledge receipt of and thank you for your cheque for £80. We understand that you would be getting many applications and this is why we are very grateful to be selected among the beneficiaries you have helped. It is grants/donations such as this that help to keep us running our services, even in difficult times as these. We do appreciate your support. Many thanks and best wishes. Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers

Just wanted to confirm that received the cheque. thank you for the support, it has made a big difference to A's life during this challenging time. Hope all is well! Kind Regards, [www.caritassalford.org.uk](http://www.caritassalford.org.uk)

Firstly, I would like to give thanks and gratitude for your support on behalf of our most vulnerable citizens and society at large in 2020. As we end 2020 and move into 2021, we wish you a restful winter, a happy Christmas with your bubbled loved ones and a happy new year. Best wishes, Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland

Morning, I am writing to acknowledge receipt of the £80 grant payment for our client. Our finance team are processing this cheque currently. Ourselves and the client really appreciate this kind support. Kind regards, Freedom from Torture

### **The need**

From an organisation helping those in the asylum system in the North.

B is a refused asylum seeker from Pakistan. He is homeless and sleeps rough on the streets. He suffers from severe anxiety and has been diagnosed with PTSD. His solicitor has tried to argue his case with the City council for financial support and accommodation on the basis of his mental health. There is very little 3rd sector support available during this pandemic because most charities are still closed. B is hoping to receive a positive decision from the city council, social services about some practical support but he doesn't know when he will hear back. B has requested some help to buy a warm winter coat, a sleeping bag and some healthy food to keep him going until he hears back from the adult social care, B doesn't have a mobile either, he can buy a £10/£15 basic mobile phone to stay in contact with his solicitor and support organisations. Award £80, for food, sleeping bag and phone. Oct 2020. Wantage & Grove Church Partnership

Keeping in touch – we send a newsletter regularly, by post or email, to all supporters and interested parties. We will get in touch to find out your mailing preferences. If at any time these change please let the administrator know. Mrs Gill Mason: fundhumanneed@gmail.com; phone: 01325 244992; post: 6 Newlands Road, Darlington, Co Durham. DL3 9JL.

For more information please see the website: <http://fundforhumanneed.org.uk>

We have heard from her family this week that Laelia, widow of the late Dennis Austen, died peacefully in the afternoon of January 28th. Her family was with her. There will be a crematorium service in a few weeks in Gloucestershire (online screening will be available). We remember the family in our prayers at this time. Please contact Keith, Gordon Skidmore or Ann Barber for contact details.

THE BEST  
OF ALL IS  
GOD  
IS WITH US.



So much of what we do has changed in this last year - shops, schools, banks and not least of all, church. Many people and organisations have had to re-think what they do and how. We often think of faithfulness as continuing with something despite all obstacles and difficulties - and yes, that is often what faithfulness looks like. But when we continue with something that is no longer needed or relevant, our faithfulness can turn in to stubbornness, rigidity and blinkered vision.

Street Pastors has always been about meeting the needs of people in our communities whom we have often found to be unwell, upset, lost, confused, alone, in danger - and in many other ways! But life has changed and the people we used to meet are mostly now at home - possibly in similar or maybe worse situations. Don't worry, although we are not currently patrolling during lockdown, we are not about to pack up and go home ourselves - as Christians we must be ready to re-think what we do in order to continue to be relevant to those we seek to help. We are not sure when we will make it back on to the streets at night, but for now we must look at ways of helping those in need and continuing to recruit volunteers who can help us reach people, maybe in different ways and at different times. I am sure that things will continue to change in 2021, but in all this we know Him who does not change like shifting shadows, whose faithfulness reaches to the skies. Let's continue to seek Him in our daily lives to know how best to serve those in need. His compassions fail not... for great is His faithfulness! (Lamentations Ch 3 v 22-23)

### **Back where we belong ...but not for long**

Since our October 2020 Quarterly News we patrolled 7 times in Wantage during the time when pubs were allowed to open to 11 pm. We were able to help one or two people and be a listening ear for several more, but we have not seen the numbers of people out and about that we are used to, and with such big changes to the night-time economy, there is a great deal less drunkenness on the streets - which is definitely a good thing, although, we're not quite sure what to do with that massive box of flip-flops in the cupboard! :-

As the nation entered another 'Stay-at-home' lockdown on Boxing Day, the Trustees decided that continuing night-time patrols throughout January was of little benefit and so it was decided to suspend night-time patrols for the time being. It's not that there are not needy people out and about, it's just that their needs are very different and they're not generally out and about in the cold and in the dark except to do some shopping for the essentials.

With this in mind, we would be very happy to patrol in day time hours, given sufficient Street Pastors' availability and we are exploring the possibility of online patrols! What? Yes, online patrols! We certainly wouldn't be the first Street Pastor area to go online to meet people and to continue to care, to listen and to help wherever we can.

If daytime or online patrols are something that interests you, please do contact us for more information.

### **A Prayer for our Nation**

God of hope, in these times of change,  
unite our nation and guide our leaders with your wisdom.

Give us courage to overcome our fears,  
and help us to build a future in which all may prosper and share;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

### **Local Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG)**

Wantage & Grove Street Pastors has been a member of the local Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) for many years. The NAG meets every 6 weeks and is made up of local and village residents, farmers, Councillors and representatives from organisations such as King Alfred's Academy, Sweatbox, Betjeman Park, Neighbourhood Watch, Chamber of Commerce, and the Neighbourhood Police Team, etc. The purpose of the NAG is to identify issues in the local community and to take action towards resolving problems wherever possible. The overall intention is to make our communities happier, safer places for all who live and/or work here. If you are experiencing problems in your locality, do contact us (details below) and we can feed items in to the NAG on your behalf. For more information about the NAG, visit:

- the NAG website: [www.uknags.org.uk/view\\_group.php?nag=29](http://www.uknags.org.uk/view_group.php?nag=29) or
- the NAG Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/WantageWestNagNeighbourhoodActionGroup](https://www.facebook.com/WantageWestNagNeighbourhoodActionGroup)

### **Street Pastor Training on line**

Several of our Street Pastors have dipped their toes into the wonderful world of online training, with courses such as Good News, Knowing Your Community and Listening Skills. The pilot scheme seems to be going well.

Sessions are live and interactive using the Zoom app, which allows for people to break away into small discussion groups as well as allowing the trainer to display Powerpoint presentations and videos.

One of our Street Pastors said that despite some technical issues, "...it was good to encounter a geographically wider cohort of street pastors with a wider variety of experiences!".

### **Interview with Carol Pask**

Straight from the police station into the church – that was the route for Carol Pask in the early days of WGSP. Carol would finish her shift at midnight from working behind the bar at the police social club, then join the prayer support team at the base. Sadly due to back pain, Carol has had to retire from Street Pastors but assures us she will be back on prayer support when COVID allows. Carol is also one the few street pastors across the country who has patrolled with the aid of crutches, and latterly a rollator through two hip replacements. Marj Lunn chats to Carol to gain an insight into her inspirational commitment:

**What made you decide to be a Street Pastor?** I started out as a prayer support volunteer because I wasn't sure about doing all the training but after a few years I went out as an observer and I thought I'd give it a go. I've really enjoyed it and I'll miss it.

**What did you enjoy about being a Street Pastor?** People are really pleased to see us. The young people are really chatty and sometimes the older people not so much, but they get to know us. I've enjoyed meeting other prayer support volunteers, some of whom have moved away and I still keep in touch with.

**What will you miss?** I'll miss chatting to people and I'll miss our team – we had such a laugh together. We even had nicknames for each other. If you know, you know!

**Tell us about one of the most memorable moments.** Oh, there are so many... I remember a family coming out of the pub one night and physically fighting in the middle of the street. Then a car came along and ran in to them because they wouldn't move out of the way. The police came and sorted it all out.

**What advice would you give to someone thinking of becoming a street pastor?** You've got to want to do it. It can be tiring but once you're chatting to people, the time passes. Also, the training was quite straight forward in the end and I managed it without too much trouble.

## Smiles and Groans

*Thanks to Rev Tony Buglass on Facebook*

*(When my father got home from Synod in Hebden Bridge, he brought jokes with him that he had picked up at the meeting. I have been pleased to note that the Methodist ministry has lost none of its wit. JGS)*

Where are average things manufactured? The satisfactory.

My granddad has the heart of a lion and a lifetime ban from London Zoo.

I went on a once in a lifetime holiday. Never again.

I was in the car wash and started foaming at the mouth. I thought, I'm not having this, so I cycled out again.

The receptionist said to me, have you got a reservation? I said, yes, I'm worried about the price.

I said, can you give me an early morning call? She said, cockadoodledoo.

My favourite composer is Handel - he teamed up with Hinge and Bracket to form The Doors.

## **Grove and Wantage Schools Prayer Group February 2020**

In ordinary times, we would have arranged to meet to pray for our local schools in the week just gone. While meeting in person is still not an option,

If you would be interested in being part of a Zoom video meeting to pray together, please let us know. If enough people are interested, we will run something in the half-term week (14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> February).

Helen suggested that each of us could arrange to meet one other person for a walk and pray while we walk. Helen and I are going to do that some time soon. (This is still legal and within the guidelines!)

Lastly, not directly related to schools, Grove Parish Church are setting up a community prayer group which will meet via Zoom at least initially. If you would like to be involved in that, please contact Helen.

## **Grove and Wantage Schools Prayer Focus February 2020**

### **- General points**

Schools are still currently closed (except for some children of “key workers”). Please pray for:

- the safety and wellbeing of all our school staff
- students and families, especially those in needy or abusive situations
- the long-term gaps which will continue to appear
- exam students
- school governors.

Please also pray for a clear way forward for our schools.

### **- Wantage and Grove School Chaplain**

Please continue to pray for the work going on to establish a school chaplain for Wantage and Grove. Pat Hudson writes:

My really, really urgent prayer request is for funding to establish a deanery schools chaplaincy. On behalf of the deanery sub-committee working on it, I've submitted three funding requests: one to the diocese, one to the Cowley Fathers and one to a Wantage KA charity; but even if all three are successful to the full amount requested, we are still £16K short.

The project will be joint deanery, CSMV, VAT and a few volunteers like me. It'll start in Wantage, Grove, Hanney and Challow church primaries, extend to all the primaries and secondaries so hopefully a real impact on the new secondary in Grove.

It's a three-year project in the first instance and should pull together all the voluntary people who work in schools and link the schools/their parish church and community.

Please pray for

- the funding for it to start this September while the school support is there
- the right applicants and the right appointment.

#### **- St Blaise, Milton**

Jane Robinson asks us to pray for families in the area who are struggling with loss of family members, loss of jobs and a sense of losing hope at the moment. Families are finding it hard.

#### **- Millbrook Primary School in Grove**

Helen Harwood has passed on the following prayer requests from the school office.

Please pray for:

- children unable to attend school during lockdown
- parents managing their home schooling (!!)
- parents and children who are really struggling with the above
- teachers managing face to face lessons and home learning
- all support staff who are in school
- other staff who are unable to be in school at the moment
- the school leaders who are keeping it all together
- the speedy recovery of two members of staff suffering with Covid-19
- a family with children in Years 2 and 5 – parents are recovering from Covid-19 and they have had 2 recent bereavements.

#### **- King Alfred's Academy in Wantage**

Jane Beckley has passed on some points for thanks and prayer.

Thanks

- We had very few cases before the latest lockdown.
- The few cases we did have were identified quickly and our own track and trace system meant those who needed to be were identified and asked to self-isolate quickly and the infection didn't spread.
- Systems for distancing and cleaning were all in place and well maintained.
- Live online lessons seem to be working well - teachers are rapidly getting to grips with the technology and the options it offers, and most students seem able to access the lessons and the accompanying work.
- Key worker and vulnerable students are working in school in year group bubbles.
- Laptops, tablets and data "vouchers" have been supplied to lots of families either from school stock or, mostly, through "The Mix" and other generous local charities plus companies providing cards for data for mobile phones if that's been the issue.
- Testing protocols are in place ready for when we return and have been tried out on those working in school.

## Prayer Requests

- The uncertainties and changing guidelines are difficult for all.
- The live online teaching isn't easy - it's draining for teachers who have to adjust their resources and teaching styles and are getting to grips with how best to support students remotely; students (and families) are juggling resources at home and struggling to concentrate at times. Some students seem to be thriving in their own space, but others find it hard or have technical issues that disrupt the flow.
- The workload for students (and teachers) is tough. The Government legally require 5 hours of lessons per day. KAs have interpreted this to provide 4 live lessons each morning and independent tasks to follow on in the afternoon but it's very hard to judge how long tasks are taking each student and how they're coping with it all.
- Some still have technical issues (all have them at times!)
- Although some students are working in school there are still students who need support who are struggling at home (and falling behind)
- Pastoral care - better provision this time but some will still slip through the net and be struggling.
- Exam groups - great stress all round while we wait for details about how they will be assessed. (And this filters down to Y10 too, for example)
- Transition from primaries - we have a plan in place for "remote" transition and it should be smoother than last year as we've already got resources and procedures in place and tested them last year, but it's still an anxious time for families and not ideal to be supporting them from a distance.

### - Grove CE School

Andrea Morgan asks us to pray for:

- safety, health, rest, people coming to Christ,
- guidance and wisdom for those in difficult situations at home
- home learning: patience, understanding, guidance and kindness
- enough food and job stability
- equipment to help with learning
- calm attitudes, maintaining the mental, emotional and physical well-being of each child and their parents/carers and teachers.

### - Future meetings

We still don't yet know when meeting together in person will be possible again. In normal times, we would next plan to meet late in April. For now, we will keep in touch by email, and hope to be able to meet to pray again before too long.

*John Wilson*

*Helen Harwood*

## 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

Our next **Church Council Meeting** is on **Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> February** at 7:30 pm on Zoom. All interested in the life and work of our church are invited to join the meeting. Please let Keith or Veronica know if you are interested and haven't received an email giving the link to join in.

It is so good to see the daylight hours lengthening and a bonus to spot so many flowers in bloom when out on a 'health walk'. Already there are early daffodils as well as snowdrops, crocus, cyclamen, aconites, hellebores and many more.

As we continue in lockdown and are still missing 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 and listen to what other people have to say – and sometimes include a 'picture gallery'. Anyone who has photos of times past in the life of our church 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.

**Advance invitation:** Handmade cards for sale, proceeds for Freyja's Fund. Judith is having a sale of handmade cards, suitable for Easter, birthdays and anniversaries, on **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March** from 2:00 to 4:00 pm at 121 Mayfield Avenue, Grove. It will be held in her garden or in the conservatory if wet. If you would like to contact Judith about it or to arrange a different time please phone her on 07887 995530.

# Wantage

## **Church Council**

Church Council met on Zoom on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February.

The meeting expressed its sympathy and sorrow at the recent death of Keith Underhill's father and thanks for the generosity of the legacy received from Pam Rose.

It was reminded that District Synod would be voting this spring on proposals from Conference consequent to the report "God in love unites us".

It agreed unanimously to provisional legislation regarding changes to the Model Trust to ease the restrictions on the use of Methodist premises by other Churches.

It received the annual reports regarding Data Protection (GDPR compliance), Annual Accounts, the Property Return and Safeguarding.

It agreed to donations from the General Fund and Benevolent Fund.

The need to open a separate bank account was noted and a small group were authorised to progress the matter.

Thanks were recorded to those members and friends who have continued to support the church, both financially and in other ways during the closure of the church buildings.

The issues with the West Boundary wall were noted. Thanks were expressed to Rob Charles for the work involved in progressing this.

The meeting agreed to progress the offer of a new home for the old pulpit lantern from West Challow Church and approved the potential use of our church premises as a Polling Station at the May local elections and on two Saturdays in June by the Wantage Music Festival (conditional on it being permitted).

There will be a Zoom service on Ash Wednesday and Keith is preparing material for study /discussion groups in Lent. Arrangements are being finalised for a zoom meeting with Michael Wadsworth to promote the "Methodist Way of Life".

The meeting confirmed the policy that the routine use of the premises is conditional on the Wantage area being below "CV19 Tier 2 (January 2021 definition)".

**It was emphasised that the Church is live and working.** Only our buildings are closed.

## **News from Ghana**

Sharon sends her love to everyone. She says she misses us all, and was so sorry she could not go round hugging everyone before going back to her family in Ghana. She has been very busy in all sorts of ways since getting back into the family home, but finds she is hampered by the heat and humidity. The temperature is about 30 degrees C with about 75% humidity. She says it is taking a long time to get used to that! She says she will be in touch again before too long to say more about her life back in Ghana.



Whilst we recognise and accept that the social restrictions currently in place are essential for our protection, it's natural for us to be missing the face-to-face interaction with each other. Perhaps we had taken it for granted until lockdown took it away from us? How fortunate it is that there are so many means by which we can still communicate – our Newsletter being one of them. So, here's some pastoral good news of members of our church family. Diane Barton is making an amazing recovery from her fall last year. She is now driving locally again, and gradually increasing the distance she's able to walk, and the everyday tasks she can once again manage. Diane is very grateful for the love and support from church friends.

One of our older members, June Coppock, who will be well known to all of the longstanding people in our church family, also wants to convey how well supported and loved she feels by everyone at church. June has settled very happily into Framland Care Home, where she feels so content and well looked after by the kind and caring staff.

Whilst out for a walk, Pam Martin had a fall early in the new year. Who but Pam could plan her walk with such precision that the point at which she fell was directly outside her son Tim's house? Having broken her right arm, she had a short stay in the JR, followed by a longer one in Witney Community Hospital. As her daughter lives with her, Pam's discharge to home was facilitated, and Gill now combines caring assistance to her Mum, household duties and the teaching demands of Head of Department at the Cherwell School in Oxford. Pam too appreciates the concern shown for her by her many WMC friends.

### **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 March the following people on **Diane Barton's Pastoral List** will be included in the prayer time at Eileen Rennie's house-group: June Coppock, Glenis Deval, Rodney Deval, Hilary Rewcastle, Mary Trotter, Rosemary Rae, and Ruth Manning, and on **Alison Brown's list**: June Grunwald, Alan Grunwald, Jane Robinson, Judith and Michael Skinner and Geoffrey Stokell.

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

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## Prayer list

*Eileen Rennie*

Loving God, we thank you for your lovely world which surrounds us to enjoy. As the new life of the Springtime world emerges we praise you for the joy and beauty of nature. We pray that we will be good stewards of your world, respecting and nurturing all that you have placed in our care. As we look forward to Lent and study time beginning later this month we pray that we will open our hearts and minds to find new insights from your word. Having discovered these, we pray that we will use them to help us grow in our faith. Help us also to learn to share more of our faith with those we have contact with. We offer our prayer in Jesus name. Amen

Please pray for:

Jean M, Bethan Grant, Jane, Alan Bunn and family, 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, 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 26<sup>th</sup> February in order for her to meet the newsletter deadline.

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

## GOOD NEWS

Richard George's Grandson Matthew's wife Vicky gave birth to a baby girl, Melody, (7lb 5oz) in Coventry on 18th January . All are well.

## Tuesday Afternoon House Group

*Eileen Rennie*

Here we are with Spring beginning to wake into our lives but sadly we are still not able to meet as a group.

We have, though, much to be thankful for beginning with the new signs of life in our gardens and in what we see as we go on our walks for exercise. We can also give thanks for the successful roll out of the vaccine programme and many of us have our own thanks to add to that as either we ourselves or someone within our family has already received theirs. There is also the good news that a further two vaccines are awaiting approval and should then be available. We must also give thanks for all the research which is continuing and for so much that has been achieved in such a short period of time thanks to the skill and dedication of our scientists.

We continue to pray for the current situation and that we will all act responsibly and so look forward to a brighter future ahead. All our NHS Staff and Support Services

still need our prayers as they still face overwhelming workloads as they fight to support all in need of additional care.

I will continue to email the 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. Please let us know if there is someone or some situation you would like us to prayer for.

It is good to have the availability of Zoom Sunday Services, Reflective Worship Resources, You tube resources and our Church Website as well as Zoom Tea @ Three on Tuesdays.

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.

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



### **Knit & Chat**

*Carolyn Roche, 01235 764310*

As more and more people are receiving their vaccinations we can perhaps look forward to a time, later in the year, when we can all meet together. We shall need really special biscuits to go with our tea and coffee when it finally happens. Until then keep knitting, crocheting and sewing. Don't forget to send photos of things you have made to June and she will then put them on the church website. Thank you Helen, June and Gordon for keeping us connected.

Do call me if you have any queries or just fancy a chat.

### **Community Drop In Café**

*Eileen Rennie*

Another month has passed and there is no definite news available as to when we can all meet together again. It seems like the same old news again but indeed there is much to be joyful about. The vaccine programme is progressing wonderfully and I know many among us have already received a first vaccine. In the past couple of weeks we have heard of another two vaccines which are awaiting approval and should be available in the not too distant future. In the meantime we must remain patient and positive. We have much to be thankful for and we give our thanks to our brilliant scientists and their continuing work. 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. Please 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 willing volunteers waiting in the wings to be able to resume service again. 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.

For further information contact either Eileen Rennie or June Grunwald.

## **Users**

We remain closed to our community users. We shall not reopen before Easter and more probably September for our community users.

## **Wantage Annual Church Meeting - Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup>** at the email address [wmcannualreport@gmail.com](mailto: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**

### **FEBRUARY**

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> 7:30 pm Grove Church Council on Zoom**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday  
7:30 pm Zoom Service**

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> DEADLINE for MARCH NEWSLETTER**

### **MARCH**

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> DEADLINE for WANTAGE ANNUAL CHURCH REPORT**

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> DEADLINE for APRIL NEWSLETTER**

### **APRIL**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> 7:30 pm Wantage Annual Church Meeting on Zoom**