

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

CHILDREY, GROVE & WANTAGE SECTOR

 The Methodist Church

CGW NEWS



JUNE 2022

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Contributions for the **next Newsletter** (July/August) should be sent to the editor by
email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 26th June 2022**
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Editors : Gill & Gordon Skidmore

Sunday Services and Church Activities

Wantage Morning Worship will be shared each week on Zoom at 10:30
(for access to this please contact Gordon Skidmore)

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

CGW News Publication deadline dates - 2022

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| July/August | Sunday 26 th June |
| September | Sunday 21 st August |
| October | Sunday 18 th September |
| November | Sunday 23 rd October |
| December/January | Sunday 20 th November |

From the Manse.....

Celebratory events, both locally as well as nationally will form the backdrop to the special Bank Holiday weekend this month to honour the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

This jubilee celebrates an unprecedented and unparalleled achievement and one that is unlikely to be repeated, 70 years as a reigning monarch!

Browsing in an independent book store the other day, my attention was caught by a special display linking in to the Jubilee celebrations; "The Big Jubilee read".

As its name suggests it is a list of 70 books to mark the Queen's long reign. Split into 7 decades, it incorporates novels, short story and poetry collections from around the Commonwealth published since 1952.

Having looked at this list, I can reveal that I have read just five of them, which says more about my limited scope of reading material than the books themselves

If you'd like to see the list for yourself you can find it at <https://readinggroups.org/big-jubilee-read>

The books are varied and represent a mix of cultures and experiences. They are stories of life, love and identity. The pages of the chosen 70 give us a snapshot of what was important at the times they were written as well as those timeless themes that affect us all. Every single experience and emotion that can be known and felt are covered within this collection.

As we reflect on the past 70 years, we are aware that those themes that run through these works of literature, run also through our lives, our shared history and of course those of the Queen, both public and private.

There are 66 books in the protestant Bible, and within those pages, we also find those experiences and emotions which resonate profoundly within us, touching our stories and our own lives.

The Queen is the Head of the Church of England - but as we well know, it is for her far more than just a title, for she is very devout and a person of great faith. At the heart of her story told over 70 years in the public arena, this faith finds its out-workings and expression in both duty and service.

For that we give thanks as we celebrate her Platinum jubilee.
With love and God Bless

Keith



Queen's Jubilee Service of Thanksgiving

Wednesday 1 June at 7 pm in the Parish Church

This will be a Deanery celebration and the curtain-raiser for Jubilee events in our community.

It will include the **Jubilee anthem, In Our Service**, to be sung by the Parish Church Choir and **Caritas**, the children's and youth choir which rehearses on our Wantage premises every week. This anthem has been specially commissioned from Thomas Hewitt Jones by the Royal School of Church Music in honour of their Royal Patron, Her Majesty the Queen. The 4-minute anthem picks up themes of service and dedication and is deliberately written to be something which is really enjoyable to sing for cathedral and church choirs, choral societies, chamber choirs, community choirs and schools. Caritas will also be singing their signature music, Ubi Caritas, in the service.

Bible Month : June

What is Bible Month?

Bible Month is an annual campaign that celebrates scripture by inviting the whole Methodist Connexion to feast on one particular book of the Bible together.*

Through a menu of carefully curated resources, training and learning opportunities, churches and circuits are encouraged to taste and see the goodness of an individual text; enjoying some of its unique flavours, considering its origins, appreciating its place alongside the rest of scripture, and savouring the unique contribution it might make to our faithful living and learning today.

Bible Month 2022

In 2022, we're going to feast upon the Book of Isaiah

Isaiah is a highly significant book that sits right at the centre of the Bible – not only in terms of where it appears, but in terms of its theological significance. It encapsulates the core strands of the Old Testament, summarising the story and struggles of Israel, and proclaiming God's plans and promises for its people. It is also referenced again and again by the New Testament writers who are eager to demonstrate that Jesus and the early Church can be seen as the fulfilment of those plans and promises. In short, it is one of the best texts for helping us to trace a story-arc through the whole Bible; hear God's heart for God's people, appreciate what the writers of the New Testament are saying, and reflect on who Jesus is and who we are called to be as the Church today.

Because Isaiah is rather long, it might seem like a daunting book to explore. But, rest assured, this year's menu of resources, training and learning opportunities is set to make it really accessible for everyone in your context.

Each week we're encouraging reflection on a different fundamental theme of the book.

Week 1: Tough Love

Week 2: A Light to the World

Week 3: The Faithful Servant

Week 4: A New World

Wantage & Grove Street Pastors



*Michael Elliott
SP & Trustee*

Last month I had the privilege and joy of attending a celebration marking the 10th anniversary of Newbury Street Pastors. It was an opportunity to reflect back on their last ten years and also to look to the future. New street pastors were commissioned, existing street pastors shared their experiences (one even in a new poem) and local officials and police community officers gave their thanks and encouragement. The guest speaker was Revd Les Isaac OBE, the founder and recently retired leader of Street Pastors. He talked about the founding of Street Pastors, some of its history and his vision for the impact Street Pastors can have and is having on local communities.

Apart from the obvious joy of being part of such a celebration I was also greatly encouraged simply by being reminded that Wantage and Grove Street Pastors is part of a much larger movement of Christians with initiatives across the country and around the world. We may venture out in teams of three or four supported by our prayer support volunteers, but we are also part of the national, and increasingly international, grouping of so many Street Pastor initiatives. We join in prayer and in shared experiences in our common purpose to bring caring, listening and helping to anyone in need on our streets whenever we patrol. And in doing so show something of the love of God to the people we live among and, through prayer and action, work together for the Shalom (the peace, welfare and tranquillity) of all our communities.

How we helped in the streets

Cold or wet weather during January, February and March made for some fairly quiet patrols. We patrolled four times in January, five times in February and four times in March.

One night we met about 20 young people in two groups standing in a Wantage park area with one drunk man standing on a monument shouting. We gave out lollies to the two groups while we assessed the situation to see what might happen. We chatted for a while and picked up some bottles, cans and broken glass from the area. We stayed there until the two groups headed off in different directions without any problems.

We spent some time chatting to a couple but as they walked away, the lady tripped on the uneven pavement and twisted her ankle. Our team stayed with them until the lady was able to get up and walk on with the help of her partner.

The Police alerted us to groups of young people gathering around Wantage Parish Church, especially while there was scaffolding present at the back of the church. Street Pastor teams have been circling the church on their route around town but haven't found any young people there yet.

We have patrolled in Grove and spent time with people in different locations including the skate park and kebab van, Saville Way shops, Millbrook Square, etc. We didn't encounter any problems in Grove.

Trustee Goals for 2022/23

Each year our Management Committee sets goals to help focus our efforts and to ensure that we continue to serve our community well. We centre our goals around the key areas of delivering patrols, finances and relationships.

► Delivering Patrols:

- Increase the number of volunteers, Street Pastors and Prayer Support Volunteers
- Hold Street Pastor Sundays in each of the partner churches
- Set up an additional Saturday team
- Investigate and possibly initiate on-line street pastor presence
- Pursue daytime patrols

► Finance:

- Secure funding to cover our costs

► Relationships:

- Complete the transition of WGSP into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Recruit new Trustee, particularly a Fundraising Lead

Congratulations

Congratulations go to Newbury Street Pastors, who celebrated 10 years of patrols in March, and to Abingdon Street Pastors who celebrated 10 years of patrols at the beginning of April. Well done to everyone who has helped to achieve so much.

Keep up the good work!

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Galatians Ch 6 v 9

Quiz & Curry Night

Join us for our Quiz & Curry Night on Saturday 19 November at Wantage Methodist Church.

Put the date in your diary and get working on your team of 6 people.

Raising funds for Wantage & Grove Street Pastors!

More details coming soon!

From the Methodist Church News Website

The political and economic crisis in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is experiencing the worst economic crisis since becoming independent in 1948. The government has insufficient foreign currency to import essentials such as food, petrol, cooking gas and medicines, so there are severe shortages. Waiting in queues has become normal, and the wait to purchase petrol can now be longer than 24 hours. However, rising inflation means that basic items have become too expensive for many people to afford. In the light of the anger and frustration which have led to public protests, the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka has called for action on the part of those in power, and non-violent approaches from both the protesters and the authorities.

The Methodist Church in Britain received a letter from Revd W.P. Ebenezer Joseph, President of Conference, Methodist Church, Sri Lanka in which he commented, "The Methodist Church Sri Lanka is grieved and alarmed at the current political developments that are unfolding before us, at a time when as a nation we are facing an acute economic crisis, causing immense suffering and hardship, leading to frustration and hopelessness among all our people."

The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference have offered this statement of support and solidarity in response:

Over the past weeks we have seen the reports of the situation in Sri Lanka as the country has experienced economic collapse on top of the social disruption brought about by the Covid crisis. We have noted with concern the sufferings of the Sri Lankan people as soaring inflation has led to unaffordable prices of basic goods and shortages of foods, medicines and fuel.

In response to the Appeal from the Methodist Church, Sri Lanka Pertaining to the Current Situation, and in the face of the growing anger and political unrest in Sri Lanka, we join in calling for calm attempts to reach peaceful solutions, and in affirming the need for all individuals to treat others with care and love.

The Methodist Church in Britain values the partnership of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka. We stand in solidarity with them at this time of economic and political crisis, and support them in their appeals for solutions according to democratic principles. We join them in their call for non-violent action and dignified treatment of other people, both on the part of protesters, and on the part of the authorities when dealing with peaceful protests.

We continue to hold the leadership and members of the Methodist Church Sri Lanka in our prayers,

The President and Vice-President of the Conference

Revd Sonia Hicks and Barbara Easton

Nationality and Borders Act 2022

A statement on behalf of the Methodist Church in Britain, Baptists Together and the United Reformed Church

We lament the passing of the Nationality and Borders Bill into law. Compelled by the Biblical call to welcome the stranger, our denominations were outspoken in our criticism of the Bill, arguing that it would unjustly remove the rights and threaten the dignity of people who are in need of our nation's care and protection.

Over the last year, members of our churches have come together with a wide range of people to raise concerns about the government's proposals, and to stand alongside refugees. Many have also signed up to host refugees from Ukraine, and continue to be involved in welcoming people seeking sanctuary in their own communities. This legislation will not diminish that spirit of compassion, hospitality and solidarity. We know that through such encounters we will learn more about ourselves, each other, and God.

Alongside the practical work of welcome, our Churches will not stop advocating for love to be shown to our neighbours through the policies and practices of our asylum system. We will continue to push the government to open up more safe and legal routes for people who are in need of the sanctuary we can offer here in the UK. Our denominations have also joined hundreds of other organisations and charities in pledging to work towards the repeal of the UK's 'anti-refugee' laws. We remain committed to working with others towards a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion.

JPIT The Campaign

Refugees abandon their homes to escape war and persecution. They have to seek safety elsewhere. The right to do so, set out in the 1951 Refugee Convention, has protected millions worldwide for decades.

Today, in the UK, the anti-refugee laws are putting that basic right under threat. Unless we fight back, Britain's days as a safe haven could be over.

In April 2022 the Nationality and Borders Bill passed in Parliament, turning the anti-refugee Bill into the anti-refugee laws. The Government chose to punish refugees rather than protect them. It's a tragedy that must be put right.

When the anti-refugee laws are repealed it won't be a second to soon, but it will be too late for many of the lives ruined by this legislation.

Our pledge below lays out what this campaign and its supporters are committed to: a compassionate approach that welcomes and supports refugees.

The Pledge

We believe that people seeking protection from war and persecution should be welcomed and that everyone's claim for asylum should be treated equally and fairly.

We believe that the UK should offer sanctuary to those who need it. That's why we're taking a stand against the anti-refugee laws. We pledge to:

- **Defend the right to seek safety from war and persecution in the UK**
- **Speak out against attempts to criminalise and punish those who make their own way to safety**
- **Challenge the anti-refugee laws which will risk the lives and well-being of people**
- **Work towards a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion.**

The anti-refugee laws

The anti-refugee laws permit the offshore processing of people seeking asylum and the creation of warehouse-style reception centres on UK soil, ripping up internationally recognised rights for people fleeing war and persecution, and criminalising thousands of refugees.

They will be costly to implement and ineffective – creating ever-longer backlogs and delays in the asylum process that will leave people facing homelessness and destitution, and living in limbo for longer.

Rather than breaking the business model of people smugglers, the new laws will leave people vulnerable to exploitation and reliant upon criminal gangs in order to reach safety.

Missing from the legislation is any attempt by the Government to introduce new routes for people fleeing war and persecution to claim asylum in the UK, such as a long-term and ambitious commitment to refugee resettlement or expanded family reunion schemes. It's the lack of such safe routes that drives people to risk their lives to cross the dangerous Channel in flimsy boats.

As the Nationality and Borders Bill returned to the House of Lords, several senior Church leaders wrote to Peers to encourage them to stand up for changes to the Bill.

“We are writing as a group of Christian leaders, from denominations and traditions across the UK, ahead of the debate on the Nationality and Borders Bill in the House of Lords this week. We want to take this last opportunity to make it clear where we stand on the Bill, and to urge you to support the continued inclusion of amendments previously made to the Bill in the House of Lords. Peers have consistently supported changes to the Bill to bring it in line with international convention, and demonstrate compassion and care for our common humanity. Being resolute about these safeguards is rightly the role of a revising chamber.

Faith groups have been outspoken on our concerns about the Bill. In February, over 1000 faith leaders from communities across the UK joined us to express how horrified and appalled we were about its potential repercussions. We have made it clear how we feel the Bill fails to uphold the principles and values of the UK by creating hostility and fostering discrimination against some of the most vulnerable people in the world.

We hope that our vocal concern might encourage you to continue to seek changes even at this very late stage.

Only in the last few weeks we have witnessed the seemingly limitless compassion and commitment shown by UK citizens as they have welcomed Ukrainian refugees into their lives and homes. Yet the Nationality and Borders Bill directly contradicts this generosity of spirit. We find it challenging to understand how the policies within the Bill will work in practice, except that they will cause hardship, criminalise innocent people and fracture families. The government's recently announced plan to export some asylum seekers to Rwanda only compounds our sense of concern, representing an abandonment of the UK's responsibilities and a denial of the rights and dignity of refugees.

In particular, we support amendments to the Bill made to expand and protect family reunion rights, to enable asylum seekers to work after waiting six months for their application outcome, to establish a target for resettlement and to amend the two-tier system proposed for asylum seekers. Each of these amendments recognises that the trauma and need of a person seeking asylum should be prioritised, and that we should do all we can to offer opportunities for people and families to restore their lives in a place of safety. In supporting these amendments, we urge you not to vote against the lives of vulnerable children, men, women and families who are in desperate need of our support.

In this Easter season, as Christians we celebrate new life and new hope. Our faith tells us that our God-given hope in new life should influence the way we treat our neighbour, wherever they come from. As the Nationality and Borders Bill comes before you once again this week, we ask you to consider how your vote demonstrates how you care for those most vulnerable in our world.

Recently, Church leaders have been criticised for joining the debate about asylum and immigration plans. But in the face of unfair and cruel proposals, to fail to speak out would be a denial of our gospel calling. The Biblical mandate is that righteous nations 'welcome the stranger'. So, regardless of the outcome of this week's votes, we will not stop advocating for love to be shown to our neighbour through the policies and practices in our asylum system. Churches across the UK will continue to come alongside those who remain in desperate need of our friendship and welcome.

We wish to encourage you in your role, and hold you in our prayers during this time."

Diary of a Home for Ukrainians – (1) Escape, search & bureaucracy

At the February Wantage Church Council, I voiced deep concern about the lack of government action to support Ukrainian refugees. Much support was expressed and several of us wrote to our MPs. We also wrote a letter which was circulated to other churches and local organisations, suggesting there would be a need for several local support groups: between hosts themselves, between the refugees, and for both of those groups offering support from the churches and broader local community.

Shortly afterwards, the government announced its “Homes for Ukraine” scheme and on 14 March we duly signed up along with 150 thousand others. However, there seemed to be no process in place(*) for the urgent matching of hosts and refugees that was needed. We searched the web and social media and joined new newly formed organisations such as RESET UK and OPORA, as well as several impromptu Facebook groups. We also attended online seminars hosted by the Sanctuary organisation. We saw many impassioned pleas from refugees requesting hosting but most of these had already had more than 20 replies so we ignored them. We were able to search a database of refugees on the OPORA website and made several approaches. We only had one reply which saddens us to this day. It was from a retired academic in Kherson, occupied by Russian forces from Crimea. After a couple of WhatsApp exchanges, this was her final response:

“Take my thankfulness please. I cannot contact now...just trying to escape!

Nobody knows what will happen tomorrow”

On 10 April, we spotted a new entry on the Sponsor Ukrainian Refugee UK Facebook page, from two people who, with the help of a local priest, had escaped underground shelters in surrounded and bombed Mariupol on the 23rd of March (they had avoided attempts to evacuate them via Donetsk to Russia, instead making their way to the coast at Berdyansk).

Next morning, we Skyped them in Poland, where a former colleague was sheltering them. Three hours after that, we set about completing the visa application using Zoom, sharing a screen showing the online form and booking visits for them 2 days later to the nearby visa application centre (VAC) as they only had Ukrainian national passports, not the international biometric version (this all took 5 hours!). Just the next morning we had a surprise call from Oxfordshire County Council asking to arrange a visit to inspect our house, which took place two days later.

A little over 2 weeks after their visit to the VAC, our guests received notification that their “decision letters” awaited them in Warsaw (200 miles away). Less than a week later, they went to Warsaw, picked up their entry permits and found a charity-run hostel from where they could try to arrange a bus to the UK. Having done DBS checks, we actually headed off for a pre-planned weekend-break but this had to be aborted on Saturday when we heard they were flying to Luton, arriving early the next morning.

There was a lot of late-night cleaning & tidying before heading off early to Luton. Our guests didn't even have the luxury a few hours sleep, having spent the night in the airport. We had a fairly nervous wait, along with quite a few other hosts, at the exit from Immigration, before our guests finally arrived. They each carried just a small rucksack and a laptop case, having left most belongings with which they managed to

escape in Berdyansk and any new acquisitions in Poland, as the airline extra baggage costs were so high. We stopped at M40 services for a light breakfast and debrief then pressed on. Just 10 minutes after arriving, one of our guests was playing such amazing music on our old piano that it brought tears to our eyes. The rest of the day was spent sleeping, before the real work began the next day – but that's another story.

(*) This is still the case. The 'government-preferred' matching service run by RESET UK is only just now promising to start working soon.

Prayer for Ukraine

Loving God, your Son Jesus Christ, wept over Jerusalem.

Today, we weep over Ukraine.

We weep for those uprooted from their homes and lives.

We weep for those cowering in basements.

We weep for those who have witnessed death and destruction on their streets.

We weep for those separated from parents, from children, from spouses and siblings.

We are amazed at the resilience of people seeking to comfort those in need and so we pray for Governments opening up borders so that Ukrainians can have safe passage.

We pray for churches and individuals providing food, clothing and shelter.

We pray for medical workers ensuring that shattered bodies are put back together again.

We pray for ordinary Russians demonstrating and voicing their disapproval of the military actions in Ukraine.

May the Holy Spirit give us the willpower to turn our tears into action also.

May we, through our words, prayers and example pursue the things that make for a just peace in the world today and especially in Ukraine.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.

Amen

Childrey

For the foreseeable future Childrey will normally be open for Worship on the 2nd and 4th Sundays in the month.

12th June 11:00 am Led by Ian Sturt

26th June 11:00 am Service of Holy Communion led by Rev Ian Griffiths

There was a good turnout at St Mary's on Sunday 15th May for Andrea Colbrook's last service before moving on to be the Rector of Ducklington & Hardwick. Childrey Methodist's were also present and presented Andrea with a small gift as a mark of our appreciation for all her service in the village and surrounding areas and the co-operation she fostered between St Mary's and the Chapel. We wish her well in her new post.

Her Installation will be at St. Bartholomew's Church, Ducklington on 4th July at 7:30 pm.

Prayers

We remember in our prayers:

Vicky, Robin and Becky Legge and the Legge family grandchildren.

The Stanley family.

Keith, Joy Gee, Jean and all members and supporters of Childrey Methodist Chapel.

The congregation at St Mary's, Childrey and the people of the village.

All those unknown to us who are in need of our help and prayers.

WANTAGE MUSIC FESTIVAL request.

Wantage Music Festival (a friendly competitive festival) will be taking place in our Wantage church premises on Saturday 18th June (morning, afternoon and evening), Saturday 25th June (morning and afternoon) and Sunday 26th June (afternoon and early evening). Each year we need volunteers to steward the event and this year I am wondering if anyone from WMC would like to help in that capacity - it is a fun thing to do!

If you would like to know more about the event and what is involved in volunteering please do contact me - HelenC on 01235 764810 or 07881 504623 or helen45carter@gmail.com. Thank you very much.

Grove

Sunday worship in church is open for all at 10:45 am and you are invited to come and worship with us. The seating is well spaced, the windows are open, and face masks are optional.

As we will all be celebrating, in various ways, with the Queen on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee during the first weekend of June, we will not be holding our usual monthly coffee morning. Our next coffee morning in church will be on 2nd July.

Bible month

June is bible month and this year we will be studying the book of Isaiah.

Carol and Ian Sturt will be running a study group during June to get to grips with some of the themes and issues Isaiah raises. There will be four weekly sessions at 2:30 pm on Wednesdays 8th / 15th / 22nd / 29th June at 2 Collinsmith Drive, Grove.

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Tuesday Fellowship

Kath Gourlay

There will be NO meeting on the 7th June.

We will be meeting on Tuesday, 5th July at 2:15 pm in the church meeting room. Our speaker will be Alan Stead (brother of John). He will be talking about his visit to Israel and Palestine. We are very much looking forward to meeting him on this day.

Film Club is on Friday, 17th June, at 7:30 pm in the Meeting Room.

We will be showing the film **Grey Owl**.

Grey Owl is a 1990's biopic directed by Richard Attenborough and starring Pierce Brosnan in the role of real life British schoolboy turned Indian trapper "Grey Owl", Archibald Belaney (1888-1938). Eventually he renounced trapping and hunting and became an environmentalist.

Cast: Pierce Brosnan, Annie Galipeau, Vlasta Vrane, Stewart Bick.

All are welcome. The roof ventilation will be open. Masks are optional. Admission is free; a small donation helps to cover the cost of licences and DVDs.

Craft Group meets at the Cornerstone Coffee Shop on Monday afternoons from 2 pm to 4 pm. All are welcome. Bring your own craft to do and enjoy a chat and exchange of ideas with other crafters while you work. We each give a donation of £1 to Cornerstone and buy a drink of our choice.

Thank you to all who supported the Coffee morning for Christian Aid. A total of £190 was donated. Thank you also to all who made donations at the Church lunch. After expenses the sum of £108 was realised and this will be added to the Christian Aid total. Thank you. We also have in hand a tax refund of £30.64 owing to them, so the total amount to be transferred to C.A. is £328.64. Thank you everyone.

Wantage & Grove Food Bank:

A reminder to everyone that we have a food bank collection point in the foyer. Items in tins, jars and packets are best, with as long a shelf life as possible please.

God bless you, and many thanks for so much already. Carol & Ian xx

Ukraine Donations:

Thank you so much for all that has been given so far in the box in the foyer.

Lynda Cully takes all donated items to a collection point in Grove, from where they are forwarded to Poland to help with the refugee effort.

Suggestions of things that we have been asked for are: knitted blankets; knitted/crocheted or soft toys (especially small ones); children's clothes suitable for colder weather and marked with the size/age; nappies; dummies; baby food; baby milk (especially ready made up); small toys; colouring books and crayons, etc; sanitary items; bandages; Paracetamol and children's medicine. Other items welcomed are packet soups and cereals (they weigh less than tins), nail brushes (for the medics) and Euros. If anyone has any Euro coins or notes to donate they are either used to purchase fuel for the vehicles or to purchase items in situ.

Lynda has lots of photos and messages that Cynthia Bulpitt has shared with her and which she can show people. All your help is very much appreciated.

JOGLE Message received from Alex King on 12/05/2022

Hello friends and family,

I recently told you of my plan to walk from John o Groats to Lands End.

I started the walk from John o Groats on May 3rd and completed the 144 miles of the John o Groats Trail, in Inverness on the 10th.

Sadly, I decided that I could not complete the rest of the walk and I returned home yesterday. I am afraid it is a case of reality overcoming ambition.

I have been amazed by all of your interest and the generous amount of money given to the Doddie Foundation.

Please accept my thanks and apologies for not completing the walk.

We continue to hold in our prayers all those who are in poor health or have other difficulties and problems compounded by the very different times we have been living through. We trust that, with care, the way forward continues to open up safely for everyone.

Wantage

Sunday Morning Worship

In June Morning Worship is in the chapel except on June 26th when we shall worship in the Hall. Services commence at 10:30 am. All services are available on Zoom. Except on the June 19th, tea and coffee will be available in the Hall after service.

Covid

We continue to try to ensure a Covid safe environment. We can no longer insist on the wearing of masks in the building but we ask that people have respect for one another and wear a mask particularly if they have a cough or any signs of a cold. Hand sanitation will continue to be provided and we will do our best to keep the space well ventilated. We are monitoring as best we can the prevalence of Covid infection in the area and reserve the right to increase discipline if this proves necessary.

Tuesday Afternoon Prayer and Study Group

Eileen Rennie

We meet in church each Tuesday at 2 pm.

In May we discussed the previous Sunday's sermon which led to lots of input from those present, many of whom had made notes on the Sunday and done their own research which, added to the notes and research of those leading, made the discussions very meaningful.

Our Studies in June will focus on Bible Month Isaiah. We begin this with a Day for Quiet Reflection at the Convent on 7th June led by Libby Bolton. There are 11 of us attending this and details for the day will be sent to those attending.

We are still mindful of everyone's safety and vulnerability so we continue to wear our masks whilst meeting and have the chairs spaced and the door open for fresh air. Please be assured if you cannot meet with us that you are remembered in prayer.

Prayer is an important part of our meeting and we spend time each week praying for people and situations near and far. If you have someone or a situation you would like us to pray for, please let me know.

Dates for June are as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 7 th June | Day for Quiet Reflection at St Mary's Convent. An Introduction to Isaiah |
| 14 th June | Bible Month Week 1 Tough Love. Isaiah 5 and Isaiah 41:1-11 |
| 21 st June | Bible Month Week 2 Light to the world. Isaiah 19:16-25, Isaiah 2:1-4 and Isaiah 56:3-8 |
| 28 th June | Bible Month Week 3 Faithful Servant. Isaiah 61. |

If you have any queries you can contact me (Eileen Rennie) by telephone on 01235 224284 or e-mail: eileenrennie@icloud.com

As we approach midsummer with its long hours of daylight, and our gardens, parks and the countryside full of colour, how thankful we feel for the beauty and wonders of God's creation. Alongside these joys which enhance everyday experiences for us, we are also very aware of the difficulties facing so many people in all parts of the world. Our thoughts and our prayers are especially with the people of Ukraine and all those who are suffering such pain and heartbreak because of the war in their country. It is a privilege to meet **Olena and Vitalii**, two Ukrainian guests from Mariupol, to whom Mike and Judith Skinner have offered a home. We welcome them to our Sunday morning Services, and look forward hopefully to getting to know them well. We offer our support to them through our prayers and in other practical ways, hoping we will be able to help them and all those who are beginning a new life in our local community.

22nd May was a special day for **Zach Smith**. Having successfully completed all of the training, Zach has become our church's first and youngest Street Pastor, and this was marked during our Morning Service and at the Street Pastors AGM in the afternoon. We wish Zach well on all of his patrols, knowing that his presence in the community will be valued by the colleagues with whom he patrols, and welcomed by the young people with whom he will interact.

Sheila and Trevor Johnson's move back to Wantage has been a long drawn out process with many delays, but it's good to know that they're now safely back. They are pleased to call Wantage their home town once more. It's been good to see them worshipping with us via Zoom for the last two years, but hopefully, before too long, we will be able to welcome them back to worshipping with us in church once more.

Martin and Judith Smithson In 2016, just before welcoming Keith to Wantage as our Minister, we celebrated Martin's 60th birthday and said farewell to him and Judith after their eleven years with us. In a few weeks' time, they will be leaving their home and church in Bingham and moving to Edwinstowe, a village in the heart of Sherwood Forest, where Martin will begin his retirement after 41 years as a Methodist Minister. Martin's final Service will be on Sunday 24th July at 10:30 am, and his Circuit Farewell on Tuesday 26th July at 7 pm. Both Services will be live streamed on YouTube, but the message from Judith and Martin is that "*any Wantage folk who would like to be there in person would be very welcome*". We remember their time in Wantage with great fondness, and wish them God's blessings as they begin what will, hopefully, be a long and happy retirement.

Praying for each other: In June the people listed below will be included in the prayer time at Eileen Rennie's Bible Study-group. **On June Grunwald's List:** Nicky Atkinson, Stella Belcher, Graham Godfrey, Lois Greenhalgh, Agripinia Kirkpatrick, Eileen Rennie, Roy Scholes, Jim Hughes and Sonia Wilkie, and on **Rita Lawrence's List:** Kay Goodwin, Pam and John Leake, Carole and Keith Robbins, Meriel Robson, Helen and John Carter

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 BOX

On the outside wall near the double doors to the Hall building, is a poster with the words: **“Would you like us to pray for you?”**

It doesn't matter how big or small your prayer is, God can help

We are following the lead taken by Grove who set up a Prayer Box on their building. There has been an encouraging take-up by people walking past their Church.

The invitation is for anyone to place their request into the Prayer Box, and our promise is to respond by praying for them. Preachers and Worship Leaders will be notified and asked to include the requests in their prayers of intercession. **In addition**, we would like to set up a prayer support group, so that its members can also respond. Volunteers who would like to be part of the support group will receive information about the requests via WhatsApp or email. [Confidentiality rules will, of course, be agreed in advance]

Please send me a WhatsApp or email message if you would like to be part of the group, or let any of the Stewards know. We hope that this can become a helpful form of community outreach, and one in which many of our church family will wish to take part.

Prayer list

Eileen Rennie

Loving God, in an ever changing world with so many conflicts and challenges, we give you thanks that we are still able to praise and worship you and build on our faith journey. We ask that you will forgive our neglect in the care of your world and challenge us to make amends and pledge to do all that we can to improve and save this wonderful planet earth. As we have travelled through this Easter period we give thanks for all the opportunities that have led us to be faithful. Now as we approach June we add our thanks for the wonderful message of Pentecost, for Trinity Sunday and for Bible Month. May we turn our faith into action in the pursuit of a more fair and equal world for all. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Please pray for:

Bethan Grant, Jane, Alan Bunn and family, Anne, Carol Mackinder, Emma Wright and family, Caroline, Alastair Wright and family, John Morton, Anne Hatto, Gordon and Marina, Jane and Brian Soffe, June, Catharine, Richard in York and Nigel Bunney. All at Bullingdon Prison, staff, prisoners and visitors, Our Ministers, Deacon, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, 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 July/August Newsletter, please let me know by Friday 24th June in order for me to meet the Newsletter deadline. *Eileen Rennie* Telephone 01235 224284, or email eileenrennie@icloud.com

Kids@church - IT'S BACK !

Dates for the summer term are **19th June & 17th July.**

Kids@church is an informal service for primary aged children and their parents. If you would like further details please contact Cath Worth, 01235 770151

In May we met in person in the hall and what a joy it was to be together again! We had fun exploring the story of the risen Jesus cooking breakfast for his friends on the beach. The children acted out the story of the miraculous catch of fish using Clive and Alison's inflatable boat and then had fun painting salt dough fish! We finished sharing breakfast together.

Our next gathering will be on Sunday 19th June and anyone with children or grandchildren ages 3-11 will be really welcome!

(Any questions, don't hesitate to give Jane a call on 01235 765421)

YMOSES*Jane Kent*

It was a joy to meet on a beautiful evening in May and enjoy a circular walk from Letcombe Bassett up to the Ridgeway. We stopped half way for drinks and cookies! Due to exam pressure for some of the young people, we have decided to enjoy a walk together again during the evening of June 12th. If you are at secondary school and fancy coning along we would love to have you with us! Just give me a call on 07443420205.

Community Drop In Café*June Grunwald*

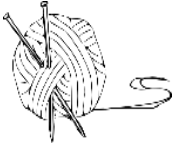
The café continues to do well. With the decline in Covid rates, we are planning to get the puzzles, books etc out at the beginning of June and we will get the display boards and bunting out again in front of the Church and on Church Street. However, we will continue with waitress service as this works well for all concerned.

Since starting back in October we have been supporting different charities for 3 months each. We managed to send £400 to Clean Slate which was the total of Donations received for October, November and December and £400 to Hope UK which covered the January, February and March Donations. From April we are supporting Through the Roof. The donations for that period will be forwarded to them at the end of June.

Our thanks to all the volunteers on the rota who make the café such a welcoming place to come to. If you would like to learn more about the café, please see June Grunwald or Eileen Rennie.

Knit & Chat

Carolyn Roche, 01235 764310



This month Knit & Chat will meet on **Monday 6th June** and **Monday 20th June** at 2 pm in the Chapel. Come and share in an afternoon of companionship, chat and knitting – or whatever other craft you are currently doing.

Several of us are slowly adding to this year's host of angels and others are working on scarves, jumpers, teddy bears and cross stitch.

If you need wool, have any other queries or just fancy a chat, do please call me. Please let June G know if you wish to join the Facebook group. Looking forward to seeing you in June.

Eco Church

Join in to complete the survey

Rodney Tillotson

Wantage Methodist Church is committed to taking part in the Eco Church scheme.

The scheme is to encourage congregations and the individuals in them to examine their buildings, ways of working, priorities and lifestyles with a view to aligning them as closely as possible with God's care for the world and its human and other occupants, including responding realistically to the climate crisis.

We complete a survey (questionnaire) as many times as we like, that gives a score for each of several kinds of thing we do (or neglect to do), and an overall score. There are threshold scores which, as we attain each of them, qualify us for bronze, silver or gold Awards.

We can make trial adjustments and explore what we might change to reach the score for the next Award: both changes that we decide are important for their own sake, and other changes that gather a lot of points quickly or easily in our own situation.

Either way, Eco Church will then have helped us to make a difference.

A very crude first attempt at a survey, involving only a handful of people, suggested that we are already not far from a bronze Award! It also appeared, though, that between us we not only estimated a range of different answers, not all of which can have been right, but we didn't know how to find the real answers.

Volunteers needed then, please.

The task is to each take away a few of the 94 multiple choice questions, somehow get an answer to each, and say how you found it out. You might find who in the church knows the answers; or you might look them up or work them out yourself.

You can read more about Eco Church (and even look at the questionnaire) at their Web site: <https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/>

If you can take away and deal with a few questions please let Rodney Tillotson know: phone or text 07786 558192 or email R.Tillotson@ntlworld.com.

Thank you!

Clothes Swap

Jane Kent

On Saturday 21st May we hosted a Clothes Swap in our church hall. This was a joint project with Sustainable Wantage. About 50 people came along and dropped off clothes first then came back after we had sorted them with the intention of finding others to swap them with! We had a lot of happy customers! I do want to thank June, Eileen, Sue, Alice and Carolyn who kindly provided cakes and biscuits and served delicious teas and coffees! We raised £100 for Sanctuary Housing who support refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants and saved a lot of clothes potentially going to landfill!

Sustainable Wantage

Wantage Methodist Church now has a share in the Sustainable Wantage community benefit society for which the church paid £1 as indicated by the share certificate. Our subscription fee of £50 covers us until April 2023. The Sustainable Wantage rules, available from Clive and Gordon, describe the legal side of how it runs.

We are the first organisational member of Sustainable Wantage.

How to keep in touch with what's going on

The newsletter is the best way of keeping up-to-date with what Sustainable Wantage is doing. Information is regularly posted on the following Facebook pages:

Wantage Market Garden | Sustainable Wantage | The Mix | The Mix Community Fridge | Wantage Community Larder

They can also be found on Instagram and Twitter.

The website (<https://sustainablewantage.org.uk>) is an excellent way of seeing all the different projects Sustainable Wantage is involved in. Something you may like to have a look at is the Wild Wantage pages, where there's lots of useful information about how each of us can increase the biodiversity in our gardens or balcony.

If any of church members would like to be more involved:

Members (and non-members!) are welcome to Sustainable Sessions (Green Drinks) and this is an excellent way to meet others who are interested in sustainability and the environment. Sustainable Sessions are normally the last Wednesday of the month (except this May and June!); details of where and when are published on the Sustainable Wantage Facebook page and in the SW Newsletter.

Some church members may also be interested in signing up for the (occasional) Wild Wantage newsletter or the One Action initiative.

www.sustainablewantage.org.uk

What is happening on the premises at present?

| | | | | |
|---------|----------------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| Sunday | 10:30 am Evening | Morning Worship YMOSES | in person and on Zoom | Weekly Monthly on the 2 nd Sunday |
| Monday | Morning Afternoon | Drop-in Café Knit & Chat | in the Hall in the Chapel | Weekly 1 st & 3 rd Week each month |
| Tuesday | Afternoon | Tuesday Prayer and Study Group in the Chapel | | Weekly |
| Friday | Afternoon | Caritas Choirs (in school term) | | |

Users All in the Hall

| | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Monday | Evening | Slimming World | | |
| Tuesday | Morning Evening | MIND Wantage Camera Club | | |
| Wednesday | Evening | Wantage Stage Musical | | |
| Thursday | Midday | KAWI | 3 rd week each month | |
| Friday | Morning | Mother & Toddlers | | |
| Saturday | Morning | Dads Out | 1 st week each month | |

Specials

Wantage Music Festival

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--|
| 11 th June | Daytime | Chapel | |
| 17 th June | Evening | Chapel & Hall – set up | |
| 18 th June | Day & Evening | Chapel & Hall | |
| 24 th June | Daytime | Chapel - piano setup | |
| 25 th June | Daytime | Chapel & Hall | |
| 26 th June | Afternoon & Evening | Chapel & Hall | |
| 27 th June | Morning | Chapel – piano removal | |

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|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|--------|
| Sunday 5 th June | Afternoon | Crescendo | Chapel |
| Sunday 12 th June | Afternoon | Wantage Stage Musical | Hall |
| Saturday 2 nd July | Afternoon | Private Party | Hall |

DIARY for JUNE/JULY

JUNE

BIBLE MONTH - ISAIAH

Monday 6th 2:00 pm **Knit & Chat** in Wantage Chapel

Saturday 11th June between 1pm and 2pm – Vehicular access to Wantage Chapel will not be possible for about 30 minutes as around 100 professional riders race past along Newbury Street from the Royal Oak to the Market Place and into Wallingford Street as part of the prestigious Women's Tour.

Sunday 12th 7:00 pm **YMOSES** at Wantage

Sunday 19th 9:30 am **Kids@Church** at Wantage

Monday 16th 2:00 pm **Knit & Chat** in Wantage Chapel

Friday 17th 7:30 pm **Film Club** at Grove **“Grey Owl”**

Sunday 26th 10:30 am Wantage Morning Worship in the Hall
DEADLINE for JUNE NEWSLETTER

JULY

Saturday 2nd 10:00 am **Coffee Morning** at Grove

Monday 4th 2:00 pm **Knit & Chat** in Wantage Chapel

SERVICES during JUNE

JUNE

BIBLE MONTH - ISAIAH

| | | | |
|-------------------------|----------|---|-------------------|
| Sunday 5 th | 10:30 am | Wantage (shared on Zoom) | Helen Carter |
| | 10:45 am | Grove | Peter Hemmings |
| Sunday 12 th | 10:30 am | Wantage (shared on Zoom) | Tabitha Griffiths |
| | 10:45 am | Grove | Carol Sturt |
| | 11:00 am | Childrey | Ian Sturt |
| Sunday 19 th | 9:30 am | Wantage | Kids@Church |
| | 10:30 am | Wantage (shared on Zoom) This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion | Rev Ian Griffiths |
| | 10:45 am | Grove | Libby Bolton |
| Sunday 26 th | 10:30 am | Wantage (shared on Zoom) | Ian Sturt |
| | 10:45 am | Grove | Rev Alan Grist |
| | | This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion | |
| | 11:00 am | Childrey | Rev Ian Griffiths |
| | | This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion | |

JULY

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Sunday 3 rd | 10:30 am | Wantage (shared on Zoom) | Andrew Dixon |
| | 10:45 am | Grove | Rev Keith Underhill |