

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

CHILDREY, GROVE & WANTAGE SECTOR



CGW NEWS



SEPTEMBER 2023

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

When Keith is not available, please talk to one of the Stewards listed below, who will put you in touch:

Gordon Skidmore : 01235 766655 / 07710 214601
Ian Sturt : 07426 772761

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

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

Contributions for the **next Newsletter** (October) should be sent to the editor by email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 17th September 2023**
e-mail : wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com
Tel : 01235 766655 / 07710 214601
Editors : Gill & Gordon Skidmore

Sunday Services and Church Activities

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

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 – 2023

October	Sunday 17 th September
November	Sunday 22 nd October
December/January	Sunday 19 th November

From the Manse.....

Just as September marks the beginning of a new school year, so too for us Methodists this month marks the beginning of a New Year. Summer is over (did it ever arrive we may wonder!) and it is now back to work so to speak.

The rhythm of the church year once more takes and leads us through the liturgy of the seasons, as together we mark harvest, Advent and Christmas and then on to Lent, Easter and Pentecost.

The New Year also gives us time to give thanks for what has been and is now past as well as directing us to look forward with a sense of anticipation and expectancy – what do the next twelve months hold in store for us as, together with God, we mark the beginning of a new chapter?

Both the psalmist and hymn writers eloquently remind us of how our hope is to be found in God and because he has been faithful to us in the past, we can not only trust him for today but also for all the days that are to come.

God will not forsake us or abandon us – for we are held safely and securely in his arms.

Whilst the world at large often encourages us to make New Year resolutions when December ends and January begins, I wonder what our Methodist New Year resolutions might be?

Resolutions for us as a Circuit and churches certainly but also for us as individuals.

Whatever they might be, never let us forget the words of Joachim Neander:

“All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

With love and God Bless

Keith

Revd Bruce Thompson

We welcome Bruce, Karen and their dog Dylan to our Circuit as they move into the Didcot manse.

Bruce will be looking after Didcot, Milton and Wallingford Methodist Churches as well as being line-manager for our Community Chaplains.

Bruce's welcome service will be at 3:00 pm on Saturday September 2nd at Didcot Methodist Church and everyone is welcome to this special service. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

A Letter of Introduction from Rev Bruce Thompson

Dear Friends,

Our Superintendent the Revd Keith has kindly invited me to write a few words to introduce myself, which I am very pleased to do. Karen and I are really looking forward to joining you in ministry in the Wantage & Abingdon Circuit in September. Two years ago I had every intention of seeing out my active ministry by continuing in my role as Chair of the Lincolnshire Methodist District, a role that has been a great privilege to undertake. Lincolnshire is a county that has become dear to my heart. However, as I sat in Stationing Matching Group in November 2021 I began to feel drawn to a number of the appointments that were not being filled. A few weeks later, after much thought and prayer, Karen and I decided that I should curtail after 12 years as Chair, enter stationing in the autumn of 2022, and offer my final two or three years in active ministry serving in a Circuit. When I received the profiles suggested to me we were quickly drawn to the Wantage & Abingdon appointment. The subsequent visit did not disappoint, far from it. We felt this to be the place that God has called us and we are excited at what may be in store for us all.

It will no doubt take a little while to readjust to circuit ministry again, though I think that a number of things I learnt as Chair may be of benefit! Prior to Lincolnshire, I served for eighteen years in Manchester, three in training at Hartley Victoria College (Methodist Inter Collegiate Football Cup winners for two of those three years, robbed on penalties in the third!). This was followed by five years in three inner city churches and ten years in a large suburban church. During that time, through various encounters, I developed a keen interest in faiths other than Christianity, especially Judaism. I also became deeply concerned about the complicity of the Church in antisemitism and the Holocaust. My commitment to raising awareness of the hostility Christians have often had toward Jews has continued since. I also became very involved in coordinating hospitality to Kosovan refugees during the 1999 Kosovan War. I have recently spent some time in Kosova during my sabbatical. You can read about it on my blog at revbrucethompson.wordpress.com.

My third appointment was in the county of Somerset from 2002 – 2011. For three of those years I was superintendent of two Circuits before we were able to merge them into a new Circuit, the Taunton Deane & South Sedgemoor Circuit in 2006. It was a time of challenge and change. There were also some significant building redevelopments, which was enjoyable as it drew me back to my first career in the construction industry.

I often view my ministry in fairly general terms. I have always enjoyed preaching and leading worship. Over recent years, I have especially enjoyed leading Bible studies, tending to focus on the context of the passages: why they were written in the way that they were.

Since 1996 I have led pilgrimages to Israel and I am thrilled that so many from the Circuit are part of this year's tour at the end of November. I have also led a number of visits to Krakow and Auschwitz. A number of people have already asked if I will be leading another Auschwitz tour in the future and hopefully this will be possible in the autumn of 2024.

Karen will be taking retirement from teaching after thirty-six years, so this will be a challenge for us both! On our days off we anticipate exploring nearby areas that we are as yet unfamiliar with. On rainy days I expect to be throwing a bit of paint at canvases in the hope that they resemble something decent. Painting is a pastime I have grown to enjoy more and more in recent years. Karen and I are both keen on art. I am also an avid reader of novels. We are blessed with two sons and two daughters in law. David & Sarah will be taking up new teaching appointments in Gloucester in September and Robert & Katie live in London. All being well David & Robert will be able to take an appointment or two on the Circuit Plan in the near future.

My hope as we join the Wantage & Abingdon Circuit is that we will together continue to discern God's will for this wonderful part of England and have fun in undertaking it.

More to come!

Every blessing, Bruce

Stepping out with Noah

Keith Underhill

A big thank you to all those who joined me on the walks this past Connexional Year – it was great to have your company and I hope you found the walks enjoyable and of worth.

They will begin again in October and I was wondering if it might be worth changing the format slightly and would value your feedback on this. The pattern until now has been twice a month, midweek either morning or afternoon.

However, I am very aware that we all lead busy lives and was therefore wondering if you might find it easier if we were to move to a monthly Sunday afternoon walk instead.

Please would you let me know your thoughts on this as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Christmas is coming! What??!

Yes, it is ridiculous, but it will be here before we know it, and you need to book a special date in your diaries.

On **Saturday 16th December** in **Wantage Methodist Church**, the Wantage and Grove Church Partnership will be presenting the Christmas story in a brand new musical, **“What about Joseph?”**, written by Julie Steventon from Vale Elim Church and featuring members of a number of different local churches.

More details to follow, but put the date down now and look out for notification of how to purchase your tickets nearer the time.

Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home

June Grunwald

This Bible Study is held at the new care home on Grove Road. It is held on the second Monday of the month at 2.30 pm, lasting between 30 and 45 mins. In July we studied “Jesus Calms the Storm and in August “The Good Samaritan”. On 11th September, Helen Carter has kindly agreed to lead the session which will be on the theme of Harvest. On 9th October Keith will join the group and lead Holy Communion. On 13th November the session will have a theme of Remembrance. For various reasons, numbers who attend from Elmbrook vary from month to month. Residents really appreciate people from our church joining in their study and we often enjoy fellowship with a cup of coffee in the Elmbrook lounge afterwards.

Pray for Revival

Ian and Carol Sturt

Jesus loves the Church - He will not allow His Church to die. And yet there are so many problems in this world ... 360 million Christians worldwide are persecuted or discriminated against (statistics from Open Doors) ... our churches are struggling to survive, with dwindling congregations ... millions have little or no faith ... what is to be done?

Well, we have started a new prayer group, Pray for Revival, and we meet at Grove Methodist Church on the last Sunday of each month at 6.30 pm. As we enjoy a time of fellowship, we worship, pray, share and reflect, with the focus on asking God to revive His Church and move it forward.

Please feel free to come along and join us - everyone is welcome. And if you are unable to join us in person, please do add your prayers to ours, wherever you are.

The next meeting is on **Sunday, 24th September** at 6.30 pm.

Hoping to see you soon. God bless.

Cornerstone news – September 2023

Take Note

We have a new Take Note promotion that will run throughout September – this includes books and CDs. Do come and see what is on offer.



Make and Bake for Under 5s

Unfortunately, we are unable to continue with this as we have had no-one come forward to lead it. If you know someone who might be interested please do get in touch. Many activities and themes have been prepared over the years, so it isn't a huge amount of work – there is some craft preparation each week, a story to read and songs to sing.

Volunteers

We are still looking for someone for the **till on Wednesday afternoons 2-4pm**. If you are interested in volunteering please do contact me.

Community Fridge

The Community Fridge runs here every Thursday from 4 to 5 pm – come and take some surplus food to help stop food wastage.

Monthly hot meal special

The hot meal this month will be served on Wednesday 27th September - please do book this in advance so we know how many to cater for.

Christmas Lunches

At present we are not sure that we will be able to serve Christmas lunches this year due to our shortage of staff. We are however, taking expressions of interest and if we are able to go ahead then we will contact those who have enquired.

Prayer breakfasts

Our monthly prayer breakfasts continue on the second Saturday of each month. The next one will be on **Saturday 9th September** at 8.30 am and I look forward to you joining us for croissants, tea, coffee, prayer and fellowship.

Staffing: Kitchen Manager

We are very sorry that Diana will be leaving us in September, and we are now advertising for a new Kitchen Manager. Please contact us on office@cornerstonegrove.org.uk for more information.

Staffing: Part time cook(s)

We are also still advertising for one or two part time cooks to join our team – again the advertisement is attached to this newsletter.

Please do get in touch if you or anyone you know is interested in either of the above positions and please do pray that the right people will come forward and that these gaps can be filled without too much delay.

Staffing: Cleaner

We are still in urgent need of a cleaner for Saturdays (3 – 4 pm). Please let me know if you can help with this or know someone who may be interested. We also need a weekday cleaner 4 - 5 pm, Monday - Friday.



We have vacancies

for one or two Part Time Cooks

Join our small friendly team and become part of the Cornerstone family.

You must have some experience working in catering and pass Food Hygiene Level 2

The hours are negotiable, we are looking to cover 24 hours a week but this could be as part of a job share, but must include Saturdays (9.30 to 3.30) and weekday working on some days to 4.15.

Ideally you will start immediately.

You will be paid monthly at £10.50 per hour. Annual leave is 5.6 weeks pro rata and including all bank holidays.

Get in touch for more information.

Tel 01235 772280

or email office@cornerstonegrove.org.uk

Submit a CV or get in touch by the 8th September to be considered.

Cornerstone Christian Centre is a Registered Charity No.1046923
Registered Office: Grove House, Grove, Wantage. OX12 7PF Company No. 3060710 V.A.T. No.685-6254-96



Greetings. Happy summertime to you all. This is my 2nd article for Quarterly News, my first was written with my Street Pastor 'hat' on. This time I'm wearing my Trustee 'hat', but it will be my last in this role as I am hanging up my Trustee 'hat' after nearly 5 years - although I will continue to serve as a Street Pastor. One of my tasks has been taking responsibility for collection tins which we have placed in several pubs, The Cornerstone in Grove, The Kings Centre in Wantage, and in one of the local churches.

During these 5 years (and for the previous 9 years), there has been lots of cake and curry consumed! Cakes for social events and celebrations, and curries for our annual Quiz and Curry Night. I have helped on many of these occasions and look forward to being on the other side of the serving hatch from now on! Of course, there has been much more than money and munching going on - follow us on social media and, for those who like a paper copy, in Quarterly News, to stay up to date with all our news. It has been a privilege to serve on the Management Committee and I thank God for his faithfulness. Thanks too to fellow trustees and our co-ordinator for their support. There are now two trustee vacancies so please do consider if there is a role for you. A love of cakes or curry is not necessary. *Hilary Moore Trustee and SP*

How we helped on the Streets

In Grove one evening, Street Pastors saw a young lad fall off his new bike. We went over to check he was ok and used our torches to help him check if his bike was ok too.

We spent a short time talking to a young man on a bench who had a bag of his belongings with him at the bus stop in Wantage. He had had an argument with his other half and was expecting to spend the night in his car! We suggested other options but he seemed content to sleep in his car. It was fairly warm evening, so we weren't too worried about him.

One of our teams visited Sweatbox Youth Centre and spent time chatting with the young people and staff.

The same night we cleared up a lot of broken glass in the Undercroft Car Park – our kit bag includes a dustpan and brush for this very reason.

Another night in Wantage town centre, we found that some of the plants in one of the Wantage planters had been uprooted, perhaps by a frustrated reveller.

Before heading home for the night, one of our Street Pastors replanted the plants.

Quiz & Curry Night

It's time to brush up on your general knowledge and keep up to speed on current affairs because our very popular Quiz & Curry Night is back this November!

7 pm Saturday 18 Nov Wantage Methodist Church Hall

Book in your team of 6 people now!

Email us on...

wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk

David Johnston MP on Patrol

David Johnston MP joined one of our Friday night Street Pastor patrols as an observer at the end of June.

David said, ***"It was great to take part in a session with the Wantage and Grove Street Pastors. These volunteers play a really important role when they're out and about and it was a pleasure to spend time with them and see first-hand how they help to keep people safe."***

If you would like to see first-hand what the Street Pastors do, you are welcome to come out as an observer too. Just send us an email to arrange a date - wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk

Street Pastor Sunday & Commissioning

We enjoyed a very warm welcome at Wantage Parish Church on Sunday 18 June where we held a Street Pastor Sunday and commissioned Sylvia Ward as a Street Pastor. Sylvia has been patrolling since August 2022 and recently helped re-plant some of the town's flowers after a frustrated reveller uprooted them!



Our Coordinator, Nigel Watt, spoke about the ways we care, listen and help and went on to talk about our hopes for the future. Paul Gander, our Chair, brought the message from Matthew Ch 9 + 10, where Jesus sends out the disciples. We aim to hold 4 or 5 Street Pastor Sundays each year to update the churches on our ministry and to encourage greater involvement and recruitment.

Watch this space for details of our next Street Pastor Sundays at Holy Trinity, Charlton and Vale Elim in Grove.

Afternoon Patrols

We are very excited to announce that Afternoon Patrols are one step closer to becoming a reality after we received our first afternoon patrols Street Pastor application form!

Thanks to Paul Gander, our Chair and Pastor of Wantage Community Church, for getting the ball rolling and spearheading the way ahead for this important part of our ministry.

It's a great start, but Paul is going to need a few more people to sign up and build the team together.

Are you:

- available once a month on a Thursday or Friday afternoon from 2.30 pm to 6 pm
- passionate about serving God in the local community
- willing to step outside your comfort zone

Street Pastor and Prayer Support roles are available!

For more information and an application form, send us an email to wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk.

One question, four answers

BARNABAS SHIN *‘Our body clock will get used to what we think is normal’*

This question reminded me of my young adulthood when I used to sit in front of the pew on Sunday morning services in my home church in Korea. The sermon was around 30 minutes, and I was passionate about making notes, although I was sometimes nearly falling asleep. For now, in my pastorate churches, I aim to set my sermon for less than 20 minutes, which, I think, would be expected among in our congregation. When my sermon lasts longer than 20 minutes, even I sense it is too long while I deliver it.

It is interesting to see the survey of Lifeway Research in 2019 in the US. Mainline Protestant pastors (54%) are more likely than evangelical pastors (17%) to say their sermons are shorter than 20 minutes; white pastors are more likely to say they are shorter than 20 minutes, while African American pastors and those of other ethnicities are more likely to preach for at least 40 minutes...

Barnabas Shin is Minister of Billericay, Brentwood and Ingatestone United Reformed Churches

DIANA PAULDING *‘Online worship brings a freedom to find new ways’*

Having grown up attending local United Reformed churches, my instinct always used to be that a sermon should be as concise as possible while still retaining adequate content. Since 2020, however, my home church has been yourchurch, an online congregation. In an online church, a lot of the elements of a traditional church service need to be rethought. Communal singing on Zoom is a recipe for disaster, and so instead we use YouTube videos and encourage people to sing along with their microphones turned off. On the other hand, we do say the Lord’s Prayer together and we embrace the glorious cacophony of everybody saying their preferred version at the same time.

There is no technical reason to change how sermons are given. People can listen to one person speak in the traditional manner and a worship leader can speak for as long or short a time as they wish. In yourchurch, our focus on developing discipleship and living out our faith in our daily lives often influences the content of sermons, but there is no reason for it to affect the length...

Diana Paulding is a PhD student at the University of Exeter and is on the leadership team for yourchurch

PETER STEVENSON *‘No one should have fallen out of a window’*

It would be good to have the opportunity of a 30-minute sermon every week in order to read the text, exegete the passage and give an interpretation. In Acts 20 we learn that Paul preached an even longer sermon:

We met on Sunday to worship and celebrate the Master’s Supper. Paul addressed the congregation. Our plan was to leave first thing in the morning, but Paul talked on, way past midnight. We were meeting in a well-lighted upper room. A young man named Eutychus was sitting in an open window. As Paul went on and on, Eutychus

fell sound asleep and toppled out the third-storey window. When they picked him up, he was dead.

Paul went down, stretched himself on him, and hugged him hard. ‘No more crying,’ he said. ‘There’s life in him yet.’ Then Paul got up and served the Master’s Supper. And went on telling stories of the faith until dawn! On that note, they left – Paul going one way, the congregation another, leading the boy off alive, and full of life themselves. (Acts 20:7–12, The Message)

However, it has been said about preaching that if you don’t strike oil in the first five minutes, you’re simply boring!...

Peter Stevenson is Minister of churches in Grantham and Stamford, East Midlands Synod Pastoral Consultant, and Convenor of the URC’s Communications Committee until General Assembly

LUCY BERRY *‘How deep need a sermon be?’*

You see, I think this might be the wrong question. That word ‘should’ worries me. It has echoes of churchy norms that I don’t quite trust. ‘Should’ is a word of routine and habit. It implies an habitual way of preaching. It suggests something thoroughly to be expected. Do we want to do expected sermons? I think I prefer ‘How long does a sermon need to be?’ – because need (of one kind or another) was at the root of everything that Jesus ever did or preached.

Well, if need is the imperative behind a sermon, then what needs saying? It won’t be the repetition of recently unexplored Good News. It won’t be the unexamined reinforcement of traditional behaviours. It won’t be the comforting collapse into safe interpretations. Surely what needs discovering and proclaiming is the happening-right-now Good News. And that, in all its complexity, could take a lifetime of much-needed instalments. All this nudges me towards questions like ‘How deep need a sermon be?’, or ‘How tough need a sermon be?’ or ‘How real need a sermon be?’...

Lucy Berry is a URC minister and poet.

This is an extract from an article published in the June 2023 edition of Reform

“Some plague the people with too long sermons; for the faculty of listening is a tender thing, and soon becomes weary and satiated.” - Martin Luther

CHILDREY

Services in September

Sunday 10th 11:00 am Rev John Anderson in **Childrey Chapel**
This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

Sunday 24th 3:00 pm **Harvest Festival at St. Mary's Church**

Our **Harvest Festival** service this year will be held on **Sunday 24th September** at 3:00 pm. Rev Ness Brunner-Ellis will be leading the service and Keith will be preaching. Everyone is welcome. There will be light refreshments afterwards.

Our **Chapel Anniversary** will be on **Sunday 8th October** at 4:00 pm. With Keith leading the service and Revd Ness Brunner-Ellis preaching – this will be followed by a “bring and share” tea. We hope as many people as possible will be able to join us.

There will be an **open informal business meeting** on **4th September** at 2:30 pm.

Prayers

We remember in our prayers:

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

John Cliffe and Frederick Gee.

Keith, 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.

GROVE

Coffee Morning on **Saturday, 2nd September** from 10 am till noon in the church. Proceeds from the morning will be donated to Cancer Research UK. Rachel and Morgan are our hosts. We hope you can join us for a chat, coffee/tea and cake. We look forward to seeing you. Offers of cakes would be appreciated.

Film Club is on **Friday, 15th September** at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room. We will be showing "Sully". The story of Chesley Sullenberger, an American pilot who became a hero after landing his damaged plane on the Hudson River in order to save the flight's passengers and crew. True story based on the book "Highest Duty".
Cast: Tom Hanks, Aaron Eckhart, Laura Linney, Anna Gunn

All are welcome. Admission is free; a small donation helps to cover the cost of licences and DVDs. Masks are optional.

Tuesday Fellowship. We will be meeting on **Tuesday, 26th September** at 2.15 pm. Further information will be in the weekly notice sheet nearer the time.

"Prayer for Revival" – An ecumenical prayer meeting led by Ian and Carol on the last Sunday of each month **at 6.30 pm till 8 pm** in our church. All are invited to come and pray with us. The next meeting is on **Sunday, 24th September** at 6.30 pm. All are welcome.

Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust – Ride & Stride – Saturday, 9th September

As many of you know, Grove Methodists have been taking part for over 25 years. For various reasons we may not have any cyclists or walkers of our own again this year but would like to open the Church on 9th September between 10 am and 6 pm in order to greet participants from other churches, sign their sheets and offer light refreshments (squash, water and biscuits) or use of our toilet facilities. We are looking for volunteers to "meet and greet" during the opening time. It could be for just an hour or for 2 hours. There is a sign up sheet on the table in the entrance hall. Although we may not have cyclists to sponsor, perhaps you would be willing to sponsor a "church meet & greet" person instead. All donations very welcome.

50% of any donations are returned to our church for use as we see fit.

Any questions about the event see the website <https://ohct.org.uk/ride-and-stride/>

Contact Lynda Culley if you would like to sponsor/donate on 07759 085336

Advance notice of our Harvest Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, 1st October.

We hope you will be able to join us. Details will be in the weekly notice sheet nearer the time.

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.

We continue to hold in our prayers all those who are in poor health or have other difficulties and problems. We trust that, with care, life has opened up again for you.

Thank you for your support for the Coffee Morning in July, raising funds to help support newly housed homeless people. Donations raised £380.70.

The Coffee Morning in August for M.H.A. raised £165.

Thank you for supporting both these events.

Thank you to everyone for your continued and generous support for the Wantage & Grove Food Bank. Your donations of food do help make a difference to local families in need. Thank you.

Cynthia Bulpitt has recently posted the following message on Facebook to all who have helped her in her efforts to gather and send things to Ukraine and also in her work in helping homeless people being rehoused. We felt it should be shared in our newsletter too as many of you have contributed in various ways to her requests.

Cynthia's message:

"For several years now my rock, Martin, and many of you out there have stood alongside of me and helped in whatever way you have been able to in supporting the homeless.

This then spread into helping the unfortunate people of Ukraine, some DV families from the fall out of lockdown and Ukraine families that have completed their host period and are now making their homes in England, and always the homeless.

It's lovely to see all of these families pick up and carry on with the help and support that Martin and I have given them, something that we have only been able to do with your, our wonderful community's support.

Unfortunately due to my recent poor health we are having to take a break from offering our help, although there are a few vulnerable people who we shall still be supporting with advice and food.

Martin and I expect to be taking a break for at least 6 months and then hopefully all going well and with God's blessings we shall carry on after I am back on my feet.

I know that you will all be wondering what's wrong with me so before all the assumptions come out, I will tell you myself that I have cancer that has arrived and spread very quickly and will require a 12 hours' operation, some reconstruction surgery and quite a bit of convalescent time.

We, Martin and I, are hoping that this will be a temporary break in what we do and will soon be back to helping those less fortunate than ourselves in the New Year.

God bless and thank you all for all of the support that you have given over the years. You have helped to enrich so many peoples' lives and helped them to carry on. xxx "

WANTAGE

Holy Habits

Holy Habits (lite) #3 starts on Sunday 3rd September and the theme for the three months will be "**Eating Together**"

The **film** will be watching together (date t.b.c. so please watch this space) is **Babette's Feast**.

This theme's **book** choice will be an easier read than the last and in fact there is a choice of two books to choose from

"**Chocolat**" by Joanne Harris or

"**Appetite: A memoir in recipes of Family and Food**" by Ed Balls

To help launch this new Holy Habit there will be a **church breakfast at 9:00 am on 3rd September** – please do sign up if you are hoping to come along as this will help us with catering etc.

Holy Habits (lite) 3

Jane Kent

We are looking forward to meeting to discuss Chocolat by Joanne Harris and / or Appetite by Ed Balls on **Saturday 11th November** at Cornerstone book shop in Grove at 10 am (please note **change of venue**). If you'd like a lift please ask as that's not a problem at all. Please can you speak to me, email me (janevkent@iCloud.com), phone or text me (07443420205) by Thursday 9th November so Cornerstone have a good idea of numbers.

Holy Habit of Prayer

Helen Carter

I would love to start a prayer group to build on the Holy Habit of Prayer. There are so many ways a prayer group can be convened and also lots of choices of timing. I am therefore proposing to have a meeting for anyone who might be interested in being part of a prayer group or who might want to convene a prayer group. I will be at the church, in the parlour, on **Saturday 16th September from 3 pm** and it would be great if others felt able to join me to start a discussion about the why, what, where, and when of a prayer group. I will supply tea and cake! If you are unable to make that date and time but would be interested to know more then please do contact me, Helen Carter, for a discussion. Thank you.

Harvest Festival

Wantage Harvest Festival will be on **24th September** at 10:30 am. Keith will be leading the service which will be an "all age" service. All will be welcome.

Chapel decoration will be in the morning of **Saturday 23rd September**. More details will be in the weekly notices.

Childrey Harvest Festival this year will also be on **Sunday 24th September** at 3:00 pm at St Mary's Church. Revd. Ness Brunner-Ellis will be leading the service and Keith will be preaching. Everyone is welcome. There will be light refreshments afterwards.

Another new year begins in the life of our church as we return to the activities which were paused during the school summer holidays. Hopefully those who have taken holidays, near or far away from Wantage, have enjoyed the refreshing value of time away from the usual responsibilities, and perhaps the excitement of new experiences. As a church family we give thanks for the happy moments we have shared during the summer months, and for our safe return to all that lies before us in the year ahead, knowing God's love will surround us all each new day.

This time last year Graham Godfrey was approaching his 100th birthday, which we celebrated with him during and after a morning service in September. So much has changed for Graham since then, including some stays in hospital before moving into a care home in Abingdon. Several months since becoming a resident at Bridge House, Graham now seems to have settled there well, and is now very close to his 101st birthday. We continue to miss Graham from our congregation, just as he misses being able to worship with us, but we think of him and his daughters, Anne and Gill, and support them with our prayers.

Gordon Scott: Our summer newsletter had already gone to press before we learned the sad news of Gordon's death on 23rd June. Until his own health problems and his caring responsibilities for Marina made it difficult to get to church, Gordon worshipped with us on Sunday mornings over many years. Sitting in the same pew at the back of the chapel each week, he was always very cheerful and friendly, and enjoyed conversations with others after the service before walking home. A few months ago, Gordon and Marina moved from their home in Charlton Road to Elmbrook Court so they could both receive the care they needed as their frailty increased. We gave thanks for Gordon's life at his funeral service on 12th July, and will hold fond memories of the many years in which he was part of our Church family. We remember Marina and all of the family, praying that God's love will support and comfort them in their sadness.

We were pleased to welcome Daisy-June Carter, her parents Taysha and Neil, and their family and friends on 23rd July, when the morning service included an act of thanksgiving for Daisy-June. We hope they will join us for worship again.

The Church Directory which we published last year is, inevitably, already partially out of date. It was designed so that amendments could be inserted individually on the blank pages, thereby saving the resources used in producing a new directory each year. Everyone for whom I have an email address will have already received a corrections list. It is available in paper form for anyone not able to receive it electronically – please let me know if you would like a copy.

Praying for each other: In September the people listed below, who are on Eileen Rennie's pastoral list, will be included in the prayer time at the Tuesday Bible Study: Janet and Richard Browning, Charlotte Browning, Joan and Ed Clipsham, Sue Haithwaite, Jean Manners, Gill Morton, Gill and Gordon Skidmore and Jenny Whymark.

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 the Tuesday Bible Study Group.

Prayer list

Eileen Rennie

Loving God we praise and thank you for the Autumn world and all the beauty you have produced for us to enjoy. As we begin a new Methodist year and plan ahead for the future we pray for your guidance and our listening ears so that we may discern what it is you want us to do to further your kingdom here on earth. Fill us with your holy spirit in our planning to ensure that we are truly all inclusive. Remind us of the need for daily prayer and reading of your word and then equip us to share what we have enjoyed in what we have learned with others so that your fellowship of love and joy will increase. We pray for all those in need of prayer and especially we pray for those who feel unloved and feel no one prays for them. Hear our prayer and all prayers offered in Jesus' name. Amen.

Please pray for:

Bethan Grant, Anne, Carol Mackinder, Emma Wright and family, Caroline, John Morton, Anne and Doug Hatto, Jane and Brian Soffe, Richard in York, Adrian, Diane, Geoff, Diane's daughters Julie and Claire, John & Jo, Ken Harmer, Meriel, Jane Robinson, Emily, Maggie, June Hartle, Richard and Anne. All at Bullingdon Prison, staff, prisoners and visitors, our Ministers, Deacon, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, Community Chaplains, kids@church, Street Pastors and Cornerstone. Those members of our church family who, through frailty or ill health, can no longer worship with us.

If you or the person/people you have put on the prayer list would still like to be in the October Newsletter, please let me know by **Friday 15th September** in order for me to meet the Newsletter deadline.

Eileen Rennie: Telephone 01235 224284, or email eileenrennie@icloud.com

Tuesday Afternoon Prayer and Study Group

Eileen Rennie

We began July with our Annual Day for Quiet Reflection at St. Mary's Convent which is always a very special day for all those who attend and this year was no exception. Libby Bolton led us on some further reflections on Bible Month Revelation. For the next two weeks of July we studied Holy Habits - Gladness and Generosity. On the 25th July we had an open meeting when Nora and Kristzian Zarnai and family from Hungary talked to us about their work with Ukranian refugees. They live near the border of Ukraine. This was a lovely afternoon much appreciated by around 35 people who attended. We had a break in August but now look forward to starting afresh on 5th September.

We meet in the Parlour each Tuesday at 2 pm. This is an open friendly group who meet to study and pray each week so please feel free to come along and join us any week. You can be assured of a warm welcome. 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 September are as follows:

5 th	Holy Habits Gladness and Generosity Week 3 Reading Isaiah 61:1-3	Reclothed. This meeting will include our Monthly prayer list.
12 th	Holy Habits Gladness and Generosity Week 4 Reading Matthew 19:21-24	Joyful generosity.
19 th	Holy Habits Gladness and Generosity Week 5 Reading Luke 6:35-38	Overflowing generosity
26 th	Holy Habits Gladness and Generosity Week 6 Generosity spreading blessings far and wide.	Reading Luke 19:5-9

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

Kids@Church

Jane, Dave, Cath and Keith

What a joy it was to meet in the park in July and have fun together! We are really looking forward to gathering once again from **September 17th September** at 9.30 am in the church. We'd love to see you there!

Community Café

June Grunwald

The Community Café met during July and August, including the Bank Holiday Monday. On one particularly wet August Monday we had 31 visitors. We were especially pleased to welcome Jenny Whymark to the café. Jenny was a stalwart at our church and has been living at Framlands for a number of years. During the school and university holidays it was good to see some young people at the café too. Young Morgan organized an enjoyable quiz for us.

The café does not charge for coffee or home-made cakes, but each week we have "piggy banks" for donations to a charity. From June to August donations were for Wantage Methodist Church, who have provided a free home for the café since 2019. At the time of press approx. £410 has been raised. From September to November our charity for donations will be for Cornerstone, our local Christian café and bookshop in Grove.

The café is open every Monday from 9 am to 12 noon. All are welcome. Our thanks to all the volunteers on the rota who make the café such a welcoming place to come to and who provide such delicious cakes. If you cannot commit regularly but would be willing to be called upon at short notice it would be helpful. Although we can operate the café with less people, having 2 coffee makers and 2 welcomers each Monday is ideal. If you would like to learn more about the café please see June Grunwald or Eileen Rennie.

Knit & Chat

Carolyn Roche, 01235 764310

September, and the start of another Methodist year. Not so very many weeks before it will be time to see how many angels we have and to order new labels.

We have continued to meet throughout the summer, enjoying chatting over tea and biscuits as well as fitting in some knitting and rug making. Don't forget that we are happy to share photos of things you have made on our Facebook page. Please let June know if you wish to do so. Please come and join us in the Church hall on **Monday 4th September** and **Monday 18th September** at 2 pm.

If you need wool, have any other queries or just fancy a chat do please call me.

Food Bank

Thank you for the food donations that arrive at the church. There is still a great need for anything except pasta and baked beans! So please keep the donations of food or money coming so that those in need can be supported. It is so sad that there is this great need, but there is and we are doing our part. Thank you.

Recyclable items

Just a reminder that not only can blister packs from medications be put in the box in the chapel vestibule, but also that toothpaste tubes, writing implements and printer ink cartridges be left there too. All will be taken to the Mix. Items such as soft plastics, biscuit wrappers and crisp packets can be taken to Sainsbury's. If you cannot get there, then pop those into the box too and they will find their way to Sainsbury's. Thank you.

Request for help on Sunday mornings

Huge thanks to the people who have been regularly helping Cathy to come to church on a Sunday morning by walking with her from near the fire station.

Unfortunately, but most understandably, Helen is finding that it's incompatible with her stewarding and local preaching duties. Thank you, Helen, for having even considered it, and for the times that you have been able to help.

If you feel that you could be on a rota and walk with Cathy about once a month, please talk to Gill Skidmore. It would be much appreciated.

Wantage Methodist Church - Looking to the future

Thanks to all who attended and contributed to our morning looking forward.

In the summer of 2024 Rev Ian Griffiths and Tabitha will be leaving the Circuit and we are in the process of seeking a replacement minister to serve in the Circuit and with the hope that they will take over as Superintendent in 2025 when Keith retires. From September 2025, we are expecting that there will only be two Presbyters in the circuit covering Wantage/Grove/Childrey, Didcot/Milton, Abingdon (Trinity & All Saints) and Wallingford. For various reasons it is most probable that one will live in Abingdon and one in Didcot. This has implications regarding what the ministers can deliver as well as how often they can lead worship in any Chapel. As we also have fewer available supernumerary ministers and local preachers, there will be a significant number of services that will not have a conventional leader planned.

Saturday 29th July was an opportunity to consider what the implications, hopes and fears were for Wantage & Childrey. The comments that were received are now being considered by the Church Leadership team.

Riders & Striders

The Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust annual fundraising event, "Ride & Stride" will take place this year on **Saturday September 9th**. As usual most of the churches in Oxfordshire (and surrounding counties) will be open to greet sponsored riders and striders, and other visitors.

If anyone wishes to take part to raise money for OHCT and Wantage Methodist Church, by walking or riding to churches near or far, we can provide more information and sponsorship forms. As usual, our church will be open on that day from 10 am to 6 pm and volunteers to church-sit will be very welcome.

Please contact Clive & Alison Phillips.

What is happening on the Wantage premises at present?

Sunday	9:30 am	Kids@Church		3 rd Sunday
	10:30 am	Morning Worship	In person and on Zoom	Weekly
Monday	Morning	Drop-in Café	in the Hall	Weekly
	Afternoon	Knit & Chat	in the Hall	1 st /3 rd Week each month
Tuesday	Afternoon	Prayer & Study Group	in the Hall	Weekly
Friday	Afternoon	Caritas Choirs		Weekly in term

Users All in the Hall

Monday	Evening	Slimming World	
Tuesday	Morning	MIND	
	Evening	My Life, My Choice (Parlour)	2 nd Tuesday
	Evening	Wantage Camera Club	
Wednesday	Evening	Wantage Stage Musical	
Thursday	Midday	KAWI	3 rd Thursday
Friday	Morning	Mothers & Toddlers	In term
Saturday	Morning	Dads Out	1 st Saturday

September

Saturday 9 th	Morning	WGCP – rehearsal	Hall/Chapel
	All day	Riders & Striders	Chapel
Saturday 16 th	Afternoon	Holy Habit Prayer	Parlour
Monday 18 th	Evening	Church St PPG AGM	Chapel
Saturday 23 rd	Morning	WGCP – rehearsal	Hall
Thursday 28 th	Morning	SUDEP Action	Hall
	Evening	Wantage Music Festival AGM	Hall
Saturday 30 th	Noon	Wedding	Chapel

Work is continuing on the clearing and rebuilding of 16 Newbury Street.

There will be vehicles in the yard to deliver and remove the materials. Please be aware and take care when entering our site from Newbury Street. Also parking spaces will be in use during the day.

We are grateful for the care taken by the workers on this project to maintain a safe and tidy operation.

DIARY for SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 2 nd	10:00 am	Coffee Morning at Grove	p14
	3:00 pm	Welcome Service for Rev Bruce Thompson at Didcot	p4
Sunday 3rd	9:00 am	Start of Holy Habits 3 Eating Together Breakfast	
	10:30 am	Holy Habits – Holy Communion at Wantage	p16
Monday 4 th	2:00 pm	Knit & Chat at Wantage	p20
Saturday 9 th		Riders & Striders – welcome at Wantage & Grove	pp15/21
Monday, 11 th	2:30 pm	Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home	p6
Tuesday 12 th	7:30 pm	Circuit Meeting at Milton	
Friday, 15 th	7:30 pm	Film Club at Grove “Sully”	p14
Saturday 16 th	3:00 pm	Holy Habit Prayer Meet	p16
Sunday 17th	9:30 am	Kids@Church at Wantage	p19
		DEADLINE for October CGW NEWS	
Monday 18 th	2:00 pm	Knit & Chat at Wantage	p20
Sunday 24th	10:30 am	Wantage Harvest Festival	p16
	3:00 pm	Childrey Harvest Festival	p13
	6:30 pm	Prayer for Revival at Grove	pp6/14
Tuesday 26 th	2:15 pm	Grove Tuesday Fellowship	p14

OCTOBER

Sunday 1st	10:30 am	Grove Harvest Festival	p14
Saturday 7 th	9:30 am	Circuit Meeting Plus 2	

SERVICES during SEPTEMBER

All Services from Wantage are shared on Zoom

Saturday 2nd 3:00 pm **Welcome Service** for Rev Bruce Thompson at Didcot

Sunday 3rd **Ordinary 22**

10:30 am Wantage Holy Habits Rev Keith Underhill
This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

10:30 am Grove Eileen Appleyard

Sunday 10th **Ordinary 23**

Education Sunday

10:30 am Wantage Tabitha Griffiths

10:30 am Grove Barbara Kershaw

11:00 am Childrey Rev John Anderson

This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

Sunday 17th **Ordinary 24**

9:30 am Wantage Kids@Church

10:30 am Wantage Libby Bolton

10:30 am Grove Rev Keith Underhill

This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

Sunday 24th **Ordinary 25**

10:30 am Wantage Harvest Festival Rev Keith Underhill

10:30 am Grove Local Arrangements

3:00 pm St Mary's Childrey Harvest Festival Rev Ness Brunner-Ellis
& Rev Keith Underhill

6:30 pm Grove Prayer for Revival