

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

CHILDREY, GROVE & WANTAGE SECTOR

  
The **Methodist** Church

# CGW NEWS



FEBRUARY 2024

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:

Helen Carter : 01235 764810  
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](mailto:wntgmethodistnotices@gmail.com)

Contributions for the **next Newsletter** (March) should be sent to the editor by email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024**  
e-mail : [wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.wantab.org.uk)

**Wantage web site** [www.wantagemethodist.org.uk](http://www.wantagemethodist.org.uk)

**Circuit web site** [www.wantab.org.uk](http://www.wantab.org.uk)

### **CGW News Contribution deadline dates – 2024**

March	Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> February
April	Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> March
May	Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> April
June	Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> May
Summer (July/August)	Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June

## From the Manse.....

February this year brings with it both Valentine's Day and Lent – both of which speak to us about love. Indeed in all that we observe in this season of Lent, we witness love not as some mere notion or idea but as a force and power being lived out and profoundly expressed.

Malcolm Guite (the poet/priest) reminds us that of the fact that “George Herbert has written perhaps the greatest ever poem on the Divine Love that meets us in Christ, a poem in which Christ is simply named Love...” the one that opens by declaring; ‘Love bade me welcome’.

Guite himself begins his own poem on love by skilfully weaving his own thoughts amongst the threads of George Herbert's, seeking to “create an archway” through which he and his readers can walk to receive that same welcome “and respond to it, perhaps a little shyly, a little hesitantly, as Herbert did.”

*“Love took George Herbert's hand and now takes mine,  
The same quick eyes, the same wry, welcome smile,  
The same spear-pierced and always-healing heart.  
He turns to me and, taking bread and wine,  
He spreads a table in the desert, while  
I hesitate and draw back, stand apart,  
Afraid, as always, of committed love.  
But I have come too far to turn away,  
Though Joy has vanished, she has led me here.  
'So come', says Love, 'there's nothing left to prove,  
And nothing that you need to do or say,  
I am that perfect love that casts out fear,  
Sit with George Herbert here, then taste and see  
And find that all your loves are found in me.”*

Once more we see how ‘out of the ordinary comes the extraordinary’ – as we seek to encounter the divine love of God himself.

With love and God Bless

*Keith*

## **Accreditation service for Libby Hawkness-Smith as a Methodist Local Preacher**

Libby's service will be held at **Wantage Methodist Church** at **3:00 pm** on **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February** – this is a special occasion that both recognises Libby's calling as a Local Preacher within the Methodist Church and the successful completion of her training and study.

Do come along and support her if you can.

It goes without saying that refreshments will be served after the service.

## **Stepping out with Noah – February 2024**

*Keith Underhill*

I hope that the New Year finds you well and wish you every blessing for the year ahead.

As so many of the paths and routes continue to be sodden, muddy, waterlogged or indeed flooded in places, I think it best that we wait a little longer before the first SOWN walk.

Therefore, in **January** we will meet on **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>** at 2 pm outside my Manse (14 Haywards Close OX12 7AT)

The walks in February will be on **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>** at 10 am, meeting again at my Manse and **Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>** at 2 pm, meeting in the car park at Wantage Methodist Church.

I will double check the routes just before to make sure that they are okay and none of the walks will be more than 4.5 miles.

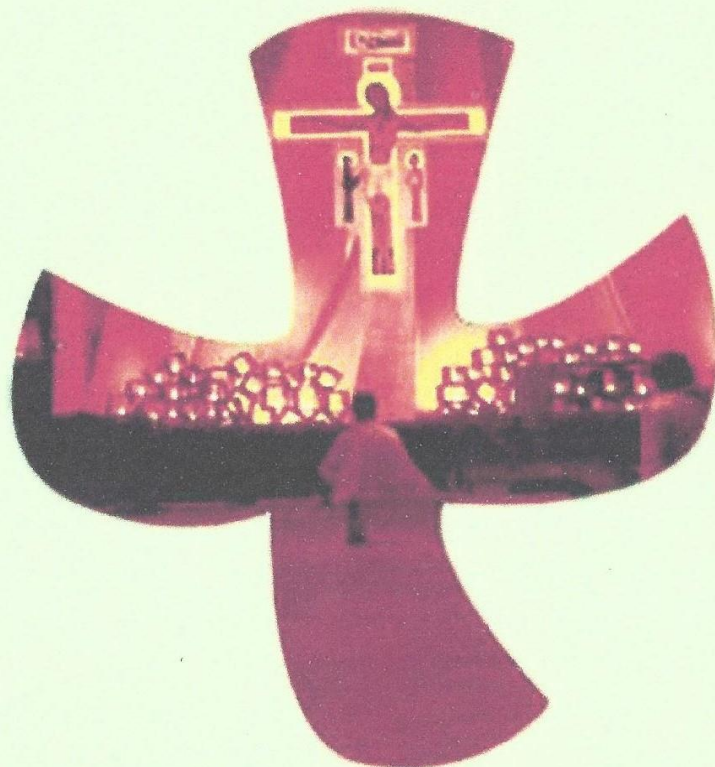
## **Wantage & Grove Church Partnership**

### **“What about Joseph?”**

Many thanks to everyone who supported the Wantage and Grove Church Partnership musical, “What about Joseph?” on 16<sup>th</sup> December. We are delighted to announce that we were able to send £1,112 to Helen and Douglas House. It was lovely to see the church absolutely packed, and the performance was received with great enthusiasm.

A special “thank you” must go to all those providing vital background support, to Ann Barber and her catering team, and Alison Phillips and the front of house team.

# TAIZE Evening Prayer for CANDLEMAS



CHRIST is the LIGHT of the NATIONS

St John Vianney Church, Wantage

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 7.30pm

**EVERYONE WELCOME**

All permissions applied for Taize logo.

## Wantage and Grove Street Pastors

Website: [www.wantageandgrove.streetpastors.org.uk](http://www.wantageandgrove.streetpastors.org.uk)

Email: [wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk](mailto:wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk)

### REPORT OF OUR OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2023 ACTIVITIES

We patrolled eight times during October and November 2023.

Street Pastors met a very angry man who was carrying his friend's phone and threatening to smash the phone. We helped to calm the man down a little and persuaded him to give us the phone. We handed it in to a nearby pub and informed the phone's owner where they could collect it. The next day, the owner of the phone contacted us to thank us.

One night we met a group who we have seen a number of occasions previously. One of the girls tearfully confided some of the challenges she is facing in her life. We were able to support her. It's a privilege to be able to spend time with young people, letting them share without judging them.

Street Pastors were on hand to help a couple who got tangled up in a conflict with a young man. A kind bus driver helped by taking the couple and a Street Pastor on his bus and moving them out of the situation where they were able to get a taxi home.

A member of the public alerted us to an incident in Wantage town centre. Street Pastors attended and found a young woman being comforted by her friend. The upset lady had been in an argument with a man who appeared to be part of their friendship group. Street Pastors were able to bring calm to the situation and put a little distance between the two parties. Later in the evening we saw that the friendship had been restored and all was well between them.

Street Pastors were on hand to help supervise 200+ teenagers as they left a Wantage venue at the end of their Teens Disco. We were able to use our mobile power supply to help a young lady contact her mum to come and take her home.

Thank you for your support of Wantage & Grove Street Pastors throughout 2023 and best wishes from all of us for 2024.

### Holocaust Memorial Day Events

**Wantage Methodist Church**      **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January**      **10 am till 12 noon**

A time to pop in and reflect a while, for as brief a time or as long as you are able.

At 12 noon Rev Bruce Thompson will lead a 15 minute reflection.

Further details from June Grunwald.

Refreshments available in the hall.

**Wallingford Methodist Church**      **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February**      **12 noon till 1pm**

Holocaust Survivor Dr Agnes Kaposi MBE in conversation with Rev Bruce Thompson.

Light refreshments to follow.

**Wantage Methodist Church**      **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February**      **7.30 - 8.30pm**

Holocaust Survivor Dr Agnes Kaposi MBE      Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich  
Revd Bruce Thompson

# Holocaust Memorial Events

## Tuesday 13 February

with

**Holocaust Survivor Dr Agnes Kaposi MBE, FREng  
and Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich**

**12 noon—1.00 pm**

**In Conversation**

**at Wallingford Methodist Church**

St Leonard's Square OX10 0AS

**7.30—8.30 pm**

**An Evening of Remembrance**

**at Wantage Methodist Church**

20 Newbury Street OX12 8DA



Dr Kaposi and Rabbi Tanya will be present at both events.

Each event will include survivor testimony, music and reflections.

Further details from Rev Bruce Thompson  
on [revbrucet@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:revbrucet@yahoo.co.uk) or 01235 813242

## Cornerstone news –



Thank you to everyone who has been praying for our staffing needs, we are in the process of appointing a new kitchen manager, who will hopefully start towards the end of February. There is still a need for a part-time cook and we will be re-advertising this role in the coming weeks.

In February half term we will be offering free breakfast again to families who are entitled to free school meals, we have received plenty of donations to cover the cost of this initiative but we would value a few extra volunteers who would be able to serve that week 9.30-11 am on the Monday and Thursday (12th & 17th February). If you have never volunteered with us before, this is a great way to start - we keep the menu fairly simple to make it easier!

In the shop we have Lent books, Valetine's cards, Mothering Sunday cards and Easter cards are out already. We will shortly be receiving Easter Eggs too. So do come in and have a browse.

+++++



The charity Parkinsons.Me is a crucial force in supporting individuals affected by Parkinson's disease. It serves as a beacon of

support, offering a community that fosters belonging, empathy, and shared experiences. Providing support groups, forums, counselling, and educational resources, Parkinsons.Me empowers individuals and families with knowledge to manage the challenges of Parkinson's effectively.

The charity provides a platform for people to connect, share experiences, and heal. Supporting Parkinsons.Me contributes to reducing stigma, advocating for better care and coping strategies. Through your generous donations, we can offer these services to everyone living with Parkinsons.

However, it's not just about financial support; it's about being part of a community that stands together in the face of adversity, recognising the strength in unity and shared experiences.

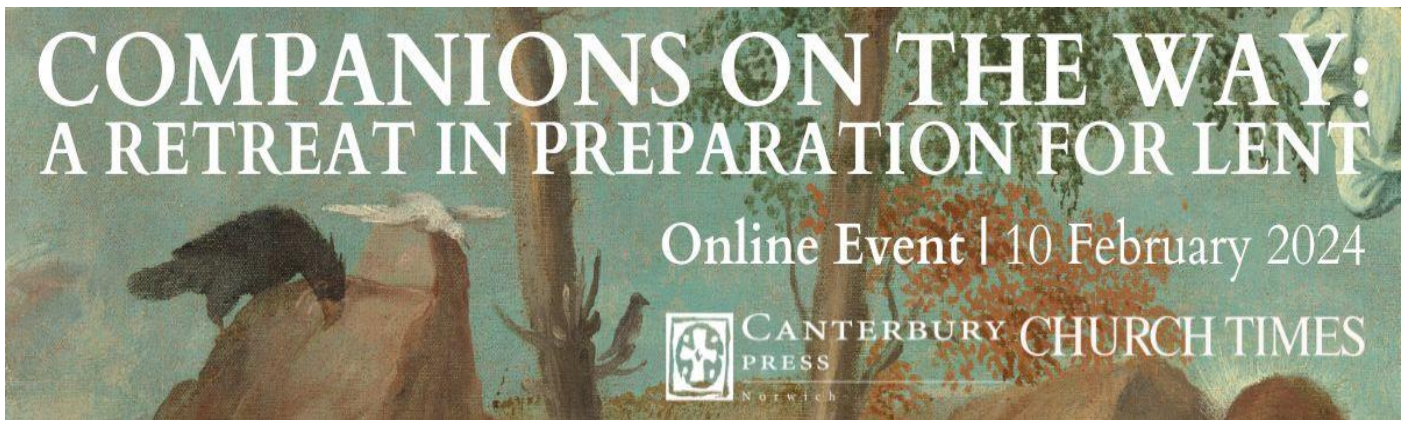
**We are actively looking for Trustees to join us. If you are interested please email [mail@parkinsons.me](mailto:mail@parkinsons.me)? (subject : parkinsons.me trustees enquiry)**

Your involvement, whether through financial contributions, volunteering, or raising awareness, significantly helps Parkinsons.Me in its mission to uplift and empower those affected by Parkinson's.

Your support is not just an investment in the charity but an investment in a brighter, more hopeful future for individuals living with Parkinson's. Parkinsons.Me relies on your support to continue its impactful work, ensuring that no one faces Parkinson's alone.

Together, let's continue pushing the boundaries of what's possible and make a profound difference in the lives of countless individuals. Your dedication to making a difference is deeply appreciated.





**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2024** 10 am – 1 pm

‘Jesus was in the wilderness forty days, tested by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him.’ Mark 1.13

Lent is demanding. It strips us back, asks us to set aside the amusements that distract us and the comforts that cushion us in order that we may be more truly known. But it never asks us to be alone.

Whether disturbing, strange or assuring, there will be company on our journey through Lent. Our speakers reflect on who they would choose as a spiritual companion for the season and reveal that even the most unexpected or unwelcome companion can draw us nearer to God.

A Lent retreat offering a morning of worship and reflection. Speakers include Jay Hulme, Rachel Mann, Rob Marshall and Nick Papadopulos. Opening and closing worship with Richard Carter and the St Martin’s Voices. In association with Canterbury Press.

Book a ticket to access the event at [events@hymnsam.co.uk](mailto:events@hymnsam.co.uk)

## PROGRAMME

10.00 Welcome and introduction - Christine Smith

10.05 Opening worship – Richard Carter and the St Martin’s Voices

10.30 With a friend like this, who needs...? - Nick Papadopulos introduces an unruly companion for your infernal Lenten journey

11.00 Hiking with St Peter - Rob Marshall takes us up the Mountain of Transfiguration

11.30 Break

11.45 A relenting heart – Lent with Jane Austen - Rachel Mann

12.15 Finding a way in the wilderness - Jay Hulme goes in search of some saintly companions for the season

12.45 Closing worship – Richard Carter and the St Martin’s Voices

13.00 Close

## CONTRIBUTORS

Jay Hulme is an award-winning performance poet the author of the bestselling collections, *The Backwater Sermons* and *The Vanishing Song*.

Rachel Mann is a priest, poet, theologian, novelist and broadcaster. The author of numerous books, her latest work is *A Truth Universally Acknowledged: Forty Days with Jane Austen*. Rachel is the Archdeacon of Salford and Bolton in the Diocese of Manchester.

Rob Marshall is a familiar voice from BBC radio's *Thought for the Day* which he has presented regularly for almost thirty years. He is a priest and honorary canon in the Diocese of St Albans and author of *Transfiguration: 50 Pilgrim Steps*

Nick Papadopoulos is the Dean of Salisbury. He is the author of *The Infernal Word: Notes from a Rebel Angel*, described as 'Deceptively simple; profoundly insightful; immensely entertaining' by Archbishop Justin Welby.

Richard Carter is a priest at St Martin-in-the-Fields in London's Trafalgar Square, and founder of its contemplative Nazareth Community. He is the author of *The City is My Monastery*, *In Search of the Lost*, and *Letters From Nazareth*.

#### TICKET INFORMATION

Group rates: we know many of you like to watch our online events together. We have a new group rate of £25 and this will allow up to 10 people to watch our online event together. For groups of 10 plus, please get in touch with us.

Questions? Contact [events@hymnsam.co.uk](mailto:events@hymnsam.co.uk).

**IMPORTANT:** Once you've ordered your ticket please check your inbox, and if necessary your Spam and Promotions folder if a Gmail user, to retrieve your order confirmation email and your ticket. The link to the broadcast will be embedded in your ticket and joining instructions will be sent to you in advance of the event. Please add [events@hymnsam.co.uk](mailto:events@hymnsam.co.uk) and [orders@hymnsam.co.uk](mailto:orders@hymnsam.co.uk) to your safe senders list. If it hasn't arrived safely please contact us at [events@hymnsam.co.uk](mailto:events@hymnsam.co.uk). Thank you.

## **From the Learning & Development Newsletter of the Methodist Church.**

### **The latest newsletter focuses on the Methodist Way of Life theme 'Care'.**

Under the 'Our Calling' headings, 'Learning and Caring' is grouped together. I have often wondered at this, but have come to realise over the years that learning to care needs to be at the heart of any Christian curriculum. In Brian McLaren's book *Faith after Doubt*, he asks what our churches would look like if they became schools of Love, where the syllabus is based on exploring how we can best love God, love our neighbours, love ourselves and love our planet and all creation. Would we notice the difference? Would our churches be transformed?

As I think about the work we do in the Learning Network, I am struck by how much of what we deliver has, at its heart, the aim of learning to care well. Whether it be safeguarding training, EDI, the new pastoral care course 'Who Cares?' or line management training and support for lay employees. We are developing our understanding and skills in order to care better.

It is not always easy though; care and compassion are costly. Glennon Doyle, an American best-selling author and founder and president of *Together Rising*, an all-women-led non-profit organization supporting women, families, and children in crisis, says:

"I understand now that I'm not a mess but a deeply feeling person in a messy world. I explain that now, when someone asks me why I cry so often, 'For the same reason I laugh so often – because I'm paying attention.'"

When we see people in pain, communities suffering, our world in crisis we are affected at a cellular level. However, looking away is not an option, Jesus tells us in the gospel caring is the greatest commandment and therefore our challenge, as disciples, is to make it our life-long commitment, our highest calling.

Rachel McCallam

**Learning and Development Manager**

## **CHILDREY**

**11<sup>th</sup> February 11:00 am Morning Worship** led by Helen Carter

**25<sup>th</sup> February 11:00 am Morning Worship** led by Revd Keith Underhill

Members of Childrey Chapel attended the funeral of James 'Jim' Lloyd Hughes on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November at Wantage Methodist Church.

Jim and Sonia were frequent attendees at Childrey services and it was always a pleasure to see them. Jim was a fervent supporter of Wolverhampton Wanderers FC and it was nice to see fellow Wolves supporters at the funeral service.

He had a mischievous sense of humour. Not so long ago when asked at a service if we believed in miracles Jim replied that he was hoping for one on the Monday night as Wolves were playing Manchester United at old Trafford!

We will all miss Jim and send our prayers to Sonia at this difficult time and we hope to see her at future services.

### **Prayers**

We remember in our prayers:

Vicky, Robin and Becky Legge and the Legge family grandchildren. John Cliffe. 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**

The **first Coffee Morning of 2024 is on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February** from 10m till noon in the church. Linda and Mark Jones are our hosts for the morning. Proceeds are for Emmaus. Emmaus communities aren't just homes for homeless people, they are places to develop skills and rebuild lives. There are 29 Emmaus communities in the UK. Each one helps more than 30 people each year to rebuild their lives. They urgently need more communities to give even more homeless people the support they badly need to help themselves.

We hope you can join us for a chat, coffee/tea and cake. There will be a book stall, mainly railway books but some others too; also some handmade cards on sale.

We look forward to seeing you.

**Ecumenical "Prayer for Revival"** will be held on the first Sunday of each month in our church. The next meeting is on **Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> February** at 6.30 pm till 8pm. All are invited to come and pray with us. All are welcome.

**Film Club** will meet on **Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> February** at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room. We will be showing **A Man called Otto** (2022 2h 6m 15)

*Otto is a grump who has given up on life following the loss of his wife and wants to end it all. When a young family moves in nearby, he meets his match in quick-witted Marisol, leading to a friendship that will turn his world around.*

*Cast: Tom Hanks, Mariana Trevino, Rachel Keller*

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

**Church Council** meets on **Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February** at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room. All who are interested in the life and work of Grove Methodist Church are invited to come and be part of this meeting. We look forward to seeing you.

### **Tuesday Fellowship.**

The **first Tuesday Fellowship of 2024** is on **Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> January** at 2.15 pm. Our minister Keith Underhill is coming to speak to us. We are meeting at the home of Lesley and Richard Hummerstone, 29 St John's Road, Grove. All are welcome.

In February, **Tuesday Fellowship** will meet on **Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> February** at 2.15 pm. Libby Bolton is our speaker and we will meet at 14 Harlington Avenue, Grove, home of Jenny Marriott. All are welcome.

**Craft Group** meets at the Cornerstone Coffee Shop on Monday afternoons from 2 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** for your support for the Coffee Morning in December for the Wantage & Grove Foodbank. Donations raised the sum of £202.10. Thank you to everyone for their support and help on the day.

Thank you also to all those who generously continue to support the Foodbank by putting contributions in the box in the entrance hall week by week. We have lost count of the number of bags of goodies which were taken down to a central collection point in Wantage in December – so many. **Thank you.** All your contributions are very much appreciated.

The need is still great. There is a note of thanks on the noticeboard from the Food Bank for our support and saying that during 2023 they delivered over 1,000 food parcels. It also says they are averaging 3-5 parcels a day on a normal week so our support is still very much needed.

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.

### **A date for your diary:**

**World Day of Prayer** (formerly Women's World Day of Prayer) will be held **at Grove Methodist Church** on **Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> March** at 2.30 pm. This year's service has been arranged by the ladies of Palestine. There will be refreshments available at the end of the service. All are welcome.

### **Rev John & Sally Durant The Vale Benefice say Goodbye**

On 27th January the Vale Benefice said goodbye to John & Sally. We thank God for them & all they have brought to the Vale Benefice and the Church in Wantage & Grove. They will be truly missed. To send them on their way into semi-retirement with love & prayers, there was a whole Benefice leaving celebration on 27th January in the St. John's Church Hall, with buffet, drinks, music and a quiz!

# **WANTAGE**

## **Holy Habits (lite iv)**

Our fourth Holy Habit that we'll be exploring together is **Worship**.

As before, there will be one dedicated Sunday each month of this three month period that will focus specifically on the concept of Worship – the first one being **February 4<sup>th</sup>** which will be led by Keith.

The **film** that we will be watching (date still to be confirmed) is Sister Act.

There are **two books** that we are suggesting people might like to read this time round:

“A friend for little bear” by Harry Horse (a Children's picture book) published by Walker Books ISBN 978-1-4063-3166-0 and

“The Essex Serpent” by Sarah Perry published by Serpents Tail (2016) an imprint of Profile Books Ltd ISBN 9781788169622

This novel (historical fiction) explores whether there's more to life than meets the eye or that faith convinces us of things not seen (Hebrews 11.1) It addresses the issues of folk religion, superstition, true faith and an awareness of the beauty of creation and a sense of awe and wonder (which as we know, is at the heart of worship)

### **Book Discussion**

*Jane Kent (07443 420205)*

We had a great discussion about ‘The Christmas Mystery’ in Cornerstone in January. We will next meet on **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April** at Cornerstone at 10 am to discuss these two books - feel free to read one or both. Everyone is welcome- as we have a children’s book this time it would be wonderful to welcome some children too!

**LUNCH** The next '**Eating Together**' occasion will be on **4<sup>th</sup> February** straight after the launch of our next Holy Habit. This will be another soup, bread and cheese lunch. There is a sign up sheet on the board in the hall vestibule. Please do **sign up** so we know how many to cater for. If you miss signing up on 28<sup>th</sup> January but wish to come to lunch, please let Helen know on 07881 504623.

I am looking for 3 people who love making soup and would be happy to supply enough for about 8 to 10 people. If this is you, please talk to Helen Carter (07881 504623 or 01235 764810). Thank you.

### **Your help is needed.**

We are expecting a full church for **Libby Hawkness-Smith's Local Preacher accreditation service** on February 18<sup>th</sup>. There will be refreshments after the service so lots of homemade cakes and biscuits will be needed! If you are able to help by supplying a cake or some biscuits, **please could you talk to Helen Carter or Carolyn Roche.**

Thank you very much.

*"If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"* Perhaps that closing line in Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind' is an encouraging thought at this time of year, during the transition from short, cold days towards the uplifting signs of lighter, longer and warmer ones ahead. This winter we have experienced the loss of several members of our congregation. We recognise the sadness it has brought to the families involved, which we acknowledge in our efforts to support them through our prayers. Hopefully the metaphor linking new life with the arrival of Spring can be reflected for them in God's promise that those who leave us are beginning a new life at peace in His care.

**Brian Soffe** died in the JR Hospital on 4<sup>th</sup> September having been admitted there following a fall, and his funeral has taken place at Garford Crematorium. Poor health had prevented both Brian and Jane from worshipping with us recently, and they have been on our Prayer List throughout this time. We continue to remember Jane, Emma and all of Brian's family at this period of particular difficulty and sadness for them now.

Also, on 4<sup>th</sup> December **Brenda Edwards** died at Abingdon Community Hospital. Brenda was one of the residents at Fleur de Lis who began worshipping with us as soon as she moved into her new accommodation. She celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday a year ago, and her cheerful presence with us on Sunday mornings will be missed. We offer our love and prayers to Brenda's son Andrew, her daughter Linda and to all of her large family.

**Dilys Seymour**, one of our oldest members at almost 101, died on New Year's Eve. She had moved from Wantage in 2022 to live in a Care Home near to her daughter Alison in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. A Thanksgiving Service in our Church will take place on **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February** at 12 noon. We think of Dilys's daughter Alison, her son Richard as well as her niece and nephew Janet and Rob Charles, praying that they are comforted by God's love for them, and for all of Dilys's family.

On 11<sup>th</sup> December a Thanksgiving Service was held for **John Morton**, who died a month earlier. It was a privilege for everyone who attended to learn about John's life. The efforts of Gill, Derek and Felicity, ensured that he was given such a breadth of fulfilling experiences despite his disabilities. These, and his day to day care, were made possible for John through the dedication of his family, support organisations and many volunteers.

We still miss **Jane Rudd, Arnold Tucker, Celia Roser, Meriel Robson**, and more recently **Pam Lowerson** because illness is preventing them from being able to join us for Sunday services. Our Church family feels incomplete with their absence, and we reassure them that we will continue to hold them all in our prayers.

Similarly we ask God's comfort and support for **Eileen Rennie** and **Stella Belcher** in their recent bereavements. Eileen's brother Charlie died in Scotland on his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday on New Year's Eve, and Stella's husband Patrick died on 16<sup>th</sup> January. Stella had been staying with him at Elmbrook Court so that she could add to the care he was receiving there. They too are in our thoughts and we pray for them both and their families. **Graham Godfrey** has spent some more time in hospital, having been admitted on Christmas Day. He is now back in Bridge House Care Home in Abingdon.



We send Graham our love, hoping that he will regain some strength to once again enjoy the activities offered to the residents, particularly the musical sessions.

It is a delight to welcome **Libby Fairweather** into our church family. Libby is Jane Kent's Mum. She has recently moved into Richmond Village, and has transferred her membership to our church, and is worshipping with us regularly on Sunday mornings. We hope that Libby will settle happily in her new home and new church, and we look forward to getting to know her better.

**Praying for each other.** In February Alan Chipperfield and Moreen Webber, who are on **Nicky Atkinson's Pastoral List**, will be included in the prayer time at the Tuesday Bible Study group, as well as Margaret Fordham, Lizzy Horton, Julie Horton, Amy Lancaster, Alison & Clive Phillips, Barbara Porter, Kelvin Rose, Mary Spalding, and Marjorie and Colin White who are on **Ann Barber's Pastoral List**.

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 Bible Study Group.

## **Kids@Church**

*Jane, Dave, Cath and Keith*

In the church in January Cath read an illustrated story to us all about the life of Jesus - as he grew from baby to adult and thinking about some of the people we know he met in his life. Some people recognised him as God's Son, some didn't ... some people who saw something special in Jesus were some fishermen who chose to give up that way of life and follow Jesus. In the hall we made fish mobiles before tucking into breakfast!

Our next few Kids@Church dates are:-

**18<sup>th</sup> February**    17<sup>th</sup> March    21<sup>st</sup> April

We meet at 9.30 am in the church then move through to the hall and always finish sharing food together. It is planned specifically for children and their families and we'd love to see you there! Any questions please don't hesitate to call Keith on 01235 763321 or call Jane on 07443 420205.

## **Evening Lent Group**

*Alison Phillips*

There will be an evening Lent group, on **Thursday evenings** from **February 15<sup>th</sup> to March 21<sup>st</sup>** arriving from 7 pm for coffee and chat, then to start at 7.30 pm and finish at 9.00 pm latest. Please let me know if you would like to be part of this Lent group.

It will meet usually at 1 Mill Paddock, Letcombe Regis.

We hope to be using material by George Giles called "At Home in Lent: An exploration of Lent through 46 objects". Gordon Giles spends each week in a different room gleaning spiritual lessons from everyday household objects. As a result, you might discover that finding God in the normal pattern of life - even in the mundane - transforms how you approach each day. Running as a thread through it all are the seven Rs of Lent: regret, repentance, resolution, recognition, reconciliation, renewal and resurrection.

Sometimes an urgent request for prayer comes our way, and sometimes there is a prayer in the prayer box which needs our immediate attention. With those circumstances in mind a WhatsApp group was set up so we can share such need for prayer. This is a small group just now, but it would be lovely if more of the church family felt able to join us. If you would like to know more, or indicate you want to join the group, then please talk to Helen Carter.

**Prayer list***Eileen Rennie*

Loving God, we praise and thank you for this New Year and we pray that you will bless us all as we endeavour to follow your plan for your world and for peace for all. We have renewed our Covenant with you and we ask for your guidance in following your ways in all that we do, living our lives according to your will and purpose for each one of us.

We urgently pray for all the countries in the world living through war and conflict, famine and oppression in the knowledge that this is not your will being done.

May we seek to be a fully inclusive Church family caring for all within our own neighbourhood and always be searching for ways in which we can spread your love to the wider world that all will live in peace and joy and an equal sharing of the earth's resources.

So many people are in so much need of our prayers so we ask that you encourage us to be diligent in prayer.

We offer our prayer in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.

Please pray for

Bethan Grant, Anne, Carol Mackinder, Emma Wright and family, Caroline, Anne and Doug Hatto, Richard in York, Adrian, Diane, Diane's daughters Julie and Claire, Geoff, Meriel, Jane Robinson, Maggie, June Hartle, Richard and Anne, Peter, Kathryn Clark, Louise, John and Jo, Mary Spalding, Jane and Harry Rudd, Jane and Emma Soffe and family, Trudy. All at Bullingdon Prison, staff, prisoners and visitors. Our Ministers, Deacon, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, Community Chaplains, [kids@church](mailto: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 March Newsletter, please let me know by **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February** in order for me to meet the Newsletter deadline. Eileen Rennie

Telephone 01235-224284, or e-mail [eileenrennie@icloud.com](mailto:eileenrennie@icloud.com)

**Tuesday February 13<sup>th</sup>, 12.30 to 1 pm - Lunchtime prayers** in the vestry. All are welcome (if there are too many people for the vestry, we can move to another part of the premises!). The format will change depending on what we feel is needed. We will maybe pray after reading a psalm or other passage from the bible, or go straight into praying about a situation in the world or community. We will always pray for those asking for prayer. This will be a monthly prayer time - usually on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, but watch for a change in any one month. If you want more information, please talk to Helen Carter.

## **Tuesday Afternoon Prayer and Study Group**

*Eileen Rennie*

In December we continued our Advent Study, They Sang and gained much to reflect on while listening and sharing our views on the four songs in the Christmas Story, Zechariah's song (the Benedictus) Mary's song (Magnificat) the song of the angels (Gloria in Excelsis) and Simeon's song (Nunc Dimittus). The first week in January we each brought a reflection of our choice highlighting Our Song in either Song, Poem, Bible Reading or our own thoughts on how the Advent, Christmas season is so special to us. It all knit together so beautifully highlighting God's presence with us and demonstrating how worship together can be so meaningful with God's guiding hand playing a vital part. We then returned to the final two sessions on Holy Habits, Eating Together and Keith came to talk to us on 23<sup>rd</sup> January on a subject of his choice.

February will see us embark on a Lent Study. At present we are experiencing some problems in getting enough copies of any particular study for the whole group but this will be resolved and all will be advised in due course. We have booked our regular visit to the Convent in Holy Week to visit the Stations of the Cross for Reflection and Prayer. If you would like to join us for this visit on **Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March** at 2 pm please let Eileen Rennie know as soon as possible and I will add your name to the booking form.

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 February are as follows:

- 6<sup>th</sup> No Meeting - Memorial Service for Dilys Seymour.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Lent Study, Session 1 TBA. This meeting includes the Monthly Prayer list.
- 20<sup>th</sup> Lent Study, Session 2
- 27<sup>th</sup> Lent Study, Session 3

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

## 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 2.30pm, lasting between 30-45 mins. In December we sang some Advent carols and our bible reading was about John the Baptist. In January our bible reading was about the Wise Men. Our next session will be on **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February**, when we will be looking at 1 Corinthians 13. 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.

## Knit & Chat

*Carolyn Roche, 01235 764310*



Once again we can celebrate the successful flight of over 1000 angels into the local community and the local care homes. Thank you to all those who helped knit, label or distribute them enabling each angel and message to find its home. We have already begun on those needed for the 2024 host of angels. You may also like to join us in knitting hats for the homeless or just continue with your own project.

Last year I took part in a Lent Knitalong run by a group at Victoria Methodist church in the Bristol Circuit. Each day there was a reflection and 3 or 4 rows of knitting pattern to follow. Eventually it made a scarf with Easter symbols on it. This year it is going to be a shawl but you won't know what it will be like until you finish at end of Lent. Please let me know if you wish to join me in taking part with this.

Our meetings in February will return to the first and third Mondays of the month and will be on **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February** and **Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February** at 2 pm in the Hall. Looking forward to seeing you then with the project you are currently working on.

Remember that you can join our Knit & Chat Facebook group. Please let June G know if you wish to do so. If you need wool, have any other queries or just fancy a chat do please call me.

## Christmas Tree Festival

*June Grunwald*



It seems strange reporting on the festival which took place in early December! We had a lovely range of trees which had been decorated by a variety of church and community groups. We also had a range of stalls in the hall which included a gift stall and cake stall run by our church folk. The local folk band Greengage also played



in the Chapel on the Friday evening. Kids @ Church had a craft activity table in the hall on the Friday evening which proved popular. This year our charity was Blood Cancer UK and the final amount sent was £669.83. Many thanks to all who helped to make it such a successful event. Many commented on the warm welcome and how much they looked forward to coming.

## Community Café

*June Grunwald*

The Community Café numbers have fluctuated in the last couple of months, mainly down to the very cold weather. The café did open on New Year's Day and was attended by 30 people. Once again Morgan brought a quiz for folk to do.

We have had more sad news in the café in that the wife of one of our regular café customers passed away. Keith became a regular to the café after his wife moved to a local care home. He has enjoyed the chat with our café regulars especially about football. We were also sad to learn about the passing of Brenda Edwards. We remember, fondly, Brenda celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at the café in January 2023. On a happier note we were very pleased to see Celia Roser back at the café.

The café does not charge for coffee or home-made cakes, but each week we have "piggy banks" for donations to a charity. From September to November our charity for donations was Cornerstone, our local Christian café and bookshop in Grove. In the end we raised £505.55. Our charity for December, January and February is Grove Day Centre and, at the time of publication, we have already raised £246.

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.

## Wantage & Grove Food Bank

*Helen Carter*

In 2023 the number of requests for food parcels exceeded 1,500! That is by far the highest number of requests in any year to date. So, please keep donating food and money. The box in the chapel vestibule is available for donations. All money should be in a sealed envelope indicating it is a foodbank donation. If you would like a receipt for the money please enclose your details - name and address. And thank you very much for the generosity shown from within the church family either through donations via the church or via the supermarket collections.

There is a **particular need just now for tinned potatoes, tinned pulses and treats (chocolates, crisps etc).**

### **Annual Report**

Contributions for the church annual report / review should reach Gordon Skidmore by **March 1<sup>st</sup>** please. Email [wmcannualreport@gmail.com](mailto:wmcannualreport@gmail.com)

The annual church meeting will be on April 28<sup>th</sup> and we would wish to publish the report/review with the March edition of CGWNEWS.

Thank you

## What is happening on the Wantage premises at present?

Sunday	9:30 am 10:30 am	Kids@Church Morning Worship	In person and on Zoom	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday Weekly
Monday	Morning Afternoon	Drop-in Café Knit & Chat	in the Hall in the Hall	Weekly see article
Tuesday	Afternoon	Prayer & Study Group	in the Parlour	Weekly
Friday	Afternoon	Caritas Choirs		Weekly in term

### Users All in the Hall

Monday	Evening	Slimming World		Weekly
Tuesday	Morning Evening	MIND Wantage Camera Club		Weekly Weekly
Wednesday	Afternoon Evening	My Life My Choice Wantage Sings		Last Wednesday Weekly
Thursday	Midday	KAWI		3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday
Friday	Morning	Mothers & Toddlers		Weekly in term
Saturday	Morning	Dads Out		1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday

### January

Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Morning	Holocaust Memorial Day		Chapel
---------------------------	---------	------------------------	--	--------

### February

Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Afternoon	Private Party		Hall
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup>	12:00 noon	Memorial Service		Hall
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Day	Conference		Hall
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Evening	Holocaust Memorial Day		Chapel
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Evening	Music Makers		Hall

## DIARY for JANUARY/ FEBRUARY

### JANUARY

Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	<b>HMD Reflection</b> at Wantage	p6
<b>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup></b>	10:30 am	<b>Covenant Service</b> at Grove	
Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup>	2:15 pm	<b>Grove Tuesday Fellowship</b>	p13

### FEBRUARY

Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	7:30 pm	<b>Taizé Evening Prayer for Candlemas</b> at St John Vianney	p5
Saturday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10:00 am	<b>Coffee Morning</b> at Grove	p13
<b>Sunday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	6:30 pm	<b>Prayer for Revival</b> at Grove	p13
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup>	2:00 pm	<b>Knit &amp; Chat</b> at Wantage	p20
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup>	12:00 noon	<b>Memorial Service</b> for Dilys Seymour at Wantage	
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup>	2:30 pm	<b>Bible Study</b> at Elmbrook Care Home	p20
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 pm	<b>HMD Event</b> at Wantage	pp6/7
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup>		ASH WEDNESDAY	
	10:00 am	<b>Stepping out with Noah</b>	p4
Friday, 16 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 pm	<b>Film Club</b> at Grove	p13
<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	9:30 am	<b>Kids@Church</b> at Wantage	p17
	3:00 pm	<b>Libby Harkness-Smith's Accreditation Service</b> at Wantage	p4

### DEADLINE for March CGW NEWS

Monday 19 <sup>th</sup>	2:00 pm	<b>Knit &amp; Chat</b> at Wantage	p20
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 pm	<b>Wantage Church Council</b>	
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	7:30 pm	<b>Grove Church Council</b>	
	7:30 pm	<b>Music Makers</b> at Wantage	
Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup>	2:15 pm	<b>Grove Tuesday Fellowship</b>	p13

### MARCH

Friday 1 <sup>st</sup>		<b>Wantage Annual Report Deadline</b>	
Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 pm	<b>Circuit Meeting</b> at Milton	

## SERVICES during FEBRUARY

All Services from Wantage are shared on Zoom

### Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> Ordinary 5

Lectionary:

Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11,20c; 1Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

10:30 am Wantage

Rev Keith Underhill

10:30 am Grove

Elizabeth Wood

6:30 pm Grove

Prayer for Revival

### Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday before Lent Racial Justice

Lectionary:

2Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

10:30 am Wantage

Elizabeth Wood

10:30 am Grove

Rev Keith Underhill

11:00 am Childrey

Helen Carter

### Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> Lent 1

Lectionary:

Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

9:30 am Wantage

Kids@Church

10:30 am Wantage

Rev Keith Underhill

10:30 am Grove

Elizabeth Wood

3:00 pm Wantage

LP Accreditation Service

### Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> Lent 2

Lectionary:

Genesis 17:1-7,15,16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

10:30 am Wantage

Rev Bruce Thompson

10:30 am Grove

Peter Hemmings

11:00 am Childrey

Rev Keith Underhill