

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

The Methodist Church

GROVE & WANTAGE SECTOR NEWS



I will hold the Christ light for you

February 2025

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keith.underhill@methodist.org.uk

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Contributions for the **next Newsletter** (March 2025) should be sent to the editor by email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 16th February 2024**

e-mail : wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com

Tel : 01235 766655 / 07710 214601

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

Sector Newsletter Contribution deadline dates – 2025

March	Sunday 16 th February
April	Sunday 23 rd March
May	Sunday 27 th April
June	Sunday 18 th May
July/August	Sunday 22 nd June

From the Manse.....

For the past couple of weeks or so, Pepper has been wearing a muzzle when we take her out. This has nothing to do with aggression, biting or bad behaviour and everything to do with her scavenging when out walking. This is a tendency that led to her having an overnight stay in our vet's 24-hour emergency hospital in Woodstock!

A check-up that included scans and X-rays, and saline infusions showed that there was a foreign body in her colon - eventually she passed the green fuzzy outer coating of a tennis ball that she had picked up and swallowed a few weeks earlier.

So, whilst we are in the process of training her with the help of a behaviourist to leave discarded items alone, she goes out looking like a canine version of Hannibal Lecter.

It is interesting that there are those we pass on our walks who now take a second glance at her and you can feel them judging Pepper by her appearance and making up their minds without knowing her, labelling her as a potentially dangerous dog.

Of course, this is nothing compared to what so many people deal with day after day. A constant judgement on what kind of person they are and what they are like purely by outward appearances.

Genesis, the opening book in the Bible, reminds us that we are all made in the image of God – we claim this important truth for ourselves and equally for all those we meet or come across.

Within the Methodist Church an understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion is just one of the ways in which we seek to overcome prejudice, suspicion and a judgemental attitude based on nothing more than how someone looks or how they may somehow be 'different' to how we are.

In this month of February, a time so often associated with love – we would do well to remember the words of Paul Field from his hymn, 'Go peaceful';

*"Show kindness
See everyone
Through heaven's eyes"*

With love and God bless

Keith

Pastoral Care Arrangements from September 2025

The following announcement was read out at the beginning of each service on January 19th.

The Wantage & Abingdon Circuit consists of 7 churches and is currently served by 4 ordained ministers. From September onwards, following the retirement of Revd Keith Underhill and the relocation to another Circuit of Deacon Selina Nisbett, there will be just 2 ordained ministers to have pastoral oversight of all seven churches.

It has been agreed that **Revd Georgina Bondzi-Simpson** will be the Superintendent Minister with specific oversight of **All Saints Abingdon, Trinity Church Abingdon, & Grove**, with occasional involvement with **Peachcroft**; and that **Revd Bruce Thompson** will have specific oversight of **Didcot, Milton, Wallingford, & Wantage**.

The reduction in staff numbers brings with it many changes and challenges, not least the pastoral care of each church, plus additional calls on the time of our ministers. In the coming weeks we will be addressing this at each of the Church Councils. The Circuit Leadership Team strongly encourages all to consider how, from September 2025 onwards, we might together ensure that not only are the members of churches cared for as effectively as possible but also the ministers too.

A booklet will be produced that will highlight these changes and possible ways forward as together we work towards ever more meaningful ways of being church in each of our local settings.

Please remember all the ministers in your prayers, Revd Keith as he prepares to retire from Circuit ministry, Deacon Selina as she prepares to move to another Circuit, Revd Georgina, and Revd Bruce as they prepare to take up additional responsibilities in the Circuit. Please pray too for the future of our Circuit, for the Lord to continue to lead and direct the Circuit Stewards as we plan for the changes we are going to be faced with.

Pastoral Care at Wantage and Grove

In the announcement from the Circuit Leadership Team that was read out in all the churches on Sunday 19th January and is reprinted above, we were reminded that “The reduction in staff numbers brings with it many changes and challenges, not least the pastoral care of each church, plus additional calls on the time of our ministers.

In the coming weeks we will be addressing this at each of the Church Councils.

“The Circuit Leadership Team strongly encourages everyone to consider how, from September 2025 onwards, we might together ensure that, not only are the members of churches cared for as effectively as possible, but also the ministers too.”

As you may be aware, this is something that we have already been working on for quite a while now and we plan to officially launch this in the spring.

In the meantime, we give thanks for all the care, love and support that is so freely given within the life of our churches and for the ways in which we look after one another.

London Landmark's half marathon featuring Liz, Becca (Jon - Liz's brother) and Keith

You might find it hard to imagine me running - let alone undertaking a half-marathon, yet, **Liz, Becca (Jon - Liz's brother) and I** will be taking on the **London Landmark's half marathon on Sunday 6th April**.

We are running to raise money for the Skye High Foundation and the brilliant work they do.

It is a small charity specifically providing support to hospital staff, medical professionals and families during and after the loss of a twin, or a baby from another multiple birth and we wanted to do something practical to help them as a way of saying thank you for all their help and support to our nephew and his wife.

We run in loving memory of Nuala, never forgotten, and of Nancy who brings so much joy. It's great to have Jon, Papa to Nuala and Nancy running with us.

We would value your prayers for this venture and if you felt able to sponsor us that would mean a great deal.

The link to our Just Giving page is below.

https://www.justgiving.com/page/keith-underhill-1736248913715?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

Stepping out with Noah in February

Our walk this month will be on **9th February at 2:00 pm** and we will meet in the car park at Wantage Methodist Church and walk through to St. Andrew's Church in Letcombe Regis. This will be a round trip of around 3.5 miles.

Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home

June Grunwald

This Bible Study is held at the care home on Grove Road. It is held on the **second Monday of the month at 2.30 pm**, lasting between 30-45 minutes. In December we had a theme of Advent. Technology failed us again but as the advent songs were well known it didn't hamper the session too much. The care home and I worked out a back up plan for the technology for January, but as is always the way, it worked. We had a lively session in January based on the Wise Men and the hymns chosen for listening to before the study session and during the session proved popular. Our theme for **10th February will be Love**. Our theme for **10th March will be Luke 4:1-13**; our theme for 14th April will be Luke 19:28-40; our theme for 12th May will be Psalm 23.

The group has recently had some new residents join us. 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. In between bible studies I pop into Elmbrook on an irregular basis and have a chat with some of the Bible Study group and any other residents who would like a chat. My thanks to Helen and John Carter who have been ferrying our church members to the sessions.

Wantage & Grove Foodbank

January Newsletter 2025

D Townsend - on behalf of Foodbank

Happy New Year! And a very big thank you to everyone who donated money or food via reverse advent calendars, secret Santas, donation boxes or in fact in any other way. We are so encouraged by the generosity of this wonderful community! We are very grateful to the on-going support of everyone as sadly the need for food parcels continues to be a concern.

Throughout 2024, we delivered 1,095 parcels with an extra 105 Christmas parcels over the festive period.

If you wish to continue donating food - collection points can be found at the following places: Sainsburys, Waitrose, The Kings Centre Gift shop in Wantage and Cornerstone coffee shop in Grove.

We do have a website: Wantageandgrovefoodbank.org.uk and a facebook page - do visit those if you'd like to - or direct people there if they'd like more information.

We are continuing to look for larger premises; as you can imagine with the increased demand, we need more space. If you know of anywhere local to Wantage/Grove, ground floor, secure, easily accessible and with parking please do get in touch!

Many thanks again to you all for your ongoing and generous support

Second anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine

Saturday, 24th February, is the second anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Prayer

To mark this, the prayer below has been written by a Ukrainian family who are being hosted by the Black Country Methodist Circuit.

Lord God of power,
You alone work miracles, so be kind to all and hear us.
Help us God, our Saviour, and deliver the people of Ukraine from persecution.
Come to our aid and destroy the intentions and unrighteous boldness of those who go to war against our people.
Calm those who oppose your commandments.
Grant us all peace, salvation and joy in our hearts.
For you are protection and salvation for those who trust in you.
We give you glory, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever.
Amen

Statement on the announcement of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas

The commencement of a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel will come as an enormous relief for all living in Gaza and for those waiting for the release of hostages held by Hamas. The UN reports that 70% of those killed in Gaza are women and children and, even in the last few days, schools and hospitals sheltering those displaced have been bombed. Our churches deeply mourn the loss of life. Each person lost is uniquely and equally precious in the eyes of God.

We long for a halt to the violence in Gaza and for the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners. The ceasefire announced today is only a first phase lasting six weeks. As church leaders we call for the ceasefire to be permanent and unconditional so that humanitarian aid can be rolled out unimpeded in Gaza. The UN agency, UNRWA, has unparalleled capacity to deliver desperately needed support. Israel's ban of UNRWA jeopardises vital life-saving assistance. We ask the UK government to make clear that the restriction of humanitarian aid in this way would have consequences for bilateral relations.

We urge the UK government to uphold standards of International Humanitarian Law. Our government and the international community must fully support the International Criminal Court in its investigations regarding grave breaches of international law.

While a ceasefire is being negotiated in Gaza, there are escalations elsewhere in Palestine, as evidenced by the Israeli drone attack this week on the refugee camp in Jenin, killing at least six people. This takes place against the backdrop of a continued expansion of settlements in the West Bank and the destruction of the homes and property of Palestinians. Our churches will continue to pray for a redoubling of efforts to bring an end to Israel's occupation in order that all Israelis and Palestinians might live in peace, harmony, and friendship.

We pray for a just, equitable, and lasting peace in the region that goes beyond simply the absence of violence. Our churches will continue to work closely with Israeli and Palestinian partners, agonising with them in their current sufferings yet confident that God's grace and deliverance offers hope for the future for all.

Revd Lynn Green, General Secretary, the Baptist Union of Great Britain

Revd Helen Cameron, President of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Britain

Carolyn Godfrey, Vice-President of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Britain

Revd Philip Brooks, Deputy General Secretary (Mission), the United Reformed Church

The Gaza/Lebanon Justice Appeal

The Methodist Church in Britain is relaunching and expanding its Gaza appeal to support emergency work being carried out there, and in Lebanon. [The Gaza/Lebanon Justice Appeal](#) will be supported by All We Can and the United Reformed Church and will benefit partners working in the area. We hope that by working together we will be able to have a greater impact on the work we do alongside our partners.

Jude Levermore, Head of Mission for the Methodist Church says: "We are called to be co-workers for God's mission of reconciliation and justice, to act and serve among fragile humanity. We believe the crucified Christ is embracing the pain of war affecting people from all parties and backgrounds and we feel compelled therefore to act together with care and compassion. We wait for sanity to prevail but in the meantime we stand with our partners in solidarity and give what we can."

David Thomson, CEO of All We Can says: "The relaunch and expansion of this emergency appeal, in collaboration with the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, is part of our commitment to better serve where the need is greatest. Alongside our partners, we call for peace in the region and the respect of humanitarian international law by all. We're putting our efforts into supporting those who are already responding directly, meeting the urgent humanitarian crisis as it only continues to worsen."

Philip Brooks, Deputy General Secretary (Mission) for the United Reformed Church (URC) says, "Given the desperate humanitarian crisis experienced by the people of Gaza and Lebanon, it is good for the URC and its global justice programme, 'Commitment for Life', to join with our Methodist ecumenical partners and All We Can in support of this vital appeal. In the face of overwhelming force and deep injustice, we hope to bring ecumenical solidarity and practical support to help alleviate the plight of so many people who are enduring conflict in this region."

The [Methodist Liaison Office](#) (MLO) based in Jerusalem works alongside several partners in Gaza, many of whom have had to adapt the support they offer in light of the Israeli Defense Forces' military campaign. The United Reformed Church is a long standing partner of the [National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon](#) which is currently working in Lebanon after the airstrikes by the IDF. The [Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees](#) which is part of the Near East Council of Churches (NECC) and the [Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre](#) which had just opened a clinic in Gaza when the violence started, are working in the most difficult of circumstances.

A prayer for the appeal

In your humanity, incarnate God, you walked this earth,
Promised through the prophets as the wonderful counselor, the prince of peace.
The footprint of your reign is embedded in the land.
Bring now, we wholeheartedly pray, your wisdom and your peace into the world.
That our world may not be ruled by war, injustice and hatred
but by peace-loving wisdom that offers everyone life in all its fullness.
Strengthen us that through our prayers, action and giving
that we may strive to be co-creators of the vision you offer the world,
in the name of the wonderful counselor and the prince of peace, amen.

Cornerstone News – February 2025



Repair update

Thank you to all who have been praying for the building work we need. Our back door was replaced in January, and we expect the works on the front of the premises to be completed late March. As soon as we have a date, we will be sure to advertise it.



Volunteers

As you know much of the café is staffed by volunteers, which is very much a blessing to us and is often a very rewarding experience for them. No experience is needed. If you are interested or you know of someone who would benefit from a regular shift, we are in need of more people to help particularly on the following shifts:

- 1st and 2nd Saturdays of each month – wash up
- Tuesdays 12-2 pm – counter
- Thursdays – 12-4 – till

The experience is something that can be put on your CV, it is brilliant for meeting new people, and we can be very flexible for time off.

Make and Bake

Make and Bake for Under 5's runs every week in term time. £2 per child – no need to book.

We now also have a selection of surplus food items on offer to families that has been organized by Grow – the local charity who run baby groups around the area. A new selection of food arrives each week on Tuesday, so do pick some up when you come to Make and Bake.



Marble Jar

We are hoping to be able to provide vouchers for free meals during half-term for those families whose children have free school meals and this is funded through the marble jar – our pay-forward system. If you would like to contribute towards this do ask at the till.

Lent

With Easter being late this year Ash Wednesday is not until 5th March, but we do have a number of Lent books on the shelf if you want to plan early.

Valentine's Day

We have a selection of cards available for Valentine's Day – 14th February.

Monthly hot meal special

This will be served on Wednesday 26th February at 12.30 pm – please do book in advance so that we know how many to cater for.

Prayer breakfasts

Our monthly prayer breakfasts continue, on the second Saturday of each month. The next one will be on Saturday 8th February at 8.30 am and I look forward to you joining us for croissants, tea, coffee, prayer and fellowship.

Cornerstone, 10 Savile Way, Grove, OX12 0PT

Tel.01235 772280, email: office@cornerstonegrove.org.uk

LOCAL ARRANGEMENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Wantage & Abingdon Methodist Circuit

Why God needs Local Arrangement Leaders

What makes an effective act of worship

Structuring the service

Formulating the prayers

Choosing the music



Milton Methodist Church

High Street, OX14 4EW

9.30 am—1.00 pm

Saturday 1st February 2025

Further details from Rev Bruce on
revbrucet@yahoo.co.uk or 018235 813242

Image ©Ronald Doucett, Unsplash

wantage parish

The Revd Katherine Price
Vicar of Wantage & Associate Area Dean
01235 768806
Please note I do not work Thursdays

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

My colleague and lay preacher David Richardson has launched a book club, and is keen for it to be open to Christians from other churches. Please could you share this invitation with your congregations?

“FULLY BOOKED”. This book club has been established by Wantage Parish to bring together lovers of literature across the Deanery and all denominations in and around the town. We will be meeting on the **third Wednesday of the month at The Bear on Wantage Market Place** to discuss a selected novel of the month. The books will not all be explicitly Christian, but members are welcome to discuss their spiritual, as well as their intellectual and emotional response. The first novel will be *Small Pleasures* by Clare Chambers and the next meeting will be at **8pm on Wednesday 19 February**. Contact David Richardson (dcrwantageparish@gmail.com).

GROVE

You are invited to the first **Coffee Morning of 2025** on **Saturday, 1st February** from 10.00 am till 12 noon in the church. Proceeds from the morning are for "Water Aid". Kirsty Bailey is our host for the morning. We hope you are able to join us for a chat and cup of tea/coffee and cake. We look forward to seeing you.

Offers of cakes and offers of help on the day would be appreciated.

Ecumenical "Prayer for Revival" is held on the first Sunday of each month in our church. The next meeting is on **Sunday, 2nd February** at 6.30 pm till 8 pm. You are invited to come and pray with us. All are welcome.

Church Council meets on **Thursday, 20th February** at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room. All interested in the life and work of Grove Methodist Church are invited to come and share in this meeting. We look forward to seeing you.

Tuesday Fellowship in January is on **Tuesday, 28th January** at 2.15 pm. Ian Sturt has kindly agreed to come and to talk to us again. We are meeting at 29 St John's Road, Grove, home of Richard and Lesley Hummerston. All welcome.

Tuesday Fellowship in February will be on **Tuesday, 25th February**. Details will be published in the weekly notices nearer the time.

Film Club is on **Friday, 21st February** at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room when we will be showing, "**Wonder**", an American coming-of-age family comedy-drama directed by Stephen Chbosky.

The film follows a boy named August "Auggie" Pullman with "Treacher Collins syndrome" as he tries to fit in. Auggie Pulman, a 10 year old boy, who was born with a rare medical facial deformity, has undergone 27 different surgeries to help him. He wears an astronaut helmet when going out in public. He has been home-schooled up to this point but as he approaches 5th Grade his parents decide to enrol him in a private middle school. The film follows his year in school and the challenges he faces.

Stars: Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson, Jacob Tremblay, Mandy Patinkin, Daveed Diggs.

All are welcome. Admission is free. A small donation helps to cover costs.

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.

Coffee Mornings 2025

The following dates are still available: Saturday, 3rd May for Christian Aid – a host is needed please; Saturdays 7th June and 5th July are both free for a charity of your own choice. If you are willing to host one of these dates please would you contact Jenny Marriott 01235 767624 or email alans.marriott@talktalk.net

Cribfest held on 14th/15th December was a lovely occasion for us all. Thank you to everyone who put so much thought and effort into preparing it and especially to all who brought along their precious nativity sets for us to share. There was a total of around 60 nativity sets and decorations arranged in the church for everyone to come and enjoy. Keith blessed them during Sunday morning service and they were then taken home by their owners for their own Christmas celebrations.

The total donations given during the weekend for Crisis was £237. Thank you.

A HUGE THANK YOU to Helen and Tim for the wonderful eye-catching panel silhouettes of the Christmas story, the first one of which appeared over Cribfest weekend, depicting Joseph, Mary and the donkey travelling towards Bethlehem. They moved nearer to our church entrance during the days before Christmas, and at Christmas itself additional panels appeared, with the shepherds, first in the fields, and then finding baby Jesus in the stable. The wise men came searching in the following week. It was much appreciated by all of us and passers-by too. Thank you.

Thank you to all those who generously continue to support the Foodbank by putting contributions in the box in the entrance hall week by week. Thank you.

All your donations are very much appreciated. The need is still great.

There is a list above the box of the things that are most useful to them at the moment.

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.

Thanks from The Children's Clothes Bank and Little People

Just wanted to say a big thankyou for supporting The Children's Clothes Bank and Little People with donations of clothes and baby equipment over the past year. We were able to give clothes to 203 children whose parents were very appreciative.

We couldn't do it without you so any donations of clothes are gratefully received, but we are always short of items in the 3 - 6yrs age range.

So thanks again and we wish you all a blessed 2025.

Helen Margetts

Children's Clothes Bank

Tessa Heron

Little People"

WANTAGE

Holy Habits

Our next Holy Habit will be “**Biblical Teaching**” and will start this month. As with previous Holy Habits, one service per month will be focusing on this issue.

The **novels** linked to this theme that you might like to read include;

- **The Da Vinci Code** – by Dan Brown – Transworld 2003
“Are there books which have challenged your relationship with Biblical Teaching?” and “How can we respond to this and similar novels?”
- **The shadow of the Galilean** – Gerd Theissen SCM Classic 2010
“How can a broader understanding of biblical times help our engagement with Biblical Teaching?”
- **The Neverending Story** – Michael Ende – Puffin 1983
“How have you known Jesus calling you through the Bible to step into his story, and let your experience of him become part of the story of your life?”

The **film** we will be watching (date tbc) is “**The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**”

Kids@Church

Jane, Dave, Cath and Keith

We had fun exploring the theme of light in December finishing in the church by singing ‘This little light of mine’ and thinking about how we can allow God’s light to shine through us in our homes / schools / places of work.

In the new year we have decided to think about what following Jesus means and looks like in our daily lives. In January Dave led us as we thought about how Jesus called the disciples to follow him and we had fun attempting to follow him round the church doing lots of silly actions! Before our shared breakfast the children enjoyed a craft activity.

Future dates - February 16th, March 16th, April 20th.

New children (and their parents/ carers) are always welcome at this monthly informal service on the 3rd Sunday of every month from 9.30 to 10.15 am.

Any questions - please don’t hesitate to ask Keith, our minister, on 01235 763321.

Community Café

Carolyn Roche

The café continues as a warm and welcoming space for all. We are open every Monday from 9 am to 12 noon. There is no charge for refreshments, but people are welcome to make a donation which goes to a different charity each month. Our current charity is Siyabonga (a small charity providing support to children in Uganda).

Thank you to all who volunteer at the café and to all the cake makers. It was much appreciated that we could open during the Christmas and New Year period. The team look forward to welcoming our regulars and newcomers.

The beginning of each new year inevitably generates a mixture of hopes and concerns. We anticipate what may lie ahead, just as we sense regret or relief at all we have now left behind. What greater reassurance can there be than the certainty of God's continuing and unconditional love for each of us for all time? It does not change as the end of one year leads us into uncertainty about the year ahead. We know that during 2025 our system of pastoral care, practised in the same way for as long as we can remember, will not continue exactly as before. As he said during our Covenant Service, Keith is planning to explain the changes during morning services he will lead in the coming weeks. In that context, hopefully we can all feel reassured that, whatever may be different about its organisation, we will go on offering care for each other within our church family. It will remain rooted in the certainty of God's love for each of us, and we will seek to fulfil the calling to support one another in the best ways we can.

We know that this is the time of year when health problems usually reach their peak, and it is no exception at present. We feel concern for many of our church family who are experiencing difficult times through illness and incapacity, which is preventing them from worshipping with us in person. Thankfully, those with the necessary technical apparatus and knowledge, can join us remotely from their homes, as our morning services are transmitted to them via Zoom. Whilst that is a valuable facility which reduces the isolation which accompanies being unwell, we still miss those with whom we cannot have personal fellowship. We pray for their return to good health and strength which will be, hopefully, a forerunner to them being well enough to be in Church with us again soon.

In our thoughts are June Grunwald, Eileen Rennie, Val Broadbent, Jane Robinson and others who prefer to remain unnamed. For all of them we offer our prayers, trusting that God's love will comfort, strengthen and restore them to better health. We give thanks for the completion of Derek Morton's operation which finally took place just before Christmas, but following three last minute postponements. Gill reports that Derek is now benefitting from greatly reduced levels of pain endured during the lengthy waiting period, but ironically the next operation to remove the stent has already been postponed until February. John Checketts has recently undergone eye surgery and we continue to hold him and Jo in our prayers. With thankfulness and much joy we acknowledge that Helen Carter and Sue Haithwaite are each progressing towards better health, and they each speak appreciatively of the excellent medical care they have received through the NHS.

Graham Godfrey: On 21st January a Thanksgiving Service for Graham's life took place in our Church. He died in the John Radcliffe Hospital on 21st December at the age of 102. We offer prayers of comfort for his daughters, Anne and Gillian and their families, whilst we wonder at the dedicated service which Graham offered to our church in so many different ways and over such a long period of time. Our buildings benefitted from so much of his time and expert knowledge, and his leadership in many areas of church life was invaluable, but above all, he showed such kindness, care and love for everyone who worshipped with us - a truly Christlike example to us.

Graham's move to Wantage in April 1949 marked the beginning of an involvement with our church, the depth and breadth of which could not have been anticipated at that point. 73 years later, on his 100th birthday, we acknowledged his amazing achievement as we reflected on his unique record of service to our church.

Member, Sunday School Teacher and Superintendent, Church Steward, Circuit Steward, Pastoral Visitor, Organist, Pianist, Audio, Visual and Technical expert, and Property Steward are among the many responsibilities which Graham held. He experienced the leadership of many ministers to whom he gave support and loyalty. His teaching and personal example to the generations of children and young people growing up in our church was as valuable as the support and encouragement he offered to the adults too. Newcomers, local preachers and other visitors benefitted from his welcome and practical assistance. Graham's 100th birthday gave us the opportunity to acknowledge how much we have been blessed, over very many years, by everything he gave and did for our church family. We now treasure the memories of times and experiences shared with him through worship, activities and serving Christ together.

Praying for each other: In February the following people will be included in the prayer time at the Tuesday Bible Study Group: on **Nicky Atkinson's Pastoral List:** Alan Chipperfield, and on **Ann Barber's Pastoral List:** Margaret Fordham, Julie Horton, Amy Lancaster, Alison and Clive Phillips, Kelvin Rose, Mary Spalding and Marjorie and Colin White.

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

Tuesday Afternoon Prayer and Study Group

Carolyn Roche

This is an open and friendly group who meet for Bible Study and prayer each Tuesday at 2 pm in the Parlour. Please feel free to join us. If you have someone or a situation you would like us to pray for please let me know.

During February we will be continuing the Holy Habits study guide on Biblical Teaching.

Dates for February are as follows:

- 4th Holy Habits, Biblical Teaching 3: The greatest commandment.
Reading: Matthew 22:34-40 This meeting includes the Monthly Prayer List.
- 11th Holy Habits, Biblical Teaching 4: More than bread
Reading: Luke 4:1-4
- 18th Holy Habits, Biblical Teaching 5: A shared meal
Reading: Luke 24:25-32
- 25th Holy Habits, Biblical Teaching 6: The word of God
Reading: John 1:1-5, 14-18

If you have any queries or prayer requests you can contact me (Carolyn Roche) by telephone on 01235 764310 or e-mail: ciroche48@hotmail.com

Prayer list

This prayer was written by Novette Headley, District Chair, Birmingham District, for our [daily prayers](#).

Faithful God, open the eyes of our hearts to recognise your presence in the seemingly hopeless circumstances of life.

Help us not to give up hope in the treasures of love, integrity and justice even when the news is dismal; when our institutions seem powerless against the forces of indifference and destruction; when people seem incapable of doing or even imagining goodness.

Deep in the darkness of the soil, O Lord, you are feeding the shoots of a new community of hope. Amongst unseen communities, you are inspiring men, women and children to dream of, and make real, a new world that is courageous, gentle and just.

Help us to value your way of being that brings true richness to life – the way of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Please pray for

Bethan Grant, Anne, Carol Mackinder, Emma Wright & family, Caroline, Doug & Anne Hatto, Richard in York, Edwina, Adrian, Geoff, Diane, Meriel, Diane's daughters Claire & Julie, June Hartle, Jane Robinson, Louise, Richard & Anne, Peter, John & Jo, Mary Spalding, Trudy, Jade, Sue, Findley, Jane & Emma Soffe & family, Eileen, Norma, Alison C & family, June G, Hunter, Gill, Alyson, Angela, Vic Press, Val Broadbent, Tony G, Lucas & family, Vicky, Robin and Becky Legge and the Legge family grandchildren. All at Bullingdon Prison, staff, prisoners and visitors, our Ministers, Deacon, Community Chaplains, Local Preachers & Worship Leaders, kids@church and Street Pastors, Cornerstone and 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 Carolyn know by **Friday 14th February** in order to meet the newsletter deadline.

Carolyn Roche: telephone: 01235 764310, email: ciroche48@hotmail.com

Prayer tree - anyone can leave a prayer request on the tree. It is appreciated if a date is written on the tag somewhere. No tags are taken off the tree unless circumstances for the person or situation being prayed for change or the tree is full... Please take time to check the tree and choose someone or a situation to pray for or about. Also, if any of the prayer cards on the table feel relevant to you please do take one.

Stepping Out with Noah

Our walk this month will be on **9th February at 2:00 pm** and we will meet in the car park at Wantage Methodist Church and walk through to St. Andrew's Church in Letcombe Regis. This will be a round trip of around 3.5 miles.

Knit & Chat

Carolyn Roche

Since the last newsletter, 1003 angels have been blessed and distributed and the hats that decorated the Knit & Chat Christmas Tree have been sent to The Mission for Seafarers. Thank you to all those who helped knit, label or distribute angels and hats. Many of the group have already begun knitting the 2025 host of angels and we can also continue with knitting hats.

Our meetings in February continue on the first and third Mondays of the month and will be on **Monday 3rd February** and **Monday 17th February** at 2 pm in the Hall. Looking forward to seeing you then with the project you are currently working on.

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

Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home

June Grunwald

This Bible Study is held at the care home on Grove Road. It is held **on the second Monday of the month** at 2.30 pm, lasting between 30-45 minutes. In December we had a theme of Advent. Technology failed us again but as the advent songs were well known it didn't hamper the session too much. The care home and I worked out a back up plan for the technology for January, but as is always the way, it worked. We had a lively session in January based on the Wise Men and the hymns chosen for listening to before the study session and during the session proved popular. Our theme for **10th February** will be **Love**. Our theme for 10th March will be Luke 4:1-13; our theme for 14th April will be Luke 19:28-40; our theme for 12th May will be Psalm 23.

The group has recently had some new residents join us. 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. In between bible studies I pop into Elmbrook on an irregular basis and have a chat with some of the Bible Study group and any other residents who would like a chat. My thanks to Helen and John Carter who have been ferrying our church members to the sessions.

Thursday morning Lent House group 2025

Alison Phillips

The Thursday morning house group that met for Advent enjoyed using material from Cover to Cover, so this year Alison Phillips would like to use similar material for a Lent group. which will be called 'Centred on Christ'.

This material uses examples from Paul's letter to the Philippians as its model which will encourage us and challenge us to centre our lives fully on Christ.

We shall meet on Thursday mornings, exact dates to be confirmed.

Anyone is most welcome to join this group which will meet at 1, Mill Paddock, Letcombe Regis from 10:00 am (with coffee) to start at 10:30 am to finish at midday.

I hope you will join us. At present I have put a small order for books with the Cornerstone bookshop, so it would be very helpful if you could **let me know as soon as possible** if you would like to be part of our group and whether you would like me to order a book or if you are happy to get one for yourself.

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 Monday
Tuesday	Afternoon	Prayer & Study Group	in the Parlour	Weekly
Friday	Afternoon	Caritas Choirs		Weekly in term

Users All in the Hall Rooms

Monday	Evening	Slimming World		Weekly
		CA Meeting		Weekly
Tuesday	Morning	MIND		Weekly
	Evening	Wantage Camera Club		Weekly
Wednesday	Evening	Wantage Sings		Weekly
Thursday	Midday	KAWI		3 rd Thursday
Friday	Morning	Mothers & Toddlers		Weekly in term
Saturday	Morning	Dads Out		1 st Saturday

Other Bookings in February

Thursday 20 th	Evening	Music Makers
Saturday 22 nd	Day	Workshop with Lisa Doscher
Friday 28 th	Evening	Life Drawing Class

SERVICES during February

February

Sunday 2nd

Candlemas

Ordinary 4

Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

10:30 am Wantage

Daphne Savage

10:30 am Grove

Rev Keith Underhill

6:30 pm Grove

Praying for Revival

Sunday 9th

Ordinary 5

Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

10:30 am Wantage

Holy Habits

Rev Keith Underhill

10:30 am Grove

Libby Bolton

Sunday 16th

Racial Justice

Ordinary 6

Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalm 1; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26

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 23rd

Student Sunday

Ordinary 7

Genesis 45:3-11,15; Psalm 37: 1-11,39,40; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38,42-50;

Luke 6:27-38

10:30 am Wantage

Rev Keith Underhill

This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

10:30 am Grove

Peter Hemmings

DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY

Saturday 1 st	9:30 am	Local Arrangements Leadership Training at Milton	p10
	10:00 am	Coffee Morning at Grove	p11
Sunday, 2 nd	6:30 pm	Prayer for Revival at Grove	p11
Monday 3 rd	2:00 pm	Knit & Chat at Wantage	p17
Sunday 9th	2:00 pm	“Stepping out with Noah”	p16
Monday 10 th	2:30 pm	Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home	p17
Sunday 16th	9:30 am	Kids@Church at Wantage	p13
		Deadline for March Section Newsletter	p2
Monday 17 th	2:00 pm	Knit & Chat at Wantage	p17
Thursday 20 th	7:30 pm	Grove Church Council	p11
Friday 21 st	7.30 pm	Grove Film Club	p11
Tuesday 25 th	2:15 pm	Grove Tuesday Fellowship	p11

MARCH

Tuesday 4 th	7:30 pm	Circuit Meeting at Wallingford
Wednesday 5 th		ASH WEDNESDAY
Monday 17 th	7:30 pm	Wantage Church Council

St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH – ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

and

CROWN SINGERS

present

Jesu, Meine Freude

Sacred Choral works by Bach, Brahms and Bruckner

Saturday 8th February at 3 pm

St Michael & All Angels Church, Park Road,

Abingdon OX14 1DS

Tickets on the door £10, children free

Refreshments available and Free Parking

Proceeds in aid of church funds and Crown Singers