

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

 The Methodist Church

GROVE & WANTAGE SECTOR NEWS



March 2025

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Contributions for the **next Newsletter** (April 2025) should be sent to the editor by email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 23rd March 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

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

From the Manse.....

One of the things I must do before retiring is to ask permission at Presbyteral Synod on March 19th if I may “sit down”, to use that quaint terminology of the Methodist Church.

The Methodist Church says that *“In ‘sitting down’ the church believes that supernumeraries still have a ministry in which to engage, but by common consent they are no longer available to be stationed to the ‘active work’. At the same time, they are no longer entitled or required to live in a manse; normatively, they are in receipt of a pension rather than a stipend.”*

I will need to say something about my experience of ministry over the years and what I have learnt and discovered. I have, of course, been contemplating for some time what to share with Synod when we meet at Wesley Memorial Church in Oxford.

In particular I will reflect on how the Methodist Church has greatly changed over these past 36 years.

From the difference that IT has brought (with the introduction of answerphones, computers and the internet) to the care and good practice that is sought to be expressed through safeguarding and supervision, the landscape is now very different to how it first appeared to a ‘wet behind the ears’ probationer straight out of college in the West Cumbrian village of Seascale.

There will be plenty of opportunities to share some of these reflections with you all over the coming months – but along with all the changes, there are those things that remain constant and are as true today as they were in the days of the Holy Club in Oxford with the young Wesley brothers, John and Charles.

At the core of our Methodist beliefs is the connection between personal faith and social action, exemplified by the Wesleys, who visited prisoners and the sick after studying the Bible and praying together.

March not only sees the gathering at Synod of all the Presbyters and Supernumeraries from within the Northampton Methodist District – but also the beginning of Lent.

Lent helps us to reflect on our faith and what it is that we believe. Each Sunday as we gather for worship and engage with the Lenten Cross liturgy, we are given time and space to ponder on the mysteries of the passion as well as being challenged as to how to demonstrate those truths in the world in which we live and to make a difference.

In the ever-changing Church we seek to serve, we hold tight to those things which define who we are for the sake of the world and our communities.

With love and God bless

Keith

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, 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 March

This month's walk is on Sunday 23rd March and will begin outside Keith's manse at **2:30pm**. The route will depend on what the weather is doing but will be between 3 and 3.5 miles.

From Northampton District

ReNew: A Day of Inspiration, Connection, and Renewal

ReNew events are for anyone in lay employment within the Methodist Church, as well as those serving in a voluntary capacity--whether as a local lay pastor, steward, worship leader, or preacher. These gatherings provide a sacred space to be inspired, to connect with others who share your calling, and to be rejuvenated in your ministry.

Are you a Circuit steward, worship leader, or lay pastor?

ReNew March 2025 is finally here!

Join this in-person event at St. Andrew's Methodist Church. So exciting to have inspiring speakers, Revd Dr Sonia Hicks, engage in workshops, and networking opportunities, together with Abi Jarvis, Discipleship and Faith Formation Officer for the Methodist Church.

Key Details:

Date & Time : **18th March 2025**, Tuesday, 10 am – 3 pm

Location: St Andrew's Methodist Church, Northampton

Parking: At the church

Reserve your place via [Click Here](https://renew2025.evenbrite.co.uk) (renew2025.evenbrite.co.uk)

**RENEW
GATHERING**

 18th March 2025

 10am - 3pm

 St Andrews - Northampton


Bible Study led by
Rev'd Dr Sonia Hicks


Plus contributions from
Abi Jarvis, Discipleship and
Faith Formation Officer

Book Via Eventbrite link

The **Methodist** Church
Northampton District

District YouTube channel

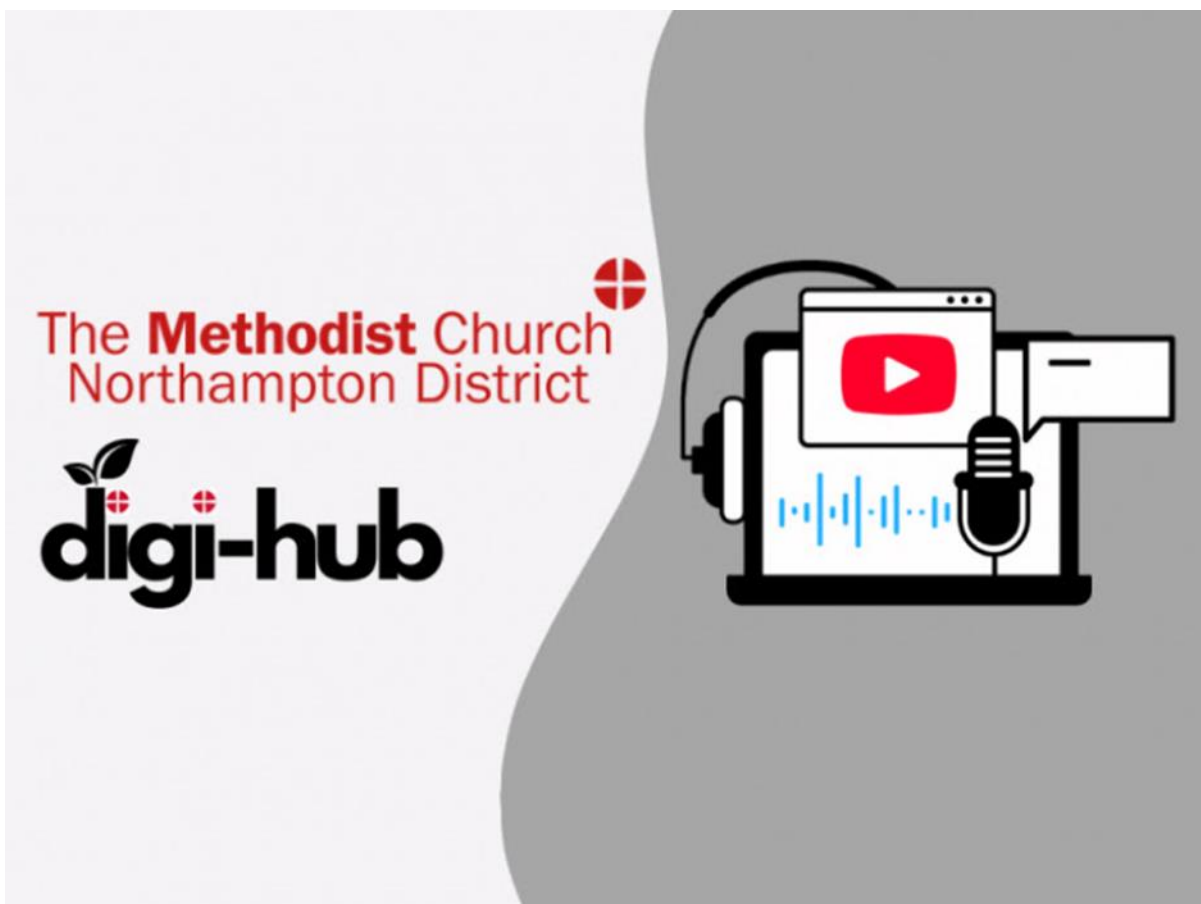
Do you still face a problem in using digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Canva?

Just to let you know that there is a District's YouTube channel up and running, and a set of introduction series is there to equip you and your churches to use digital platforms (e.g. Facebook) more effectively.

To access the first few videos in the Facebook Page training series, [click here](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3on7nTa_N5jcDUfdyNZ0iqmRgy0S9YG2).
(https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3on7nTa_N5jcDUfdyNZ0iqmRgy0S9YG2)

If you have anything that you might want to learn or need our help in digital platforms, please also feel free to contact Digital Enabler Wilhelmina Tan:

digital@northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk



Cornerstone News – March 2025



Staffing

We now have a new Saturday cook, Imogen Thomas, who has joined the team and we look forward to working with her. James, who has been our Saturday cook and is now working during the week, will stop Saturdays at the end of February.

Repair update

We continue to thank you for all your prayers. The insurance company has requested two more quotes, so it is now looking unlikely that the repairs will be complete before Easter.

Volunteers

We are still in need of more people to help particularly on the following shifts:

- Tuesdays 12 – 2 pm – counter
- Thursdays – 12 – 4 pm – Till from April

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. If you are interested or know someone who might be then do get in touch.

Marble Jar

We have given out 50 vouchers to provide free meals during half term and the Easter holidays to those families whose children have free school meals. This was funded through the marble jar – our pay forward system. If you would like to contribute towards this please do ask at the till.

Lent

Ash Wednesday is on 5th March, and we have a number of Lent books on the shelf – do come and see the display.

Mothering Sunday

Mothering Sunday this year is on 30th March and we have a selection of cards as well as items suitable for gifts.

Easter

Easter Sunday is 20th April and we have a good variety of Easter cards, Children's books, as well as the 'Real Easter Egg' Easter eggs. These are likely to sell quickly as this year Divine Chocolate are not producing Easter eggs so do buy early.



Take Note

We have a new Take Note promotion which runs until the end of March. Do come and browse and see the offers available.

Monthly hot meal special

This will be roast pork and will be served on **Wednesday 26th March 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 March 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

Wantage & Grove Street Pastors

Coordinator: Nigel Watt

REPORT OF OUR DECEMBER 2024 & JANUARY 2025 ACTIVITIES

Street Pastor patrols in December and January have been mostly peaceful, perhaps cold wet weather was encouraging people to head home rather than linger in town.

Our New Year's Eve patrol was peaceful, and apart from encouraging a young man who had climbed on King Alfred's statue to come down, was without incident.

One cold night, a man approached us who wasn't wearing any shoes! He said that he had come out without shoes so he could feel more connected to the earth but was somewhat regretting his decision. Of course, we gave him a pair of flip-flops - for which he was extremely grateful.

One of our teams visits different areas in Grove and in December they cleared up litter in Mary Green Park and put the bins back together that had been vandalised. Several of our teams gave water and wet-wipes to young women who had drunk too much and weren't feeling well. We always stay with people until we are happy that they will be ok getting home.

The police asked one of our January teams to look out for two 12 year olds who were drunk and had gone missing. Our team kept an eye out for them, however, according to the police, they may well have been in Oxford, Abingdon or Didcot. Our Street Pastors didn't spot them.

In addition to our regular night-time patrols, we now patrol once a month in the afternoon. One afternoon our team came to the assistance of a group of children who had kicked their football into someone's garden and were reluctant to knock on the door to ask for it back. Our team spoke to the owner and retrieved the ball.

On another occasion, our team helped disperse a large group of youngsters who had gathered outside Sainsbury's. The Street Pastors chatted to the young people and were able to encourage them to slowly move on.

	December 2024	January 2025
Patrols	4	5
Hours	16	19
Flip-flops	3	1
Lollies	200	100
Water	9	4

Email: wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk

Website: wantageandgrove.streetpastors.org.uk

Mobile: 07554 655 594

Wantage & Grove Street Pastors

An illustrated version of the Quarterly News can be found on the Wantage and Circuit web sites.

Quarterly News

Rev Katherine Price Vicar of Wantage

Happy New Year!

For many of us, New Year is a time for over-indulgence followed by a resolution to do better in the next twelve months! At Wantage Parish, we were delighted to be joined by Nigel on behalf of the Street Pastors at our 'Discipleship Day', encouraging folk to make a 'new year's resolution' to give their time and talents to a good cause.

But this week our Bible reading is the Wedding at Cana, and a particularly inappropriate miracle for anyone observing Dry January: the turning of water into wine! This has always been one of my favourite bible stories. For the Street Pastors, this might be a parable of Jesus meeting people 'where they are'. He is responding to wedding couple's immediate practical need, which in their case is for more wine. Okay, giving out alcohol is not advisable behaviour for Street Pastors! But he sets us an example in the practical, low-key and non-judgmental way he responds to an ordinary human situation.

It's also a reminder that Jesus loved a party! It's perhaps too easy for us to see the night-time economy or people hanging around in groups outside as a problem or a threat. But first and foremost these are people celebrating and socialising. Just as Jesus turned water into wine, using a party as an opportunity to transform ordinary human goodness into a pointer to God's kingdom, so he can transform our ordinary human acts of kindness – our lollipops and flip-flops - into a sign of God's love.

How we helped on the streets

Street Pastors patrol in all kinds of weather. Of course, winter brings the coldest cold, the iciest ice and probably the wettest wet; if that's even a thing! In November we spent some time chatting with a number of young people who had attended a funeral earlier in the day. The atmosphere in town all night was one of peace and respect.

Halloween is always a busy night in Wantage. We met lots of people and gave flip-flops to a young woman who was walking barefoot and had got blisters. Her partner asked us if we came from Heaven!

One night we found a handbag in Wantage, which we were able to return to the owner via our social media channels and we gave some assistance to a man who we found lying on the grass by the Parish Church.

New Year's Eve was busy and noisy! Thank you to the Street Pastors who volunteered for this extra patrol. The team chatted to lots of people, returned a lost shopping trolley to its rightful home, helped people with flip-flops, bottles of water and wet-wipes. They cleared up broken glass and encouraged a young man to get off King Alfred's statue!

Our afternoon patrols have been progressing. We're currently patrolling once a month. Lots of young people say that they follow us on TikTok and now they are beginning to get used to seeing us in the daytime. Please do pray for these patrols as they continue to meet lots of young people in Wantage each month.

Front Page News

Our 15th anniversary celebrations hit the headlines with a front page article in *The Herald* over the Christmas period. The news article was picked up by lots of other news outlets such as Oxford Mail, Yahoo News, This Is Oxfordshire, MSN and wantage.com.

If you missed it, check out the article and wonderful photos on the Oxford Mail website...

Visit bit.ly/wgsp-news1224

Answered Prayer!

We are so grateful for answered prayer!

At our AGM in July, Marj Lunn retired from her role as Secretary, although we are very happy that Marj continues to serve as a Trustee.

Our prayers for a new Secretary have been answered as Andrea Randall has joined the Management Committee as our new Secretary.

Andrea has been a Street Pastor since our beginning in 2009 (original Team 6 Street Pastor), so she's brings a lot of experience with her.

Welcome to the team Andrea!

2024 in Review

Fifteen years, a milestone bright,
Guiding hearts through day and night.
With pasties warm, October's cheer,
We marked a journey held so dear.
A Post Box Topper proudly shown,
A symbol of how seeds have grown.

Prayer and training set the goal,
And afternoon patrols took their stroll.
Four Sundays shared in churches near,
With love and faith that drew us here.
Tea and prayers, a quiz, a curry—
Moments cherished, sweet yet merry.

The town, the parish, the Mayor's call,
We showed up strong to serve them all.
From first teams formed, two hearts took flight—
Betty and John, now in God's light.
Though teams are fewer, still we stand,
With hope and peace across the land.

A Deputy watched our mission unfold,
Through streets of Grove, both brave and bold.
Fifteen years, the past still guides,
As we walk with grace where hope abides.

Thank you!

Huge thanks go to Wantage Methodist Church who donated the proceeds of their Christmas Tree Festival to Wantage & Grove Street Pastors. The festival, held over the weekend of the Dickensian Evening in December, raised £580 for our funds. The church was full of wonderful Christmas trees, presented by different local groups. Refreshments were served all weekend in the hall, surrounded by different stalls.

Thanks go to Wantage Methodist Church again, who hosted a singing workshop for International Day of Peace raising £165 for our funds.

And thank you to everyone involved in our Curry & Quiz night, back in November. It's always such a fun event and raised us over £700. Watch this space for information about the 2024 Curry & Quiz Night later this year.

For all your encouragement, generosity and support - thank you so much!

Thank you to Gill Skidmore

We recently said 'farewell' to Gill Skidmore who has served as a Prayer Support Volunteer (PSV) for 15 years. Gill has been such an encouragement for her team of Street Pastors over the years, often serving and praying at our base on her own - not something that everyone is very keen to do. We asked Gill a few questions about being a PSV:

What made you decide to be a PSV? I never felt that I was the right person to be out on patrol, but I thought that being a PSV was a way of offering support to those incredible people who go out month after month. In some ways it was less of a sacrifice for me than for some others, as we have always been night owls, so staying out until 3:30 am was less difficult than it sounds.

What kept you going all those years? It was always interesting when the SPs phoned in to ask for prayers for particular situations. You could never be sure what was going to happen. I remember one night when the team phoned to say they were on the way back to base at the end of the shift. When they got there, there was a young man actually on the steps of the church in need of help. It was quite some time before they finally got in! Another time I was making hot drinks, soup and snacks, looking out warm clothing and charging phone batteries for a young man, while the SPs and the emergency services worked together to find temporary accommodation to get him out of the freezing temperatures that night. Those were the sort of occasions when you knew for sure that it was worth those very quiet nights when you felt as though you were missing your bed for nothing. I also welcomed the opportunity to get to know a lot of people from the other churches in Wantage and Grove. Over the years I have worked with quite a few different teams and it has been a joy to make new friendships. I think the variety has helped to keep me going.

What will you miss? I'll miss the feeling that I was part of a team who are making a real difference in our town, together with the companionship and friendship. Even coming home during the midsummer months as day was starting to break. I won't miss going to bed at 4 am and having about four hours sleep before having to be awake to do church duties!

Wantage Choral Society
Joseph Haydn Nelson Mass (Missa in Angustiis)
Joseph Haydn Insanae et Vanae Curae
Henry Balfour Gardiner Evening Hymn

Saturday 22 March at 7:30 pm

Wantage Parish Church

Conductor Hannah - Zaki

Soprano – Helena Moore : Alto – Mia Serracino-Inglott

Tenor – Tohi Ogita : Bass – Jack Redman

Organ - Sebastian Thomson Orchestra

All Tickets £15 from

wantagechoralsociety.co.uk

Wantage Bookshop Members of WCS On the door

Under 16s - Free

Spring is the season to declutter and support a good cause

Gill Skidmore

If you don't know what to do with all those items lurking in drawers and cupboards, and listed in the flyer, please consider donating them to Macmillan Cancer Support.

Alison Brown, Janine and I have accepted a new challenge, the Macmillan Mighty Hike. We wanted to support all our family members and friends who are currently fighting cancer, and challenge ourselves to get moving again.

We have to raise a minimum of £250 each this time, but we can help that along by collecting items to recycle. Hopefully some of you are like us and have lots of odds and ends lying around because you don't know how to ethically get rid of them. The items don't have to be in working order and currency can be from any country even if out of circulation. The stamps option really is as stated – you can just take the stamps off any post you receive and donate them, as long as you make sure the stamp itself is not damaged. I have checked with the organization and Kindles do count as tablet computers for the purpose of recycling. Otherwise, only listed items can be accepted.

There will be a large white collection sack to put them in, or you can just give them to Alison Brown or myself. All contributions will be gratefully received.

Items we recycle

Jewellery

Unwanted gold & silver
Including damaged items
Costume Jewellery
Watches



Coins & Currency

Banknotes & Coins
Any currency UK or foreign
of any age/unchangeable
currency



Mobile Phones, Cameras & Gadgets

Mobile Phones • Video Cameras
Old Film Cameras • Digital
Cameras • Sat Navs
Game Consoles • Games &
Accessories • iPods
MP3 Players • Tablet Computers



Stamps

Loose / Single Stamps
First Day Covers
Presentation Packs



Please place your items into the sack provided at your designated drop off point or pass to your community fundraising representative.

Alternatively call 0800 633 5323 or email info@recyclingforgoodcauses.org to request your own collection sack.



Recycling For Good Causes
The Fundraising Company Ltd
14 Amber Business Village
Amington, Tamworth. B77 4RP

0800 633 5323
info@recyclingforgoodcauses.org
www.recyclingforgoodcauses.org

In partnership with

MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT

GROVE

You are invited to a **Coffee Morning** on **Saturday, 1st March** from 10 am till 12 noon in the church. Proceeds from the morning are for “Freyja’s Fund”. There will be a stall of handmade cards for Easter and other occasions. Judith Hopkins and her family are our hosts 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 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 March** from 6.30 pm till 8 pm. You are invited to come and pray with us. All are welcome.

Tuesday Fellowship in February is on **Tuesday, 25th February**. We are meeting at the Cornerstone at 2.15 pm for a time of friendship and fellowship together with tea/coffee and cake. Everyone welcome. We will be pleased to see you.

Tuesday Fellowship in March is on **Tuesday, 25th March** at 2.15 pm. Libby Hawkness-Smith is coming to talk to us. Venue to be decided nearer the date and details will be in the weekly notice sheet. All welcome.

Film Club is on **Friday, 21st March** at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room when we will be showing, **“The Woman King”**, a 2022 American historical action adventure film about the Agojie, the all female warrior unit that protected the West African kingdom of Dahomey during the 17th to 19th centuries. Set in the 1820s, the film stars Viola Davis as a general who trains the next generation of warriors to fight their enemies.

Stars: Viola Davis, Thuso Mbedu, Lashana Lynch, Sheila Atim, Hero Fiennes Tiffin and John Boyega.

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.

Thank you to everyone who supported the February Coffee Morning for “Water Aid”. A total of £274 was raised for the charity. Thank you.

Coffee Mornings 2025. The following dates are still available: Saturday, 3rd May for Christian Aid – a host is needed please; also Saturday 5th July is 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

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.

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.

The World Day of Prayer

Friday, 7th March at 2.30 pm

at St John Vianney R.C. Church, Wantage.

The service title "I made you wonderful"
is based on the words of Psalm 139.

The service was prepared by women from the Cook Islands, a group of 15 islands in the Pacific Ocean. They are celebrating 200 years of Christianity. Their first involvement with World Day of Prayer was in 1971.

Taking part in this service, which will be celebrated ecumenically in countries all over the world on that day, creates a wave of prayer which encircles the globe, praying with, and for, the Cook Islands and its people.

Everyone is invited to come and join in this opportunity for the churches in Wantage and Grove to share together in worship and fellowship, (with tea and cakes afterwards).

We look forward to seeing you there.

WANTAGE

Sunday 2nd March

We will be welcoming family and friends of June and Alan Grunwald to church as they come to support them both as June's wedding ring is blessed during our service. We assure them of our love and prayers on this happy occasion.

Holy Habits

We have started our next Holy Habit, "Biblical Teaching". 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?"

There is an **open coffee and chat about the books** on **Saturday 12th April** at 10 am at Cornerstone in Grove and everyone is very welcome! If anyone would like a lift please give Jane Kent a call / text on 07443420205 , and she will be more than happy to help.

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

Kids@Church

Jane, Dave, Cath and Keith

This month we thought about prayer and how we can talk to God even when we cannot see Him. Keith had made a string and can telephone which we enjoyed speaking and listening in to. We also talked about the different things we can include in our prayers.

In the hall we made a paper chain of prayers thinking about other people, things we are sorry for and things that we want to say "thank you," to God for. The chain was shared with the congregation at the 10:30 service.

Future dates - **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.

The first verse of “A Light Exists in Spring”, by the 19th century poet Emily Dickinson, seems apt for this time of year and for our March newsletter – expressing our eagerness to leave Winter behind in anticipation of brighter, warmer days which, hopefully, will accompany the arrival of Spring.

*“A light exists in Spring,
Not present on the year at any other period.
When March is scarcely here,
A colour stands abroad on solitary field,
That science cannot overtake, but human nature feels.”*

In our fast changing world, and amongst the events particularly on the international scene, there is much to generate mounting anxiety. Ever more deeply, our Christian faith brings reassurance and hope to counter our fears and doubts. The light of Christ is always ours, shining throughout our darkest days, not only heralding the approach of Springtime, but bringing comfort, joy and hope offered unconditionally to us all.

In our awareness of the changes which we know will happen during this year, and looking ahead to the start of the 2025 – 2026 Methodist year beginning in September, there are several preparations to be made. One of which is to help Bruce recognise us when he becomes our Minister. To assist him in getting to know us by name, we will prepare a photo album for him. Where possible, I will try to re-use the photos included in the photo book created for Graham for his 100th birthday – giving us all a chance to look nearly 3 years younger than our actual ages! To gain an individual photo of our complete church family, hopefully you will find it acceptable if, during our after-service coffee time, I take your picture with my phone.

A few people have asked about this year's Membership tickets which are usually given out soon after the Covenant Service and the Dedication of Pastoral Visitors. The reason they haven't been distributed yet is linked to the restructuring of our pastoral system. Keith's Morning Service on 23rd February will focus on pastoral care, explaining the changes in anticipation of our adoption of the new system in May. This will be marked by the re-dedication of our existing team, and commissioning of those newly joining it. Membership tickets will be passed to all those who will serve as Links in our Pastoral Care Team, after which they will be distributed to members in the usual way.

Several times, especially post Covid, the Church Flower Rota has been mentioned. For several different reasons, we have been unable to reconstruct it, and there are many gaps on the list. We have also noticed that the cool midweek temperatures in our chapel mean that the flowers have survived longer and remained looking nice enough to be in church on two consecutive Sundays. So, if you are willing to sign up on that list in the Link corridor, and you are happy for your flowers to remain in church for two weeks, please indicate this on the rota. Thank you to everyone who is part of the Church Flowers Team. We would welcome anyone else wishing to join it.

Sadly, there are still several members of our Church family going through difficult times because of ill health and other problems. We assure everyone who isn't able to worship with us in person on Sunday mornings that you are not forgotten. We hold

you in our thoughts and we pray regularly for you. You are missed in your absence and we look forward in hope that through God's grace you will be well enough to join us again as your health improves. In addition to the prayers of many individual members of our Church family, there is a Prayer Time at the Tuesday Bible Study Group in which you will be remembered too. Each month there is also a ***Praying for each other*** time during which Pastoral Groups and their Pastoral Visitor are included in the Prayer Time. In March it will focus on the people on **Alison Brown's Pastoral List**: June and Alan Grunwald, Jane Robinson, Judith and Mike Skinner.

Prayer list

A prayer for humility

What does the Lord require of us?

To love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

What is love? It looks like Jesus.

Lord, help us to be more patient and kind, remove jealousy, envy, anger and rage from us.

Let us not be boastful in ourselves and our possessions, but to give away freely what we have freely received.

Love is not self-seeking, but looks after the needy, poor, lonely, and the widows and orphans.

Love looks to forgive those who have hurt us and doesn't keep a record of wrongdoings. God is love and God's love always protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.

God's love never ends. Amen.

Karen Jennings, Area Support Chaplain, MHA

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

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 March we will be finishing Holy Habits – Biblical Teaching before moving on to the Lent study guide – Centred on Christ. This Cover-to-Cover guide uses examples from Paul's letter to the Philippians as its model to help us to centre our lives on Christ.

Dates for March are as follows:

- 4th Holy Habits Biblical Teaching week 7 – The Usefulness of Scripture
Reading: Timothy 3:14-4:2 This meeting includes the Monthly Prayer List.
- 11th Holy Habits Biblical Teaching week 8 – Maturity in Teaching and Lives
Reading: Hebrews: 5:11-14
- 18th Centred on Christ week 1: Servants of Christ
Reading: Philippians 1:1-2
- 25th Centred on Christ week 2: Affection of Christ
Reading: Philippians 1:3-8 + Philippians 1:9-11

Stations of the Cross

As in previous years, the Tuesday Prayer and Bible Study group will be meeting at St Mary's Convent for prayer and meditations using the Stations of the Cross in the St. Mary Magdalene Chapel. This will take place in Holy Week on **Tuesday 15th April** at 2 pm. The time of reflection is followed by tea/coffee and cake. If anyone would like to join us or have more information, please do get in touch with me.

Carolyn Roche: 01235 764310 or 07906 515323 or ciroche48@hotmail.com

Prayer initiative by the Parish Church.

On the first Thursday of each month at 8 pm, via Zoom, there will be a contemplative prayer time of up to an hour. Different people will lead the session, with a book by Gloria Durka entitled "Praying with Julian of Norwich (Companions for the Journey)" being used to initiate the prayer time. Anyone is welcome to join in with this time and if you would like to know more, then please get in touch with Helen Carter who will put you in touch with the person organising these sessions. If you would prefer a face to face contemplative prayer time based on Julian of Norwich, then please let Helen Carter know.

Stepping Out with Noah

This month's walk is on **Sunday 23rd March** and will begin outside Keith's manse at 2:30 pm. The route will depend on what the weather is doing but will be between 3 and 3.5 miles.

Knit & Chat

Carolyn Roche

The cold, wet weather did not manage to dissuade the Knitters and Chatters from gathering in February and we have added a new member to this friendly group. Our meetings in March continue on the first and third Mondays of the month and will be on **Monday 3rd March** and **Monday 17th March** at 2 pm in the Hall.

For those of you who would like to make angels, but prefer to crochet rather than knit, we now have a crochet pattern courtesy of Karen. Please let me know if you would like a copy.

This year Victoria Methodist Church in the Bristol District is having another Lent Mystery Knitalong. It is to make a lap blanket and will begin on Ash Wednesday and finish in Holy Week. The daily knitting instructions, readings and reflections will be emailed out each week.

Looking forward to seeing you and your current project at our next meeting. If you need wool, have any other queries or just fancy a chat do please call me.

Thursday morning Lent House group 2025

Alison Phillips

The Thursday morning Lent group will begin on **Thursday March 6th** at 1, Mill Paddock Letcombe Regis, starting with coffee at 10 am and beginning at 10.30 to finish at 12.00 mid day.

The following dates will be **March 13th, 20th, 27th, April 3rd and 10th**.

I have ordered books for everyone who has asked for one, and will make sure you have your copy so that you can begin reading the week before we start.

I look forward to our time together when we can take some time to centre ourselves on Christ and prepare ourselves for Holy week and the joy of Easter.

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 and 45 minutes.

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.

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.

Despite some cold and very wet mornings over the past few weeks, our warm, friendly café has continued to welcome many regulars and a few new visitors. 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. This month we begin collecting for a new charity – Parkinsons.Me.

Thank you to all who volunteer at the café and to all the cake makers. Come and join us for coffee, cake, cheese scones and conversation.

Buried Treasure

Following on from Keith's sermon last Sunday about Buried Treasure, we felt it might be helpful to have a reminder of the key points he made as we contemplate how we give and use our money.

1st marker Our giving to God is to be voluntary

Exodus 25 v. 2

"Tell the Israelites to take for me an offering; from all whose hearts prompt them to give you shall receive the offering for me"

2nd marker Our giving to God is to be cheerful

2 Corinthians 9 v. 7

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

3rd marker Our giving to God is to be regular

1 Corinthians 16 v. 2

"On the first day of every week, each of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made"

4th and last marker Our giving to God is to be in proportion to our means

Deuteronomy 16 v. 17

"Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you."

What is happening on the Wantage premises at present?

Sunday	9:30 am	Kids@Church	3 rd Sunday
	10:30 am	Morning Worship	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
	Evening	My Life My Choice	3 rd Tuesday
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 March / April

Friday 28 th February	Evening	Life Drawing
Sunday 2 nd March	Afternoon	Family Celebration
Wednesday 12 th March	Morning	MIND – 5 Ways to Well-Being Workshop
Sunday 16 th March	Afternoon	Jigsaw
Saturday 12 th April	All Day	Family Party
Thursday 1 st May	All Day	Local Elections

SERVICES during March

March

Sunday 2nd

Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12- 4:2; Luke 9:28-36

10:30 am Wantage

10:30 am Grove

6:30 pm Grove

Praying for Revival

Sunday before Lent

Rev Keith Underhill

Helen Carter

Sunday 9th

Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1,2,9-16; Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

10:30 am Wantage

10:30 am Grove

Lent 1

Graham Luscombe

Rev Keith Underhill

Sunday 16th

Genesis 15:1-12,17,18; Psalm 27; Philemon 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35

9:30 am Wantage

10:30 am Wantage

10:30 am Grove

Holy Habits

Kids@Church

Libby Hawkness-Smith

Rev Keith Underhill

This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

Lent 2

Sunday 23rd

Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13: 1-9

10:30 am Wantage

10:30 am Grove

Lent 3

Rev Keith Underhill

This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

Graham Luscombe

Sunday 30th

Mothering Sunday

Lent 4

Joshua 5: 9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32

10:30 am Wantage

10:30 am Grove

Belinda Kaur

Rev John Anderson

DIARY FOR MARCH

MARCH

Saturday 1 st	10:00 am	Coffee Morning at Grove	p14
Sunday, 2nd	6:30 pm	Prayer for Revival at Grove	p14
Monday 3 rd	2:00 pm	Knit & Chat at Wantage	p20
Tuesday 4 th	7:30 pm	Circuit Meeting at Wallingford	
Wednesday 5 th		ASH WEDNESDAY	
Thursday 6 th	10:30 am	First Thursday Lent Group	p20
Friday, 7 th	2:30 pm	The World Day of Prayer at St John Vianney R.C. Church, Wantage.	p15
Monday 10 th	2:30 pm	Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home	p20
Sunday 16th	9:30 am	Kids@Church at Wantage	p16
Monday 17 th	2:00 pm 7:30 pm	Knit & Chat at Wantage Wantage Church Council	p20
Friday 21 st	7.30 pm	Grove Film Club	p14
Sunday 23rd	2:30 pm	“Stepping out with Noah” Deadline for April Section Newsletter	p4/19 p2
Tuesday 25 th	2:15 pm	Grove Tuesday Fellowship	p14

APRIL

Sunday 13 th	PALM SUNDAY
Friday 18 th	GOOD FRIDAY
Sunday 20 th	EASTER DAY
Sunday 27 th	Wantage General Church Meeting