

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

GROVE & WANTAGE SECTOR NEWS

The Methodist Church

MAY 2025



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keith.underhill@methodist.org.uk

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Contributions for the **next Newsletter** (June 2025) should be sent to the editor by email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 18th May**

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

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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

June	Sunday 18 th May
July/August	Sunday 22 nd June
September	Sunday 24 th August
October	Sunday 21 st September
November	Sunday 19 th October
December / January	Sunday 23 th November

From the Manse.....

Every time we've moved appointments we have gone through the process of decluttering and, as a result, the charity shops in the places we left and arrived at did very well.

Now as we prepare to move for the last and final time the act of decluttering has taken on a different perspective running as it is in parallel with downsizing, for our own house is certainly smaller than 14 Haywards Close.

Some decisions are easy to make - they are obvious and there's no real debate about what should be done - we really won't need so many beds because we have fewer bedrooms!

It is the smaller things however (often with memories associated with them) that are not so straightforward to deal with. There are sentimental reasons as to why we might want to hang on to things, even if we haven't looked at or used them since before we moved to Wantage in 2016.

All this begs the question what is important and needs to be kept and what can simply be let go of?

As in moving home, so too in life in general – and in particular, our lives of faith and what it means to be church.

Are there things that we hold to that are no longer fit for purpose, that are no longer relevant, or indeed hold us back?

As we look to the future, what things of our past and heritage should we certainly continue to commit ourselves to and what can we give thanks for and simply set down?

With love and God bless

Keith

CIRCUIT SERVICES

May 25th 4:30 pm at Wallingford. Local Preachers' Service

Recognition of Belinda Kaur as a fully accredited Local Preacher

June 1st 3:00 pm at Trinity, Abingdon 150th Anniversary Service

July 27th 3:00 pm at Wantage Farewell Service

Farewell to Rev Keith Underhill and Deacon Selina Nisbett

The Methodist Church in Britain receives with deep sadness the news of the death of His Holiness Pope Francis, and gives thanks for his life and Christian witness.

Even to the final days of his long life, by his actions and his words, Pope Francis continued to set forth the gospel of God's love in Christ. He spoke plainly of the hope that is to be found in Jesus Christ, showed profound compassion for those who are poor and marginalised, and gave particular emphasis to God's demand for global justice. Through his papacy, Francis has fostered an openness to Christians sharing together in the Church's life and mission, in ways which have broken new ground for the Catholic Church. In all these ways, for many Methodists Pope Francis's witness to the Christian faith holds a special resonance, and his loss is deeply felt.

Methodists join in these days in prayer and sympathy with our Catholic sisters and brothers, who have lost their Holy Father, recognising the pain that this brings. Methodists will also offer prayers in the days ahead for the Catholic Church, as she navigates this period.

As God receives Pope Francis into God's arms of love, we pray that he may rest in peace and rise in glory.

The Revd Matthew Laferty, Director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome, said:

Pope Francis was a man of deep Christian faith, clear conviction, and prayer. His ministry extended beyond the Catholic Church as he sought to pray and work for the unity of all Christians. Pope Francis challenged and inspired Methodists and Catholics to move beyond ecumenical dialogue to be a pilgrim people walking and working together, particularly in care of creation, migration, and human fraternity. He called the Church universal and all the world to live as Jesus Christ—in holiness and in loving the poor and the marginalised.

The Revd Ruth Gee, former President of the Methodist Conference and current Co-Chair of the British Methodist-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission, shares the following reflection:

When Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected Pope on 13 March 2013 he chose Francis as his Papal name. This was a clear indication of the emphases on service of people living in poverty, humility, and concern for creation, that would characterise his papacy.

There was a further indication of these emphases on his first appearance as Pope on the balcony of St Peter's Basilica. He wore a simple white cassock and the iron pectoral cross he had worn as archbishop.

In the years following his election Pope Francis wrote and spoke about the Christian vocation to serve. He challenged world leaders when they did not recognise the obligation to serve others, to welcome and protect refugees, and to protect the environment.

These among many characteristics of his papacy endeared Pope Francis to people around the world including those of other Christian churches and other faiths. His commitment to ecumenism and to interreligious dialogue has been evident, not least in the good relationship with the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome (MEOR). Pope Francis has often been pictured talking and laughing with the Revd Matthew Laferty, Director of MEOR, representing the world-wide Methodist Church on official occasions in the Vatican.

There are many reasons to thank God for the ministry of Pope Francis, not because he has been perfect, but because he has seen himself as a servant of God and a servant of those with whom he has sought to share God's love.

The humility which was evident in his inauguration will also be evident in his funeral which has been simplified at his request. Pope Francis will be buried in a simple wooden casket in a location outside the Vatican.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

A prayer

Almighty God,

we thank you that you continue to call disciples to represent you on earth.

We recognise this call in the life, faith and ministry of Pope Francis.

We give thanks for the unique gifts with which you blessed him for this task, and for his obedience in fulfilling all that you asked of him.

Thank you for receiving Francis into the eternal home that you have been preparing for him.

We pray that all who mourn his loss will be comforted and for the Conclave that will elect his successor.

We hold before you the Roman Catholic Church and pray that we might continue to work together for the unity of your Church and for peace, justice and compassion in your world.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Supreme Court gender ruling

The President and Vice-President, along with the Secretary of the Methodist Conference, have released the following in response to the Supreme Court's ruling made on 16 April regarding gender.

Prayer

Holy God, you made us in love,
and each of us bear your image and likeness,
we are wonderfully restored and renewed by the work of your Spirit.
Help us to see and value the beauty of the gift of your diverse creation
and so treat one another with the same tenderness we receive from you.
May those who are frightened, uncertain or anxious
know your comfort and our support.
Amen

Revd Helen Cameron and Carolyn Godfrey
President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference

Statement

Following the Supreme Court's judgment, many may feel anxious, hurt, or unsettled. We need to be clear: nothing in this ruling diminishes our determination to be an inclusive church. The Methodist Church believes that all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, have a place in God's Church and trans people should always feel that they are welcome and loved.

It is important that we reassert this in the light of some of the coverage of the Supreme Court's ruling; this is not a matter of 'winners' or 'losers', and to portray it as such is at best unhelpful and at worst an attempt to justify prejudice and discrimination. The Court made its ruling on a matter of the interpretation of the law. It determined what the provisions of The Equalities Act mean by defining who may or may not participate in some single-sex activities or may use certain single-sex facilities, and who is and is not protected against discrimination on the grounds of sex (whilst noting that trans people are protected against discrimination because they are trans – and that has not changed).

It is likely that this presents an issue in very few churches, but should a question arise, please address it to soc@methodistchurch.org.uk and the Team will do its best to offer clear guidance.

Although the ruling is likely to present an issue in only a few places, the effect on those who feel excluded and uncertain is wider and deeper. Anyone in that position, and wanting pastoral support should contact the local minister or superintendent, District EDI Officer or Connexional Inclusion Team.

The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler

The Secretary of the Conference

Circuit Administrator Vacancy.

We are seeking to recruit a part-time Circuit Administrator for the Wantage & Abingdon Methodist Circuit. The Circuit is located to the South, Southwest and Southeast of the Historic City of Oxford. The Circuit delights in the worship of eight Methodist Churches, each church faithfully seeking to serve their communities and glorify God.

We are looking for a person with excellent administration and communication skills. An ability to work as part of a team is essential and flexibility to work alongside the Circuit Leadership team and Circuit Stewards is required.

A full job description, terms and conditions and a personal specification is available on request in our application pack.

A satisfactory enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service is mandatory

Outline of main T&Cs

Hours of work: 15 hours per week worked over three days flexibly within the week with a pattern of work to be agreed with your Line Manager; some occasional evening work to attend circuit meetings will be necessary

Rate of pay: £15.00 per hour

Location: Flexible between home and a Church based office space based in Abingdon, Oxfordshire

For more information and an application pack, please contact

Neil Oastler, Circuit Steward

neiloastler@gmail.com

Closing date for applications: 25th May 2025

Interviews to be held week commencing 2nd June

Post to commence 1st September 2025

The Methodist Church is an inclusive Church committed to the Safeguarding of all.

Raising Money for SERES and Artistas de El Astillero – Charities based in Guatemala.



SERES cultivate and catalyse youth leaders to build more just and sustainable communities in Guatemala. SERES stands for Social Equity, Resilience and Ecological Sustainability. <https://www.seres.org/>

Artistas de El Astillero focuses on children, youth and adults, from a community with limited resources supporting the power of art in the lives of the children. This is a community that lies just above Antigua yet wasn't even on Google Maps prior to 2023. If ever you want to see the impact of every single pound, this is it.

On Saturday 10th May

**A Silent Auction and Tabletop sale will be held with a cake stall and a book stall
At Wantage Methodist Church Hall from 9am to 1pm – Silent Auction to be concluded at 1pm.
Refreshments will be available.**

To reserve a Table to sell crafts, home-made goods etc, please contact Heather on 07769 902532 Cost £10 / table [6ft / 1.8m long]



We would welcome all contributions of cakes, books and items for the Silent Auction i.e. promises of time/talents and new or nearly new items, all gratefully received – the central photo above is a picture painted by one of the children from **Artistas de El Astillero** – this will be part of the silent auction.

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 get rid of them ethically. 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 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.



Sustainable Wantage

This church is a corporate member of the Sustainable Wantage and it is good to support what they are doing. The Mix is one part of Sustainable Wantage, so there is much more to explore, and in future newsletters we will find out about about other parts of Sustainable Wantage.

Our Projects

- [The Mix](#)
- [Wantage Community Larder](#)
- [Wantage Market Garden](#)
- [Wild Wantage](#)
- [Pewit Woodland](#)
- [Growing Projects](#)
- [Draughtbusters](#)
- [Solar Project](#)
- [Wantage & Grove Active Travel](#)

If you have access to the internet, then please check out the website <https://sustainablewantage.org.uk/>

Wild Wantage

[Subscribe to the Wild Wantage newsletter](#)

There is a lot of concern nationally about the decline in biodiversity and the destruction of local habitats. Building developments, unsustainable land practices and climate change are putting an increasing strain on our wildlife, green spaces and resources. But as a community we can take action to change things for the better! Sustainable Wantage, with the help of Wantage Town Council, launched the Wild Wantage Project in 2020. Since then we have been working to improve local biodiversity, map green corridors and transform our green spaces through volunteer action. Wild Wantage has already worked with local schools, landowners, businesses and organisations to plant trees and hedges, renovate gardens, survey species and engage with the local community to improve their environment.

Why we are taking action

Biodiversity is a measure of the variety of plants and animals in an area – generally speaking the greater the variety the healthier the area is. We rely on pollinators for much of our food production and all species have some role to play in the natural processes that give us fresh water, clean air and fertile soil. Greater diversity ensures natural sustainability for all life forms.

We are lucky in that we are surrounded by countryside, close to the Ridgeway and have Letcombe Brook, a rare chalk stream running through the town. Populations of now quite uncommon farmland birds such as the grey partridge, yellowhammer and

corn bunting can still be seen on the edge of Wantage. Protected species such as the otter and water vole inhabit the Letcombe Brook and a few swallows and swifts still return each year to nest on buildings in Wantage. However, once common species such as grass snake, common lizard and Wall butterfly are either declining or lost in this area.

What you can do to help

There are many ways to help out with Wild Wantage: from practical volunteering and surveying local species to taking action at home and gardening for wildlife. Volunteering, events and workshops: we often hold a mix of practical volunteer work parties, along with both indoor and outdoor activities and workshops. To find out what's coming up, visit our Events page.

Taking action at home

There are many ways in which you can take action to help our local wildlife and green spaces – a great place to start is at home! Wildlife gardening can greatly benefit our local birds, mammals, insects and pollinators, along with helping to create green corridors through the local area. Why not treat your garden like a mini nature reserve?

Swift Project

We are working on mapping where swifts are presently nesting in Wantage and looking to provide extra nesting opportunities nearby. You can help us with this by:

- Letting us know if you have swifts nesting on your house or nearby.
- Contacting us if you think your house might be suitable for a swift box.
- Making swift boxes that can be put up in your neighbourhood [Create a High Home for Swifts \(RSPB\)](#)

- [RSPB swift project: record your swift sightings](#)

Wantage Methodist Church hosts two Swift boxes on the east wall of the hall building.



Clothes Swap

Friday, 16th May 2025

7PM - 8PM Wantage Methodist Church Hall

Newbury Street, OX12 8DA

Why shop when you can swap?

To take part drop off at least 1 clean and presentable item to swap at The Mix in advance. You can take away as many items as you bring in, extras can be taken for a donation. Items leftover will be donated or recycled. (Shoes and accessories accepted.)

No underwear, swimwear, nightwear or earrings please.

**Drop off items to The Mix,
15 Mill Street, Wantage, OX12 9AB:**

- Sat 10th May 10am-1pm,
- Mon 12th May 2-6pm,
- Wed 14th May 10am-3pm

**Select new items at
Wantage Methodist Church Hall:**

**Any questions? Contact Daniela:
01235-767396**



Schools Prayer Group 2025-2026

Schools Prayer Group 4-5pm at St John's Rooms, Grove

- We really welcome new people to join us, 4 pm – 5 pm, in the St John's Rooms at Grove Parish Church
- We start by socializing over a cuppa and a cake
- We have a brief time of reflection together
- We pray for local schools, pupils, teachers & other school staff

We plan to meet three times each academic year, all from 4pm to 5pm in the St John's Rooms, Grove.

Upcoming dates:

- Wednesday 24th September 2025
- Wednesday 28th January 2026
- Wednesday 23rd April 2026

We are glad to welcome anyone who wishes to pray for our local schools.

Please send prayer requests or requests for more information to:

John Wilson: johnmwilson2012@gmail.com

Helen Harwood: andrewandhelenharwood@yahoo.co.uk

Wallingford Methodist Church In Conversation

Looking ahead in 2025

May 20th – Dr Agnes Kaposi MBE – surviving the Holocaust and the Hungarian Uprising

June 17th – Rt Hon Lord Graham Brady – former and longest serving Chair of the 1922 Committee, speaking about the last 5 Conservative Prime Ministers and his role in coordinating the leadership contests – Ticket Only

September 30th – Sharon Booth – Executive Director and Founder of Solutions Not Sides – an educational charity that promotes dialogue in schools and universities around the Israel-Palestine conflict

October 21th – Rev Sir Ralph Waller – former Principal of [Harris Manchester College, Oxford](#) (1988-2018) and a Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford (2010-2018)

November 25th – Rev Sonia Hicks – Chair of the Northampton Methodist District and a past President of the Methodist Conference

Wallingford Methodist Church

St Leonard's Square, OX10 0AS

In Conversation With Dr Agnes Kaposi MBE

In 2024 Dr Kaposi captivated the **In Conversation** audience with her account of surviving the Holocaust. In May Dr Kaposi returns to Wallingford to talk about what happened next, getting her life back on track, fleeing Hungary during the 1956 Uprising, coming to the UK, and her esteemed academic career. She became the third female to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering and Emeritus Professor in electrical engineering at London South Bank University



12 noon — 1.00pm
Tuesday 20 May

This is another **In Conversation**
that will be hugely popular and not to be missed

Further details from 01235 813242 or revbrucet@yahoo.co.uk

KINGMAKER

Secrets, Lies and the Truth about Five Prime Ministers
The memoir of

GRAHAM BRADY

Graham was responsible for overseeing Conservative Leadership elections
from 2010 to 2024

one of the most turbulent periods in British political history

In Conversation Wallingford Methodist Church St Leonard's Square, OX10 0AR

Tuesday 17 June
12 noon

Entry by ticket only £10
in aid of Stockdales, supporting
children, young people, and adults
with learning difficulties



Tickets (cash only) from Wallingford Bookshop 9A St. Martins Street
01491 834383

Cornerstone News – April 2025



Free Meal Vouchers

We were able to provide free meals during the Easter holidays to several families whose children have free school meals. This is funded through the marble jar – our pay forward system. If you would like to contribute towards this please do ask at the till.

Building Repairs update

Thank you to all those who have been praying for this. We expect repairs to take place over the summer. The property managers have a preferred quote but are awaiting the go ahead from the insurers. There are also plans for a new roof on the whole building with work starting in September, do pray for wisdom in the planning of this, that it won't be too disruptive to businesses or residents.

Outside catering

Did you know that we are able to supply buffet catering for your events? From small meetings, up to large events for 100 people, we supply sandwiches made freshly on the day, our delicious homemade cakes, quiches and lots of other finger foods. Do get in touch if you have an event you need catering for.

Father's Day – 15th June

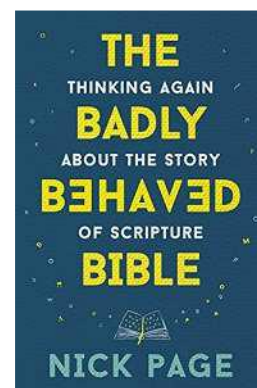
Looking ahead we have a great selection of Father's day cards and we also stock items suitable as gifts such as devotional books, chocolate, mugs and pens.

Monthly hot meal special

This will be served on Wednesday 28th May at 12.30pm – please book in advance so that we know how many to cater for.

AGM

Our AGM will be held on Monday 16th June at 7pm. We have a treat in store, as author Nick Page will be speaking. Nick has written many books over the years, including The Tabloid Bible, the Badly Behaved Bible and Dark Night of the Shed. Do come along and hear Nick speak, and also to support our trustees as they talk through the past year. As if that isn't enough, we will also be announcing our plans for our 30th birthday celebrations later in the year.



Prayer breakfasts

Our monthly prayer breakfasts continue on the second Saturday of each month. The next one will be on Saturday 10th May at 8.30am 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

GROVE

You are invited to a **Coffee Morning for Christian Aid** on **Saturday, 3rd May** from 10.00 am till 12 noon in the church. Our hosts for the morning are Noreen and Peter Hemmings. We hope you are able to join us for a chat over a cup of tea/coffee and cake. We look forward to seeing you.

Offers of cakes and help on the day are always appreciated.

Our Church Anniversary and Lunch, Sunday, 4th May.

We will be celebrating our **Church Anniversary** on **Sunday, 4th May** at 10.30 am when our worship, which will include the sacrament of holy communion, will be led by Rev Bruce Thompson. We invite you to come and share in this special service.

It will be followed by a **Bring & Share lunch**, details of which are in our weekly notice sheet. All are welcome. Please let Helen Gant (01235 886371) or one of the other stewards know if you would like to join us so that we have some idea of how many to cater for.

Ecumenical “Prayer for Revival” is held on the first Sunday of each month in our church. The next meeting is on **Sunday, 4th May** from 6.30 pm till 8 pm. You are invited to come and pray with us. All are welcome.

Film Club is on **Friday, 16th May** at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room.

We will be showing **“Brian and Charles”**. This is a 2022 comedy drama film directed by Jim Archer. “Brian Gittins is a lonely inventor in rural Wales, who builds quirky contraptions that seldom work. One day while scavenging scrap, he comes across a mannequin’s head, which inspires him to attempt to create an artificially-intelligent robot.”

Stars: David Earl, Chris Hayward, Louise Brealey, Nina Sosanya, Joe Wilkinson. All are welcome. Admission is free. A small donation helps to cover costs.

Tuesday Fellowship in May is on **Tuesday, 27th May at 2.15pm**. The subject and venue will be given in the weekly notice sheet nearer the time.

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

Thank you to everyone who supported the April Coffee Morning for “Emmaus”. Donations amounted to £195.50, to which will be added £63.26 Gift Aid arising from previous events, so the total to be transferred to Emmaus is £258.76. 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. Thank you to everyone who helps in whatever way they are able to. Your support is very much appreciated.

WANTAGE

Getting to know the Rev Bruce Thompson

Whilst a few of us within the church know Bruce well, there are many who would not recognise him if he were to walk into the church on a Sunday morning. He will be our minister as of the beginning of September and so we are keen that the church has the opportunity to start to get to know him and vice versa. Hence, the first opportunity for this will be on **Thursday 29th May at 7.30 pm** in the church hall. This will be a very informal occasion and we hope many will be able to attend on that evening. We will ensure there is another opportunity to meet, with the acknowledgement that daytime is a better time of day for many. Watch this space!

Wantage Methodist Church General Church Meeting

Our General Church Meeting took place on **Sunday 27th April**.

We re-appointed Helen Carter, Sue Haithwaite, and David Worth as our Church Stewards and Margaret Fordham and Carolyn Roche to Church Council. Clive Phillips was appointed to Church Council.

Thanks were expressed to Rob Charles, who will retire as Property Steward in August and Kelvin Rose as Copyright coordinator. We were grateful to Clive Phillips for taking over from Kelvin and are seeking a successor to Rob as Property Steward.

Wantage Gift Day

Thank you to everyone for their generous response over the last few months and particularly over the weekend of 26th – 27th April to the request to review and repledge our giving to maintain the witness at Wantage Methodist Church. The total to date for one-off payments is £4,610.00 with regular giving increased by £218 per month (£2,616 per annum).

Holy Habits

Our next Holy Habit will begin in June.

Kids@Church

Jane, Dave, Cath and Keith

Thank you to Kids@Church for a great breakfast on Easter morning. It was good to join together before worship on a wonderful morning.

Kids@Church will meet again at 9:30 am on **Sunday 18th May**.

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 timing of this month's report is such that it falls between Easter Day and the forthcoming service when our new Pastoral system comes into being.

The greatest gifts we receive at Easter are reassurance and hope – the unmatched sources of joy which follow Christ's resurrection. As we experienced the colourful transformation of the bare wooden cross, our emptied hearts were refilled with deepened hope and faithful expectation. At the service in May, everyone in the Pastoral Care team will be commissioned for the tasks we will undertake in our privileged role. It will mark the transition from the system of Pastoral Care which has served us well for as long as we can remember, to one which we hope can be similarly maintained. We remember with thankfulness the many decades of being visited and supported by our Pastoral Visitors. Now, as we adopt the new system with less emphasis on visiting, we do so trusting in God's reassuring promises of guidance and direction. Equipped and reassured by that promise, we pray that we may enable everyone to see, hear and experience God's care and resurrection love for them through all that we will try to offer as a restructured team of Pastoral Links.

A few weeks ago, Diane Barton moved into a care home in Taunton, near to where her daughter Claire lives. Over many decades, until the onset of her illness, Diane's service to our church epitomised loyalty and conscientiousness. She was a Pastoral Visitor for very many years and served in several other roles, but the one for which we remember her best is for all of the work she put into Wednesday Fellowship. Alongside her neighbour and close friend, Mary Trotter, Diane organised the programme. She somehow succeeded in the daunting task of providing a speaker or activity for the meeting every week.

It is encouraging to learn that Diane's care home has strong links with the local Anglican Church which is nearby, and so far she seems to have settled in well. We pray for Diane and her daughters, Claire and Julie, and all of her family. We acknowledge too all that both Marys – Mary T and Mary W – have done to support and care for Diane, particularly in recent years as her dependence on others has grown. As a church, we will always be grateful for the contributions and service which Diane and her late husband Mervyn gave to us.

We continue to feel concern for several members of our Church family for whom health issues are restricting their presence with us for worship, and their participation in other weekday activities. Our thoughts are with John and Val Broadbent for whom the coming month holds significant events. Val will begin her course of radiotherapy sessions, which we hope will complement the earlier surgery and successfully complete the programme of treatment. For John it will be the occasion for celebrating his 90th birthday, on which we offer our congratulations and good wishes.

Cathy White's absence from our Sunday services has caused concern about her wellbeing. Recently we have learned that, sadly, ill health has necessitated her admission to a care home in Oxford. Our thoughts are with Cathy, and we pray that she feels held in God's love.

We continue to hold Adrian Richens in our prayers as he waits for a diagnosis and treatment of the painful condition with which he is struggling at present.

Our thoughts are with all those experiencing health difficulties or problems of any kind, and we do so knowing that God's love and care will surround them in their times of uncertainty, anxiety, and sadness.

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 May we will be finishing 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. We will then be moving on to the group study guide for Holy Habits – Making More Disciples.

Dates for May are as follows:

- 6th Centred on Christ week 5: Knowing Christ : Reading: Philippians 3:7-14
- 13th Centred on Christ week 6: Rejoicing in Christ : Reading: Philippians 1:1-2
- 20th Holy Habits: – Week 1 – Shocking Generosity : Reading: Chronicles 6:32-33
- 27th Holy Habits: – Week 2 – Apprentices : Reading: Isaiah 61:1-3

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

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.

In April I took some palm crosses in and we studied Luke 19:28-40 (the triumphal entrance into Jerusalem). On **May 12th** our theme will be Psalm 23 (The good shepherd); on **June 9th** our theme will be Psalm 8 (How majestic is your name); on **July 14th** our theme will be Luke 10:38-41 (Martha and Mary); on **August 11th** our theme will be Luke 5:1-11 (The calling of the first disciples).

We have a core group from the care home who regular attend and other drop in from time to time. 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. My thanks to the regulars from our church who attend and to Helen and John Carter who have been ferrying our church members to the sessions. 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.

Prayer list

A prayer that we see the world through God's eyes

If we see the world through your eyes, Lord,
then we see a vision of our world as your love would have it:
a world where all who are weak are protected and none go hungry;
a world where your riches of creation are shared for everyone to enjoy them;
a world where mutual respect is expressed between different races and
cultures and harmony descends;
a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.
Give us the inspiration and courage to build it how you see it Lord!
That all may praise together and the only power exerted is the power of your
love. Amen.

Gwynn Bamford, supernumerary deacon, Bromsgrove and Redditch Circuit

Please pray for

Adrian, Alison C & family, Alyson, Angela, Anne, Carol Mackinder, Caroline, Diane,
Diane's daughters Claire & Julie, Doug & Anne Hatto, Edwina, Eileen, Emma Wright
& family, Findley, Geoff, Gill, Hunter, Jade, Jane Robinson, Jane & Emma Soffe &
family, John & Jo, June G, June Hartle, Lucas & family,
Mary Spalding, Meriel, Norma, Peter, Richard & Anne, Richard in York, Sue,
Terry & Sue, Sonia, Tony G, Trudy, Val Broadbent, Vic Press,
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

WMC Prayer WhatsApp group.

We have set up a prayer WhatsApp group so that we can share requests for prayers
that can't wait until they appear in the weekly notices or the monthly newsletter. It
would be so good if we could add others to this group which currently has 7 of us in
it. Please let Helen Carter know if you would like to be involved in responding to urgent
prayer requests. Thank you.

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.

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. 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.

Wantage Parish Bible Reading Book Club

Open to anyone wanting to explore the Bible with other people. Refreshments served from 5:30 pm. We read a few chapters of whichever book of the Bible we are in followed by open discussion. Anyone at any stage of faith welcome.

Tuesdays 5:45 pm to 6:45 pm at Holy Trinity, Charlton followed by evening prayer and Eucharist service at 7:00 pm

Knit & Chat

Carolyn Roche

The two April meetings were well attended despite one of them being on Easter Monday, a Bank Holiday. Our first meeting in May is also a Bank Holiday but we look forward to knitting and chatting with whoever comes.

So, our meetings in May continue on the first and third Mondays of the month and will be on **Monday 5th May** and **Monday 19th** at 2 pm in the Hall.

I have finally finished my Lent Mystery Knitalong. It is a good sized lap blanket with a lovely design of a Celtic cross on it. I will post a photo of this on our Facebook page.

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.

Community Café

Carolyn Roche

It was lovely to be able to welcome visitors to Community Café throughout April, including Easter Monday. We will be open from 9 am to 12 noon on every Monday in May and this includes the two Bank Holidays at the beginning and the end of the month. Thank you to all who volunteer at the café and to all the cake makers. There is no charge for refreshments, but people are welcome to make a donation which goes to a different charity each quarter. This month will be the final month when we collect for the charity Parkinsons.Me. We are now looking for ideas for the charities that the café will support from September 2025 – August 2026.

Do come and join us for coffee, cake, cheese scones and conversation.

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
	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 May / June

Thursday 1st May	All Day	Local Elections
Saturday 3 rd May	Afternoon	Wantage Sings
Saturday 10 th May	Morning	Silent Auction / Table Top Sale
Friday 16 th May	Evening	Clothes Swap
Saturday 17 th May	Afternoon	Wantage Sings
Sunday 18 th May	Afternoon	Jigsaw
Thursday 22 nd May	Evening	Music Makers

Thursday 12 th June	Afternoon	Oliver & James Funeral Directors
Saturday 14 th June	Morning	Wantage Community Church Craft Morning

SERVICES during May

May

Sunday 4th

Vocations Sunday

Easter 3

Acts 9:1-6(7-20) ; Psalm 30 ; Revelation 5:11-14 ; John 21:1-19

10:30 am Wantage

Libby Bolton

10:30 am Grove

Chapel Anniversary

Rev Bruce Thompson

This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

6:30 pm Grove

Praying for Revival

Sunday 11th

Christian Aid

Easter 4

Acts 9:36-43 ; Psalm 23 : Revelation 7:9-17 ; John 10: 22-30

10:45 am Wantage

Rev Keith Underhill

This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

10:30 am Grove

Elizabeth Wood

Sunday 18th

Easter 5

Acts 11:1-18 ; Psalm 148; Revelation 21:1-6 ; John 13:31-35

9:30 am Wantage

Kids@Church

10:30 am Wantage

Daphne Savage

10:30 am Grove

Rev Carol Hamilton-Foyne

Sunday 25th

Aldersgate Sunday

Easter 6

Acts 16:9-15 ; Psalm 67 ; Revelation 21:10, 22 – 22:5 ; John 14:23-29

10:30 am Wantage

Stephen Atkinson

10:30 am Grove

Rev Keith Underhill

This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

4:30 pm Wallingford

Circuit Local Preachers' Service

DIARY FOR MAY

MAY

Saturday 3rd 10:00 am Coffee Morning at Grove p15

Sunday, 4th GROVE CHAPEL ANNIVERSARY p15

10:30 am Rev Bruce Thompson
Followed by a “Bring & Share” lunch

6:30 pm Prayer for Revival at Grove p15

Monday 5th 2:00 pm Knit & Chat at Wantage p21

Saturday 10th 10:00 am Silent Auction & Table Sale at Wantage p8

Christian Aid Week 11-17 May

Monday 12th 2:30 pm Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home p21

Friday 16th 7:00 pm Clothes Swap at Wantage p11

Friday 16th 7.30 pm Grove Film Club p15

Sunday 18th 9:30 am Kids@Church at Wantage p17

Deadline for June Sector Newsletter p2

Monday 19th 2:00 pm Knit & Chat at Wantage p21

Sunday 25th 4:30 pm Circuit Service at Wallingford p3

Tuesday 27th 2:15 pm Grove Tuesday Fellowship p15

Thursday 29th 7:30 pm Getting to know you – Rev Bruce Thompson @ Wantage
p17

JUNE

Sunday 1st 3:00 pm Circuit Service at Trinity Church Abingdon
150th Anniversary Service p3