

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

**GROVE
&
WANTAGE
METHODIST
NEWS**

 The Methodist Church



June 2026

Ministers

Grove - Rev Georgina Bondzi-Simpson – Tel: 01235 219070
g.bondzi-simpson@methodist.org.uk

Wantage - Rev Bruce Thompson – Tel: 01235 813242
revbrucet@yahoo.com

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

Helen Carter : 01235 764810
Ian Sturt : 07426 772761

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

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

Contributions for the **next Newsletter** (Summer) should be sent to the editor by
email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 21st June**

email : wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com

Tel : 07710 214601

Editors : Gill & Gordon Skidmore

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

Newsletter Contribution deadline dates – 2026

July/August Sunday 21st June
September Sunday 23rd August
October Sunday 20th September

“...sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.” (Psalm 19: 10)

If you've ever struggled to make sense of the Bible, you're not alone! Even though it has been a source of spiritual guidance and moral authority for millions of people over so many centuries, some find it confusing or even contradictory. And yet, David, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), says of Scripture - "More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb." I wonder what your take on the Bible is. Do you believe it is inerrant? Do you agree that scripture is inspired by God and serves as the ultimate guide for faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:16)? Are you convinced by the idea of the dynamic and penetrating nature of Scripture, capable of transforming lives (Hebrews 4:12)?

I wonder where you stand on these and many other proclamations made about the Word of God.

There are countless resources provided by various church traditions, which help local churches and individuals to make sense of the Bible and encourage Christians to nurture discipleship by developing the habit of reading the Bible regularly. [Bible Month](#), which provides an annual opportunity for the whole Methodist Connexion to indulge in one particular book of the Bible together, is one of such resources.

The Methodist Church shares with other ecumenical partners the conviction that "The Bible is the record of God's self-revelation, supremely in Jesus Christ, and is a means through which he still reveals himself, by the Holy Spirit;" (A Catechism for the People Called Methodists) and that through Scripture, the living Christ meets us in the experience of redeeming grace.

In verses 7-10 of Psalm 19, a Psalm described by C.S. Lewis as "the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world" (Reflections on the Psalms), each phrase contains a synonym for the law of the Lord — law, decrees, precepts, commandment, fear, ordinances; and are a reference to the word of God revealed in the Scriptures.

I believe that Western society is so familiar with the Bible that we take it for granted and too often fail to appreciate the means of grace that Scripture is. Psalm 19 invites us to realise the miracle that we hold in our hands, celebrates what God has done and continues to do through the Scriptures: God revives the soul, makes wise the simple, enlightens the eye, endures forever, and is altogether righteous. Mahatma Gandhi, the famous spiritual and political leader of India, said, "You Christians look after a document containing enough dynamite to blow all civilisation to pieces, turn the world upside down and bring peace to a battle-torn planet. But you treat it as though it is nothing more than a piece of literature."

Is it not amazing that God gives us guidance on how to live? Is it not good news that the laws of the Bible are to be treasured as gracious gifts from God? I believe it is and I celebrate with the psalmist who is overjoyed to be part of the people that God has blessed with the laws and promises of Scripture.

The Bible can, indeed, be puzzling; but it is, without a shadow of doubt, a continuous source of inspiration and direction in our lives. The texts were written and gathered together over a long period of time and translated from a number of languages. This

is why it is important, when handling Scripture, to find out as much as we can about the original contexts in which those texts were produced. In our attempts to grasp its meaning, we must involve tradition, experience and reason, in accordance with Wesleyan heritage. It is also good practice for Christians from different traditions to engage with each other in healthy discussions on how the Bible applies to issues in our contemporary world - guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

One of the main ideas that I have picked up from churches across the Circuit is the need for discipleship through study of the Word and prayer. We are truly blessed to have the Bible at our disposal, free to read and discuss. God does not offer a formula that produces fully mature Christians overnight. Christian growth comes through persistent perseverance of applying what we read, hear and learn and obeying it.

What better way to conclude this than by remembering that ageless Sunday School song, "Read your Bible, pray every day if you want to grow!"

Every blessing in this Pentecost season.

Georgina

HEALING THE SOUL OF THE NATION **responding to divisions in British society**

Panel Event

Wantage Methodist Church OX12 8DA

Thursday 25 June 7.30 - 9.00pm



Sharon Booth, Founder and Executive Director of Solutions Not Sides

JOHN BOWERS KC. Principal Brasenose College, Oxford

Prof BEVERLEY CLACK, Visting Fellow at Harris Manchester College, Oxford

Imam MONAWAR HUSSAIN MBE, Founder of the Oxford Foundation and Imam at Eton College

Wantage & Grove Street Pastors

We're going to be giving away pasties on the streets on the night of Saturday 20 June and we'd love for you to join in if you can.

We first gave out pasties to celebrate our 15th anniversary, and it was so much fun and a blessing to people, that we wanted to continue this unusual, edible custom!

There are loads of ways you can get involved:

- Pray together (Methodist Church Kitchen) 9.30 pm
- Help in the kitchen (Methodist Church) 9.45 pm
- Help set up on the street (Market Place - West End) 9.45 pm
- Distribute pasties and chat to people (Market Place - West End) 10.30 pm
- Pray at home or base (Wantage Baptist) 10.30 pm
- Street Patrol (3rd Saturday patrol) SPs and PSVs 10.30 pm (Base) to 2.30 am
- Help set-down: needs 4 people for Gazebo (Market Place - West End) approx midnight
First come, first served - quite literally!

Let us know as soon as you can!

Cornerstone Christian Centre

On **Tuesday 9th July at 7 pm** at Cornerstone in Grove we will be holding our **Annual General Meeting**. Everyone is welcome to join us in reflecting on the last 12 months and looking forward to the next. It is usually very relaxed and everyone is welcome to ask questions. As we saw at the 30th Birthday Celebrations, our supporters are made up not just of friends from our 4 supporting churches or our volunteers, but from a wide range of people including from other local churches and regular customers. The AGM is another great opportunity for us to commit this important ministry to God for another year.

Can you spare two hours on a Saturday once a month?

Cornerstone is looking for a few more volunteers to join our Saturday rota, particularly on the café counter - taking orders and making drinks. Volunteering is a great way to meet people; many of our volunteers have made lifelong friends while working at Cornerstone. All training is provided and if you work 12-2 pm you will be treated to lunch at 2 pm. You must be 16 or over.

Christian Resources Together Bookshop of the Year 2023

10 Savile Way, Grove, OX12 0PT Tel: 01235 772280

Sign up to our "Friends" mailing list here:

<https://www.cornerstonegrove.org.uk/contact-us>

Works in the Methodist Modern Art Collection: 8

Peter Rogers, *The Mocking of Christ*

Warning – this article refers to a physical attack on a person



I can't help but think that this work doesn't get the recognition it deserves as I find it to be one of the most powerful in the collection. It is packed with bodies, eight soldiers and the Christ framed beautifully within it. There is a sculptural feel to it, a three-dimensional depiction that one might force one's way into it – that is if there were sufficient space between the bodies to do so. The limited palette reminds me of 'the old masters', in particular Caravaggio.

The scene itself depicts one soldier with outstretched arms seemingly standing back from Jesus, maybe he has just placed one or all of the items on Jesus – the crown of thorns, the robe, and the reed – perhaps he is admiring his work.

A second soldier, leaning forward, has his right arm raised and appears to be about to strike Jesus with the back of his hand. We recall that Jesus taught his disciples to turn the other cheek should someone strike them on their right cheek, which would mean that their attacker would have to use their fist next time they strike. Jesus is about to be struck by the back of the soldier's hand – is this the first blow?

A third soldier, without any form of armour, is lying at the feet of Jesus, arms behind his head, relaxed and looking on – is he just taking it all in? Or is he finding it all too much fun to bother getting up?

The remaining five soldiers seem to be just observing – they are onlookers – we have no idea what they may be feeling. Was it Rogers' intention to create a little ambivalence? Perhaps one or two of them do not wish to participate in the assault – are they edging their bets? We cannot say.

I particularly like how Rogers depicts Jesus. He is seated in an upright position as if he is indeed on a throne. He is serene, dignified and morally above the guards, patiently awaiting the inevitable. The crown of thorns has light around it as if it is a halo. Jesus is smaller in stature than the soldiers who are painted with a degree of solidity, muscles bulging from their limbs.

Many of us will have sat where Jesus sits. Many of us will know what it is to be misunderstood, marginalised, and mocked for our beliefs. Many of us have felt unable do anything in response to the bullying. Many of us of have been outpowered or outnumbered. It is a place of brutality, of hurt and fear. Others could come to our rescue, but they don't – they stay on the sidelines, looking on. We feel completely exposed, the bare chest of Jesus in Rogers' work adds to the sense of exposure and vulnerability.

Many survivors speak of those who could have spoken up for them, but chose to stay silent, or could have come to their aid but looked on or walked on by. I recall someone I knew who was attacked on the edge of an inner-city park late one evening. His assailants were trying to lift his ailing body over the wall into the park. My friend spotted a police car approaching but as it passed, my friend believed the officers inside had not seen what was happening so the last vestiges of hope drained from him and he lost consciousness. It was the fact that his plight had not been recognised, that those who might have expected to come to his rescue had driven past. Thankfully he regained consciousness with a police officer at his side. He and his colleague had in fact spotted what was happening to my friend and were merely turning the car round to return to him. The attackers fled and one officer gave chase, the other stayed with my friend.

It is the soldiers in the painting looking on that concern me even more than those attacking Jesus – I know I could not be a perpetrator, but would I have been a bystander? Could I find the strength within me to say 'no!' We can only know for sure when we face that dilemma.

Revd Bruce

In Conversation with

Angela Young

Author of

The Aristocrat and the Able Seaman

A compelling account of Titanic survivors Noël Leslie, Countess of Rothes, and Able Seaman Thomas Jones, whose courage and collaboration saved lives during the disaster.

Angela Young tells the extraordinary story of two Titanic survivors from vastly different social backgrounds, her great-grandmother the Countess of Rothes and Thomas Jones.

Wallingford Methodist Church, OX10 0AS

Tuesday 30 June 2026

12 noon—1.00pm

Admission Free

Soup Lunch to follow

In Partnership with

The Wallingford Bookshop



Circuit Service

4:00 pm on Sunday 28th June

at All Saints , Abingdon

celebrating the ministry of Peter Hemmings as a Local Preacher

GROVE

You are invited to a **Coffee morning on Saturday 6th June** from 10 am till 12 noon in the church. Our hosts will be Jenny, Vivienne and Simon and proceeds are for "Tools With A Mission" - TWAM, a charity which collects and refurbishes unused tools and sends them to recipients, mainly in Africa, but some in the UK also, enabling them to build a sustainable career and communities to build a future for themselves. We hope you are able to join us for a chat and tea/coffee and cake.

We look forward to seeing you.

Offers of help in providing cakes is always appreciated.

Ecumenical Prayer for Revival will be on **Sunday 7th June**, from 6.30 to 8 pm. You are invited to come and pray with us. All are welcome.

Church Council will meet on **Thursday 18th June** at 7 pm (*please note change of time*). All interested in the life and work of Grove Methodist Church are invited to attend and share in the meeting.

Film Club is on **Friday, 19th June** at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room. We will be showing "Yesterday". *This is a jukebox musical romantic comedy film directed by Danny Boyle and written by Richard Curtis, based on a story by Jack Barth. Himesh Patel stars as struggling musician Jack Malik, who suddenly finds himself as the only person who remembers the Beatles and becomes famous for performing their songs.* All are welcome. Admission is free. A small donation helps to cover expenses.

Tuesday Fellowship will be on **Tuesday 30th June**. Details of the afternoon will be given in the weekly notices nearer the time. We will be pleased to see you.

Thank you to everyone who made donations for Christian Aid at the Anniversary lunch. The amount collected was £263. To this was added Gift Aid from past years, making a total of £308.99 for Christian Aid. Thank you for your generosity.

The opportunity to **host a Coffee morning** on **4th July** is still available. If anyone would like to arrange one on that day and choose the charity to support, please get in touch with Jenny Marriott, 01235 767624.

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 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 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 prayers and support are very much appreciated.

Cornerstone A.G.M. is on **Tuesday, 9th June** at 7.30 pm at the Cornerstone. All are invited to show their support for Cornerstone by attending this meeting.

Safeguarding

The Methodist Church is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its life and ministry.

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture.

This means we will:

- promote the welfare of children, young people and adults
- work to prevent abuse from occurring
- seek to protect and respond well to those that have been abused

If you have, or become aware of any concern, you must contact your Church's Safeguarding Officer :-

Grove :

Lynda Culley 07759 085336 or Revd Georgina on 01235 219070

Wantage :

Ken Smith 01235 767545 or Revd Bruce on 01235 813242

You must not speak to others about your concerns or investigate them yourself.

WANTAGE

A Time for Reflection

Jane Kent and Helen Carter

On **June 7th**, the first Sunday of the month, we have a 'Time for Reflection' in the Godfrey Room from 9:30 - 10 am.

There will be some music, a reading from the lectionary for that day, some questions to ponder individually and the opportunity to share any thoughts briefly if you wish before finishing with some music. Everyone welcome!



Kids@church

Jane, Dave, Cath

The children had a great time in May exploring the story of the paralysed man being lowered through the roof to Jesus. They all built a duplo house and filled it with wooden people and put a roof made from branches on top and then as Dave told the story they moved the characters (and the roof!) accordingly!! After joining in prayer together the children coloured a picture to remind them of the story. We finished with sausage baps and it was lovely to welcome Bruce for breakfast!

Next month we will be meeting on **June 21st** and new friends are always welcome! We meet at 9.30 am in the hall finishing with breakfast.

Kids@Church is an informal, monthly get-together for children and their families, where we explore a Bible story, engage in an activity and finish with a shared breakfast. New friends always welcome!

(For more information, please feel free to give Jane a call /text on 07443 420205)

Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home

June Grunwald

In May we looked at John 14:15-21 (Jesus promises the Holy Spirit). In addition to the regular bible study I felt well enough to visit Elmbrook and had a lovely chat with two of the residents, which was appreciated by them.

The studies for the next few months are: June - Psalm 33:1-12; July - Matthew 13:1-9; August - Matthew 14:22-33. Elmbrook Bible Study is held at the care home on Grove Road, on the **second Monday of the month** at 2.30 pm, lasting between 30 and 45 minutes.

I am thankful for the folk at church who regularly come to the bible study and for Helen, Carolyn and Cath who offer lifts. It makes a great deal of difference to have a few people from church to join in the discussion.

Tuesday Afternoon Prayer and Study Group

Carolyn Roche

This is an open and friendly group who meet for Prayer and Bible Study 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.

For most of June we will be looking at Paul's letter to the Philippians as this is the book of the Bible that has been chosen for Bible Month this year. This will begin with our Quiet Day at the Convent, led for us by Libby Bolton. We will return to the Sermon on the Mount study next month.

Dates for June are as follows:

2nd Sermon on the Mount - Week 5 – Faithfulness in Marriage and Speech
Reading: Matthew 5:31-37; 19:3-9

9th **QUIET DAY at the Convent studying Part I from the Bible Month Philippians Study**

We gather between 9.30 and 9.45 so that those who wish can join the Sisters for Holy Communion. The study sessions are led by Libby Bolton and are interspersed with coffee, lunch, finishing with tea and cake at 3 pm.

Bible Month – Philippians

Introduction + Week 1 – A Harvest of Joy (Philippians chap 1)

16th Bible Month – Philippians - Week 2 – Shine Humbly (Philippians 2)

23rd Bible Month – Philippians - Week 3 – Press On (Philippians 3)

30th Bible Month - Philippians - Week 4 – Grace be with you (Philippians 4)

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

Community Café

Carolyn Roche

Thank you to all the volunteers and cake makers who helped throughout May – always a difficult month as there are two Bank Holidays. The café has been busy with over 28 attending on some mornings. As usual we will be open from 9 am to 12 noon each Monday serving coffee/tea, cakes, cheese scones and conversation. There is no charge for refreshments, but people are welcome to donate to our chosen charity. This month we will begin collecting for Wantage Methodist Church. We are very thankful for the hospitality and fellowship that it offers to the Café throughout the year.

A date to note is **Monday 15th June** when Community Links Oxfordshire – a service provided by **Oxfordshire Age UK** – will be holding an **Information Fair** as part of the Community Café Session. They will be there from 10 to 12 noon and will give you an opportunity to meet your local Link Worker for information and advice on a wide range of activities, services and organisations in the community.

There will be a **meeting of Church Council at 7:30pm on Thursday 18th June.**

Please pray for:

Adrian, Alison C & family, Alyson, Caroline, Carol Mackinder, Doug & Anne Hatto, Edwina, Eileen, Emma Wright & family, Findley, Mark, Angela & family, Geoff, Gloria Smith, Hannah Morton. Hunter, Jade, Jane Robinson, John & Jo, June G, John Broadbent, Jane & Emma Soffe & family, June Hartle, Ken & Grace Wright, Lucas & family, Mary Spalding, Meriel, Norma, Peter, Rachel & her family, Richard, Richard in York, Sharon, Tony G, Trudy, William Chadwick, Vicky, Robin & Becky Legge & all the Legge family. All at Bullingdon Prison, staff, prisoners and visitors. Our Ministers, Local Preachers & Worship Leaders, kids@church, 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 email: 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. 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. 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.

Knit & Chat

Carolyn Roche

This friendly group enjoyed getting together for the two May meetings. We had a range of projects taking place at the last meeting including knitting, crochet, embroidery, rug making, and word searches. If you wish to join us this month, just come with what you are working on at the moment. Tea/coffee and cake appear at some point in the afternoon. We will meet on the first and third Mondays of June - **Monday 1st June** and **Monday 15th June** at 2 pm in the Hall.

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.

These few lines, written by the poet Hafez in the 14th century, provide a seasonally appropriate preface to our midsummer pastoral report.

Even after all this time, the Sun never says to the Earth

“You owe me”.

Look what happens with a love like that,

It lights the whole sky.

By expanding the metaphor we affirm and give thanks to God for the Easter story that we celebrated together last month. It is Jesus, whose gift of total love upon the Cross, that will forever light up the whole sky, for us and for all whose faith in Christ brings meaning to their lives.

Those of us who feel well can easily welcome and feel uplifted by the arrival of longer days, warm sunshine and abundance of colourful flowers. We can readily give thanks for all the natural wonders of God’s creation. However, our thoughts are also with those in our church family for whom life feels particularly difficult at present. We think of them individually and assure each of them that they are missed from our Services on Sundays, and remembered in our prayers. As we hold them before God, we pray that they will feel sustained and supported. We pray that their health and wellbeing may be improved, and they will feel secure in the knowledge that God’s love will always surround them.

Hopefully, it is acceptable to conclude by repeating what was said on 17th May, when Bruce sensitively combined worship and Annual Church Meeting matters in our morning service entitled ‘Update and Upbeat’.

Our objectives are:

- to ensure that everyone associated with our Church is adequately cared for, with no one slipping through the net, and everyone is linked-in.
 - to recognise all aspects of care, formal and informal, that already exist within the church
- to involve everyone in the loving ethos of our church’s life.**

It is now a year since our restructured Pastoral Care system came into operation. Next month, all of our Pastoral Links will meet together with Revd. Bruce, to assess how well we are achieving our objective of offering care and support to everyone in our Church family.

There may be some people who have comments and ideas they would like taken to the meeting. I will be pleased to present them anonymously, so please don’t hesitate to give me your comments, requests or concerns.

.....and finally, yet again it is a plea for more people to join the flower rota. The sign-up sheet is in the Link corridor. Thank you to those whose names regularly appear on the rota. Any new ones will be welcomed enthusiastically.

Wantage Annual General Church Meeting

Gill Skidmore

The meeting took place in the context of morning worship on Sunday 17th May, with 62 people present in Church and 10 on Zoom.

Introduction: Bruce Thompson described the Annual Church Meeting as “Update and upbeat”. The Church and Circuit have undergone huge changes with the reduction of staff to two presbyters, and inevitably there has been a period of uncertainty and fearfulness. In the light of this we need to reflect on the year that has passed and look positively at what is to come. The format will be for Bruce to interview Church officers and leaders for everyone to be informed of our current situation. There will be an opportunity for comment or questions from anyone in the congregation.

Election of Stewards and Church Council Representatives: None of the people concerned are at the end of their potential period of office and there was no dissent expressed to the proposal from the Church Leadership Team to re-elect all stewards and representatives to provide continuity in times of upheaval. (*A full list of names is available on request from Gill Skidmore*)

Finance: (*Heather Wells, Church Treasurer*) Heather showed a slide of the comparison between last year and this, which demonstrated that income has improved and expenditure reduced. The largest reductions are in cleaning and photocopying charges. Conveniently reducing professional cleaning hours coincided with the wishes of the ladies working at the time. Cath Worth has taken responsibility for cleaning the Chapel. Heather apologised that all photocopied items are now in black and white but she could not justify the expenditure of colour printing. She thanked everyone as extra regular giving has made a huge difference to the financial situation. For the moment there will be no need for another gift day.

Property: (*Gordon Skidmore, Chair of Property and Finance Committee*) Gordon reported that in general the property is in good condition but reminded everyone that the Hall is now 34 years old, and that the Chapel renovation was completed 10 years ago. The buildings are largely in good order thanks to constant maintenance, but some larger issues are looming, none of which should be too problematic or costly. He expressed thanks to Rob Charles for his care over the years. The work of the property steward has now been divided between volunteers with shared responsibilities.

Lettings: ideally the building is used about 50% of the time. We have 8 regular users and have lost 2. Slimming World no longer meets on the premises, sadly due to difficulties in parking in the centre of Wantage. My Life My Choice have moved for better reasons – the activity is not appropriate for the Chapel space, the hall is in use and the parlour is now too small because of increased attendance, demonstrating a need being fulfilled.

Pastoral matters: (*Ann Barber, Pastoral Coordinator*) Ann began by sharing 1 Peter 5:1-3, which had very appropriately come up as the day’s Bible reading: “I appeal to you, care for the flock God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly, not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care but lead them by your own good example.” She said that when she became Pastoral Secretary 21 years ago there were 141

members. Now there are just over half that number, but also a lot of people who are just as much part of the family without having been officially received into membership of the Methodist church. The aim of the pastoral system is to ensure that everyone associated with the Church is cared for and that nobody slips through the net. Pastoral visitors had to be Methodist members, but the new pastoral links can be anybody who volunteers for the role. The system seems to be working well, but Ann and Margaret Fordham, whose role is now “Pastoral Support”, rely on being made aware of needs. Ann also said that many people have commented on being grateful for Bruce’s support. Bruce pointed out that we are an inclusive Church family open to all, but that if anyone would like to explore formal membership, they are welcome to talk to him.

Church stewards: (*David Worth*) David thanked Sue Haithwaite who had retired from her service as Church Steward and welcomed Rodney Tillotson and Jan Abrahall to the team. He also thanked the Sunday stewards for their work and reminded the Church of the invitation to act as “greeters” welcoming people on Sunday mornings. Referring to the recent Circuit “Going for Growth” day, David reminded the Church that it is as much about spiritual growth as numerical. The stewards will be asking people for their ideas, bearing in mind that one size does not fit all. Bruce reminded us that it is as much about having confidence. A year ago, we were worried about the new situation but the worries are easing as we find that we can do so much together.

Kids@church: (*David Worth*) Bruce began by asking David to convey our love and prayers to Cath, who would have been giving the report were she not at her mother’s bedside in Liverpool.

David said there were now 4 regular families coming to kids@church and everything is a lot more positive than this time last year. They involve the kids in a Bible story, have a song and a prayer before some craft work and breakfast, which is a great opportunity for children and parents to get to know each other. Ages range from newborn to teen age. David thanked the team as well as the invaluable kitchen supporters and other occasional helpers and asked for prayers for the group.

Time for reflection: (*Jane Kent*) This small group has met before service on the first Sunday of the month for the last 9 months. Jane referred to the story of Mary and Martha – the group aims to be like Martha, listening to Jesus. There is some music, a reading and a time of silence. All are welcome.

“View from the pew”: Mick Glover and Libby Fairweather shared their experiences of joining the Church at difficult times in their lives and their appreciation for the warm welcome they had received.

Looking forward: Bruce reflected that we are living in times of anxiety and fear, in the Church and in a national and international context. He spoke eloquently about dealing with extremes. He reminded us that there is truth on both sides of any conflict and Christ holds together His group of disciples whatever their views. Panic, division and instability are not the way forward.

The Circuit growth day challenges us to look at what God is calling us to do. We must work with vision and the resources that we have. “You can do what you can do now.”

The service concluded with sharing Holy Communion together.

Note the date

Gill Skidmore

The **Caritas Farewell Concert** will take place in our Chapel on **Saturday 4th July** at 4 pm. This time it will be in aid of Christian Aid. If you enjoyed our last concert, do come and join us again. We are looking forward to being joined by some of our former members to celebrate 10 years of wonderful music-making.

Watch out for tickets going on sale if you are interested.



A service provided by



Information Fair

Wantage



Pop along and meet your local Link Worker for information and advice on a wide range of activities, services and organisations in your community.

When: Monday 15th June 2026, 10-12noon

Where: Wantage Methodist Church, 20 Newbury Street, Wantage, OX12 8DA

Sam Allen 07827 235412
community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk
www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire

Community Links Oxfordshire is available to all adults living in the county, and is here to link you into what matters to you. Funded by Oxfordshire County Council.

Age UK Oxfordshire is an independent local charity. Registered charity No.1091529 and company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No. 4328143. Registered office: 10 Napier Court, Barton Lane, Abingdon, OX14 3YT.

What is happening on the Wantage premises at present?

One off Bookings

Sunday May 31 aft Wantage Sings (Band)

June

Thursday June 4 morn Baptist Toddlers

Sunday June 7 aft Wantage Sings

Thursday June 11 morn Baptist Toddlers
eve Music Makers

Sunday June 14 aft Wantage Sings

Saturday June 20 morn WCC Craft Matters
eve WGSP Pasty Prep & Prayers

Thursday June 25 morn Baptist Toddlers
eve Panel Evening

Sunday June 28 eve WCC Prayers

July

Wednesday July 1 eve Jim Mitchell Concert

Thursday July 2 morn Baptist Toddlers

Saturday July 4 aft Caritas Farewell

Saturday July 11 aft Wedding (prep from Friday afternoon)

Saturday July 18 aft Private Party

Thursday July 23 eve Music Makers

SERVICES during JUNE

Sunday 7th June

Ordinary 10

Hosea 5:15-6:6; Psalm 50:7-15; Romans 4:13-25; Matthew 9:9-13,18-26

10:30 am Wantage

Peter Hemmings

10:30 am Grove

Andrew Dixon

6:30 pm Prayer for Revival at Grove

Sunday 14th June

Methodist Homes

Ordinary 11

Exodus 19:2-8a; Psalm 100; Romans 5:1-8; Matthew 9:35-10:8

10:30 am Wantage

Carolyn Luscombe

10:30 am Grove

Rev Georgina Bondzi-Simpson

This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

Sunday 21st June

Refugee Week

Ordinary 12

Jeremiah 20:7-13; Psalm 69:7-10,16-18; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39

9:30 am Wantage

Kids@Church

10:30 am Wantage

Rev Bruce Thompson

This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

10:30 am Grove

Local Arrangements

Sunday 28th June

Ordinary 13

Jeremiah 28:5-9; Psalm 89:1-4,15-18; Romans 6:12-32; Matthew 10:40-42

10:30 am Wantage

Rev Katherine Pickering

10:30 am Grove

Stephen Atkinson

4:00 pm All Saints, Abingdon

Circuit Service

DIARY FOR JUNE

June

Sunday, 7th	6:30 pm	Prayer for Revival at Grove	p 9
Monday 8th	2:30 pm	Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home	p11
Thursday 18th	7:00 pm	Grove Church Council	p 9
	7:30 pm	Wantage Church Council	p12
Friday 19th	7:30 pm	Grove Film Club	p 9
Sunday 21st	9:30 am	Kids@Church at Wantage	p11
		Deadline for Summer (July/August) Newsletter	p 2
Thursday 25th	7:30 pm	Healing the Soul of the Nation	p 4
Sunday 28th	4:00 pm	All Saints, Abingdon Circuit Service	p 8/ p19
Tuesday 30th	Noon	In Conversation at Wallingford	p 8
	2:15 pm	Grove Tuesday Fellowship	p 9
July			
Saturday 4th	4:00 pm	Caritas Farewell Concert at Wantage	p17