

Welwyn Garden City, Harpenden and Wheathampstead United Reformed Churches Magazine



APRIL & MAY MAGAZINE 2023

What Comes Next?

I am an avid reader and a loyal user of our Community library. I can remember the first book I ever borrowed from a library when I was seven— it was tales of the ancient Greek heroes. I don't know what prompted me to choose that one, maybe the cover drew my attention. Whatever it was, those stories of their adventures and activities set the pattern of my reading for ever!

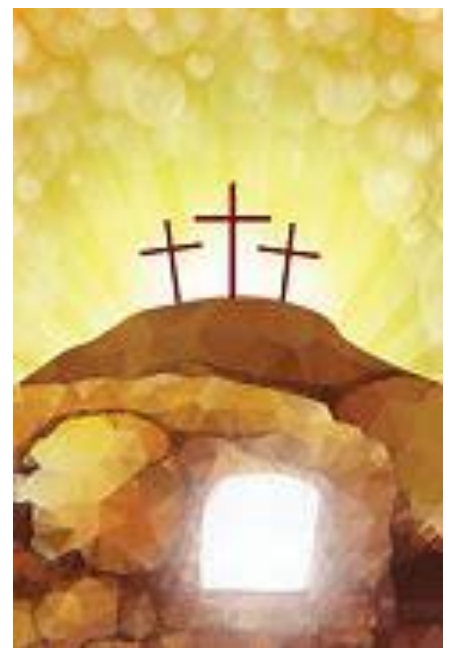
Taking a break from reading for enjoyment while I worked followed by the need to read with my children, I was later able to read my chosen genre – detective novels again. To address the more 'cultured' side of my reading I also joined a book group which broadened my reading material. But still, and especially if the group's chosen book is a bit heavy, I always have two or more books on the go.



Reading about people committing crimes isn't exactly what one might term 'suitable' reading for a person who calls themselves a Christian but I like trying to unravel the plot and discover whodunit before the revelation.

— Recently a novel I have read delivered a 'shock-ending' - the detective hero died! I wasn't expecting that. This is a fairly unusual ending for a detective novel. How would the author recover from that? How would the reader? So now I wonder if the author of the novel will continue. For him the question is 'What comes next?'

This is the question which will have confronted the disciples following the events of their past three years and the last week of Christ's earthly life. What next? All their hopes and expectations shattered. Now they live in fear for their



own lives at the hands of the Jewish elders – members of the Sanhedrin. We read a report of a crime committed and the perpetrators are revealed for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. And for those who are blind then the liar and blasphemer has met his just deserts. It's The End.

So to answer the question 'What comes next?' At the beginning of April we will celebrate Holy Week from Palm Sunday to the foot of the Cross on Good Friday. **WE** know what comes next. The glorious Resurrection on Easter Sunday, the appearance of the risen Christ to Mary Magdalen in the garden, his appearance to the disciples and then to Thomas, the doubter.

Continuing into May we will see the disciples baptised in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and sent out, now as Apostles, to preach the Good News and teach. We will learn of the thousands coming to give their lives to the Lord, encouraged and sustained by the Apostles.

The Resurrection of Christ is the twist in the story, the 'shock-ending' if you like. However, this is a story with a happy ending – a story of sacrifice, of hope, and of an abiding love – the love of a Father who gave his only Son that we might have eternal life. It's not the end – it's THE BEGINNING.

Vivienne Kendall - Wheathampstead

WGC URC Secretary's Soap Box

Allison gave me this tag and as I seem to be constantly asking for help I thought it appropriate to use it so here goes: -

WGC URC are looking for Volunteers.

WHY?

- 1) To keep our church building safe and running smoothly.
- 2) To offer a welcoming, safe and cared for space inside and outside for all.
- 3) To share the responsibility

So how can we all help to achieve this goal?

By giving a little of our time.

We all have different gifts, skills and talents. So please think about what you could offer either on a regular basis or a one off as every little helps. If you have any ideas, or see something that is in need of attention which you think you could help with, then please come and have a chat over a coffee it would be greatly appreciated.

Below is something you may be able to consider.

Volunteers for 24/7 contact

We do need 24/7 contact details in case of emergencies. We are looking for volunteers to join us on a rota of perhaps a month at a time. If you could please consider coming on the rota to share the load, please speak to Helen K. In the past 2 years Helen, Joyce and Allison have been on the rota and we haven't been contacted .

Allison and Helen have prepared a list of guidelines/ instructions which include contact details of services which may be required in the event of a call out.

How it works

The phone number is 07454 543934 The phone supports CALL DIVERT to another number

1. The phone will link to the person on the Rota
2. The phone remains in the office and is charged there as needed eg every Friday
3. We change the call divert number when handed over to someone else.

4. If there is someone in the office they can pick up - it diverts after 15 seconds of ringing.

Advantage is ... only carry 1 phone (your own), everyone knows where the phone is.

Texts won't divert but I think most people will call the phone if there is an issue.

Easter

On Friday the 7th April following the service at the Cross on Howardsgate we will be welcoming those who attended into our church for refreshments and Hot Cross Buns. Liz will be looking for volunteers to set up and prepare before the service and also serve and clear away after.

On Saturday 8th April I will be looking for help to decorate the church for Easter. My flower team is sadly depleted with Margaret in recovery following her hip operation which leaves Mary and myself. So please come along at 10am. Floral art isn't a requirement just a willingness to help which will be rewarded with refreshments and Hot Cross Buns.

As in previous years could the various church groups please decorate a windowsill in an Easter theme. It doesn't have to be religious Bunnies, Easter Chicks, Spring flowers and Easter eggs are all welcome.

Please remember to bring some daffodils on Sunday Morning to decorate the cross.

£50,000 For our Big Build

Please check out our board in the vestibule

Our fund raising is underway with £225.90 already raised from the Sunday Morning Talents Table. Could you participate by bringing something for the table it can be the offer of a service like a lift to the Airport or an appointment, help in a garden, or anything else you can think of which you could offer. Baking is also always appreciated.

Helen and Kathleen will be hosting a Soup Lunch in the Lower Hall on the 4th Sundays in May and June after Worship.

The first **Lucky Numbers Draw** will take place in April with a prize of a Gift Voucher of the winner's choice. If you haven't joined yet it isn't too late so, please see Allison. We currently have 16 participants.

Spring Fayre on the 13th May 10-2pm at the front of the church

We need your help to make this a success.

- Helpers to set up at 9am and pack away at 2pm
- Helpers to man stalls
- Helpers to serve refreshments.
- Ideas for stalls and children's activities
- Craft items
- Raffle Prizes
- Plants (You may have a few spare from those you have been growing for your own garden lettuce , toms , bedding etc.)
- Good quality Pre-Loved items like jewellery, unwanted gifts etc but **no bric-a- brac.**)
- Good as new clothes items
- A gazebo you could lend.

As it is also the Food Festival in town on that day we will be running a Charity Car Park to help boost our Fund Raising as there will be lots of people in town looking for parking. We need volunteers to man the car park for 2Hour Shifts starting at 9am and finishing at 3pm.

The success of this event depends on your participation.

Songs of Praise Service Sunday 14th May

Please look out for request forms at the back of the church which need to be completed and returned with your requests by the 30th April.

Finally please keep Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd April free for the proposed visit from the Rev Martyn Nead who has been invited to come to our Cluster Churches to meet us all and Preach with a View . Details to follow.

You will also find a poster for a visit by Eddie Boone on the 30th April our 5th Sunday Cluster Joint Worship at WGC URC. I am hoping our congregation and our friends from Harpenden and Wheathampstead will be able to join us to make this day a success.

I look forward in anticipation for all your offers to help with my various requests. We are counting on your support.

Thank you for taking the time to read my Soap Box Pleas.

God Bless Joyce

Church Fayre

Saturday 13.5.23

Time: 10am – 2pm

Place: United Reformed Church
(Opposite Sainsbury's) AL8 6PR



Come along and visit
our outdoor stalls

Gardening Stall

Tombola

Raffle

Handmade crafts

Tea/Coffee/Cake



Remembering Jean – Jane Weedon.

Thank you Carolyn for the privilege doing this today And to Joyce Nicolson and Joyce deans, Jenni Rayne, Janet Mortimer, Robert Harvey and Christine Novelli for sharing their memories with me, which have helped to shape this tribute. To be honest I didn't know where to begin, except to ask Robert how long we have, because we could be here all afternoon and evening!!

People have described Jean as a dear friend, a sister, a treasure, a friends right arm. We have known her for her love of God, her warm and loving nature, her kindness her friendship. She was an incredible straight talking love for people offering herself and her home for those in need.

She was an encourager who treated everyone equally and wanted everyone to know how much they were loved. She was even described as a force to be reckoned with and of course there were her 'Boys'!

She could also be very determined and immovable, these are qualities in a person who gets things done. All of this is true but I was looking for something special that I couldn't quite put my finger on. I would have loved to have found one of those Prevarication and Persuasion type words Jean was so fond of that described her to a 'T' but that wasn't to be. Then I heard someone talk about a person, a stranger in a new area with no special position or influence, not rich or well connected who had become a pillar of their community and I thought that is it! That is what Jean was and that is exactly why she will be so missed.

Jean arrived here with her family in 2007 at about the same time as me. I met her on her second visit to the church, she told me she had been doing the Cooks Tour but she hadn't been welcomed anywhere the way she was welcomed here. She had found her church and her people. This welcome was so important to her that she was very soon on the welcome team and has been its organiser for many years.

Janet wrote: Jean was one of the first people to welcome us to the Church when we arrived four years ago. Her welcome was so warm and loving. Jean helped and encouraged us to get involved in the life of the Church family. She was wonderful at encouraging and offering constructive criticism in a very loving way.



Jenni said I love the way she shared her loves, which she had so many. Books, performance, knitting and her wonderful grandchildren, her faith. That reminded me that everything she got involved with came from her passions, the things she loved to do which she shared so freely with us. As Jenni goes on to say 'She didn't just join clubs, she made them and encouraged others to join our community'. Jenni cherishes the memory of the baby shower that Jean and Caroline arranged for her when she was expecting the twins, her love and understanding and utter acceptance of the boys as who they are autism and all and her words as Jenni anxiously tried to keep Howard calm during a service she said. "Don't worry this is who he is, he's just being himself and we love him for who he is, just as he is." That was Jean the right word in the right place and the right time.

Jean freely shared her tears with us as well and we soon discovered that anything to do with babies in sad circumstances moved Jean to tears. On one occasion she had heard about 'Fish and Chip babies' in Africa so called because all they were wrapped in was old pieces of newspaper. She talked with such passion that we soon found ourselves knitting vests for these babies, Several suitcases were filled and sent. This eventually led to the beginning of Knit and Natter. That group of ladies has knitted for so many causes and not surprisingly they were often connected with babies and children.

Joyce Deans recalled how Jean made her feel so welcome at the group even though she couldn't knit very well. She invited her to sort the wool and wind skeins and bobbins of wool into balls

Jean always wanted people to feel good about themselves and to see that everyone has something useful they can offer.

She didn't want people to feel lonely either so once a month after church she started the Sunday Lunch. This saw a group of about a dozen people going to lunch at the Drs Tonic or other restaurants in town. Covid curtailed that activity but Robert shared that it has just started again and I am sure Jean would be glad to hear that!

There were bigger dreams too like the Hertfordshire Festival of Words and the Tea Dance with its Summer and Winter Balls. The Festival of Words ran for a quite a few years with a number of us finding ourselves involved with the committee or adjudicating or on the day. I didn't know I had an ambition to be an adjudicator and nervous as I always was I thoroughly enjoyed myself! It was a opportunity for schoolchildren to learn poetry and perform it or to write stories and illustrate them.

This combined more than one of Jeans passions and was really well received being taken over eventually by one of the participating schools.

The Tea dances were also a great success on a Saturday afternoon once a month. Lots of people helped whether they could dance or not. She tried very hard to ensure that Robert and I could at least dance a waltz with lessons from Cherylle and Mike – Robert made a much better job of it than I did despite Mikes best efforts!

The Balls were quite spectacular. Christine mentioned her dream to dance the waltz in a gown to Moon River. Jean and Cherylle hatched a plan and so it was that Geoff the music maestro danced her around the room at the first winter ball – a truly magical moment

Sometimes Jean could become rather determined and once she had made up her mind about something it was hard to move her. Jean had been nominated several times to be an Elder but she was determined that she wasn't good enough, Holy enough, religious enough to take on that role. It took a lot of internal spring cleaning and persuading that none of us are worthy but if God calls us, God provides the gifts we need. It was good to have her on board. Her straightforward approach to things and willingness to get stuck in was a great addition to the team. She did have her complaints though threatening to come in her pyjamas because she was ready for bed by 9pm and the meeting often went on beyond that. When Carolyn and Brett were away she had another little ruse to end the meeting early. We were invited to meet at their house, in the garden if it was warm enough and we had to end when we could no longer see each other!!

When the churches in the Synod were asked to work in groups we became part of Heartland and the Mid Herts cluster which meant me taking services elsewhere a couple of times a month. Jeans heart for the church came to the fore in her desire and determination to see the Worship team birth and flourish. I know she has encouraged quite a few of you out of your comfort zones to participate in various ways and to discover talents you didn't know you had or were shy of using
This team really has flourished adding great value to the worshipping life of the church and to the fellowship.

Jean often shared stories with us about Stockport Sunday School and it was a great privilege to be invited to preach at their anniversary one year and meet

her friends., Some time later a group of them returned the favour taking worship here. They encouraged us to share our love -for one another and for God with the wider community by telling us about the history of that fascinating place of worship and how they had done just that over the years.

And so I could go on! The stories are endless for all of us who valued our friendship and found ourselves doing all kinds of things we might not have got around to on our own.

Carolyn told me that a little girl who had recently lost a loved one once asked Jean what heaven is like .Jean said I don't know but it must be really special because no one ever comes back.

Of course the only one who ever did was Jesus. Now Jean knows for herself that all his promises are true. Having taken that step from life to Life she knows just how special Heaven is, where there will be new horizons to explore and she is surrounded by love beyond measure.

What an awesome legacy she leaves behind and I have heard some of you talk about honouring her by keeping it going. Although we know we will miss her it is only as time goes by that we will realise just how much.

Several people mentioned how Jean always left us by saying 'I do love you, you know.'

We say that too... Jean We do love you, you know for who you have been to each one of us
not just for what you have achieved. We thank God for you and hard as it is we lovingly let you go into the future that awaits you. Kahlil Gibran wrote

And what is it to cease breathing, but to free the breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.

And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb.

And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.

Keep on dancing Jean!

We do love you!

CHURCH FAMILY CORNER

My birthday list for April starts with 2 friends born on 1st, Mary D and Melvyn D, followed by the twins, Howard and Xander, born on 9th April and so now 9 years old. How the years have flown by for our boys! Next on the April list is Derek G. on 12th, then Margaret T. on 15th, Karen Mc. On 18th, Skye N. who will be 16 on 21st, Sanjay on 21st, Graham D. on 23rd, Arthur T. on 26th, and lastly Pat D. on 29th.

Moving on to May, we start with Margaret K. on 1st, Luke A. who will be 12 on 5th, Chloe C. who will be 17 on 9th, Nathan C. on 10th, Joyce D. on 16th, Nano W. on 20th and Marianne S. on 25th. We send our birthday congratulations and best wishes to all these friends and hope they each enjoy a happy day.

We have several Wedding Anniversary congratulations to send in April, firstly to Joyce and Bruce on their 52nd on 12th, followed by Irene and Roger on their 69th on April 17th, Helen and Allen on their 47th on 17th and lastly, Janet and John Mortimer on their 42nd on 18th. I have been told that there were tax advantages to be had when couples tied the knot in April, hence the numbers of anniversaries on our list!!

It was with great sadness that I have had to write to Lisa and her team of volunteers at the Mustard Seed Mission Charity to explain that we are no longer able to take part in their annual Christmas Love in a Box Appeal, due to changes in our circumstances. Over many years we had managed to collect 50-100+ boxes every November which were picked up from our house and taken to orphanages and churches in Moldova in time for Christmas. After losing our dear friend, Jean and Carole, our shoe box expert, no longer able to drive, we have had to opt out from now on. I have asked Lisa to let us know if there is another school or church in our area intending to take part this year, in case anyone still wants to prepare their own box. Thank you for the support we have received from you all in the past years.

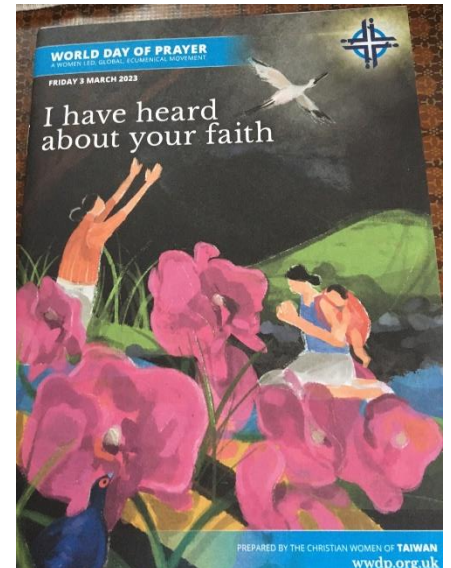
Please remember those friends in need of our prayerful support at this time, including Margaret Richardson, recovering from a replacement operation, and Brian, her husband, and Carolyn and her family coming to terms with Jean's recent death.

We thank God for His sustaining presence as we look forward to meeting a prospective new minister for our cluster on Sunday 23rd April. Please keep him and his family in your prayers and let us know of anyone else in need at this time.

Ann Meers

On behalf of our Pastoral Teams

World Day of Prayer in Wheathampstead - members from all three churches gathered at St Thomas More Catholic Church for this annual service, this year written by the Christian women of Taiwan. The theme being 'I have heard about your faith' and we heard the struggle that it's people have, the country itself being caught up in a superpower struggle and that it is being harassed by China and the risk of conflict is very real.



Included in the service of hymns, readings and prayers are short letters from the women of Taiwan about the difficulties they face daily. The meditation on the scripture reading, Ephesians 1 15 - 19 includes this passage 'Even in the face of adversity we need to remain focused and faithful and align our will to the will of God. For Christians, opposition and adversity are never far away. Spiritual advancement will always face opposition but if we, like Paul encourage each other, the people of God, we in turn will also be encouraged'.

The service always finishes with the hymn 'The day thou gravest, Lord, has ended ' and it is a very powerful thought that it was being sung as part of this wave of prayer right across the world. Next year's Service is written by the women of Palestine.

Chilli and Chocolate Night - this was a fundraising event to raise money to replace our very draughty, ill fitting and difficult to open church door into the Chapel Gym. We had a great deal of fun and over 100 people enjoyed a lovely meal and answering a very tricky(for some!) chocolate quiz and a session of live music. We



raise £1800 pounds which added to the money we had already will pay for a new, almost replica door.

Lent Course - the churches are meeting in groups for five weekly sessions to think and discuss the Christian Aid theme 'Talking Climate Justice'. It not only encourages us to think individually about the problems but very much includes how our churches can be involved.

Talking Climate Justice

Small group discussion guide

The Christian life is one of transformation. In this Talking Climate Justice small group discussion guide we will take key themes of the Christian life: repentance, sacrifice, redemption, reconciliation and reparation, to help you and your church grapple with the realities of poverty and the climate crisis and how you can respond as a church.

Each week you will explore a new theme, with Bible readings, stories and prayers, to stir up ideas of how you can act together for climate justice.

You will also find a climate justice action log where you can record the actions you want to take together. Committing to and then taking actions as a group is a great way to encourage and energise ourselves.

We look forward to a very busy time in the Church Calendar as Easter approaches, especially our Walk of Witness and service in St Helen's Churchyard accompanied by the Salvation Army Band on Good Friday. Also attending the Son Rise service on Easter morning at St Peter's Church in Gustard Wood at 5.00 am!

Jane & Jackie



Picking Up the Pieces

Sunday 30th April 2023

@ Welwyn Garden City URC

10:30am – 11:30am Service led by Eddie Boon

12pm – 1pm Lunch

1pm – 3pm Appreciative Gathering

After the service, we will be having a simple lunch (soup, bread and cheese) followed by a 'Picking up the Pieces' gathering with Eddie Boon, the URC Thames North Synod Discipleship Enabler. This promises to be an interesting, positive and useful event aimed at helping us explore our Christian discipleship both as a local church and as individuals in this new season following the pandemic. The event will start at 1pm and finish about 3pm.

This is one of our 5th Sunday services where we come together as a cluster and is an excellent opportunity to meet members of the congregations of the other churches.

THE FIENDISHLY DIFFICULT TRIVIA QUIZ

These questions aren't for the faint-hearted. A good score is between 5-10, get more than half correct and you're either good at quizzes or a lucky guesser!

Answers on back page

1. How many people were saved on the ark?
2. Name the longest book of the Bible with 150 chapters?
3. There are only three angels named in the bible, Michael and Lucifer are two, name the other?
4. The book of Esther is unique because it does not mention which word?
5. John the Baptist baptized Jesus in which river?
6. What are the first three words in the book of Genesis?
7. What is the meaning of 'CC' with reference to E-mail?
8. Which London University has been attended by Mick Jagger, David Attenborough and President John F. Kennedy?
9. Which major trunk road connects London to Fishguard in Wales?
10. How many American States start with the name 'New'?
11. The lyrics of which UK number one song contains the title of the next number one song, but not its own title? (Hint: it was the seventies!)
12. There are four main blood groups, can you name them?
13. Literally meaning "angry" in Italian, which spicy sauce for pasta is made from garlic, tomatoes, and dried red chili peppers cooked in olive oil?
14. In darts, what is the lowest score not possible to score with one dart?
15. Which famous 20 th Century person is the footballer Cristiano Ronaldo named after?
16. What facially do Fred Flintstone and Betty Rubble have that Wilma and Barney don't?
17. Complete this Billy Connolly quote: "My definition of an intellectual is someone who can listen to the William Tell Overture without thinking of... "?
18. Which is the only day of the week that has an anagram?



19. Once owned by Henry VIII, what was bought by Cecil Chubb in a South West England auction on 21 September 1915 for £6,600?
20. In 1655, diarist Samuel Pepys became the first person in Britain to write about which pet?
21. 'Don't tell him Pike', is one of the funniest lines in British television history, but he didn't give Pike's first name; what is it?
22. Which slogan of a major brand was inspired by the last words of American murderer Gary Gilmore whilst awaiting execution by firing squad?
23. There is no mention of this fruit in the works of Shakespeare, Jane Austen or the Bible; Dickens uses the word six times in <i>The Pickwick Papers</i> , always followed by another word; which fruit is it?
24. Which word do you compose by placing in order the chemical symbols for tungsten, aluminium and potassium?
25. In a deck of playing cards, who is the only king without a moustache?

Christian Aid Week: 14-20 May



This year Christian Aid are focusing on Malawi, where food, fuel, fertiliser and school fees (no free education there!) have doubled in price in the last 12 months. Drought, storms and floods have devastated crops.

But support from Christian Aid has helped Esther. For ten years, Esther grew “pigeon peas” but could never get a fair price for them from the middlemen who exploited her. She has now joined a local co-operative run by a Christian Aid partner. She has learned how to store her peas in a warehouse, safe from increasingly heavy storms, and, by joining together with other farmers, she can sell her peas for a better price and at last turn them into a profit. Pigeon peas have long roots which make them drought resistant and they can be ground into a flour to bake bread and cakes.

There will be a Welwyn Garden City Male Voice Choir concert at 7.30 on Saturday 20 May (tickets £10 from me) and I will put out Christian Aid Week collection envelopes on 14 May after church.

Robert



Do you enjoy singing familiar hymns and new Worship Songs?

Come and join us for our first

Songs of Praise

Sunday 16th April at 3 pm

followed by refreshments

in the Chapel Halls on Brewhouse Hill

Please contact Jane Deller on 01582 834130 / 07889 221551 or j_deller@btinternet.com for further information, or to ask for your favourite hymn to be included.

Teapot Tuesday

Our regular Tuesday afternoon sessions has provided a warm space for visitors, a chance to meet new friends over a cuppa, an opportunity to charge their mobile phones, use the church wi-fi and even build a puzzle.

Anne and Ian are proudly showing us the 1000-piece puzzle that was a joint effort by the group under the leadership of Ian, who also helps at the coffee morning group.



Remembrance Tea

Our next Remembrance Tea will be on 25 June @3pm.

Mid Herts Book Club

We are currently reading 'and the Shofar Blew' which is a Christian novel written by Francine Rivers.

The Book club is an opportunity for anyone who likes to read or is interested in exploring books on Christian fiction or non-fiction. Our next meeting is 10 May @10.30am on zoom.



Worship Café

We feel very blessed that we had 16 people attending our Worship Café on 12 March. Wendy and our musicians led us in song as we worshipped together before watching the Miracle Maker, an animated adaptation of the later life of Jesus, showcasing his ability to perform *miracles* and teachings on God, featuring Ralph Fiennes.

Our next Worship Café will be on 21 May.

Pet Service

Our next Pet Service will be on 11 June.

Ukrainian Vigil

24.2.23 marked the first anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine and a vigil was held at the Ebenezer Howard Statue in memory of the victims of the war.

This was followed by a fundraising event at our church where a photo exhibition was on display and a bake sale, to raise donations to support the victims of the war.



Desperate Appeal. –Please can everyone check their cupboards, drawers (and cars!!) for carrier bags. We need them for the Food Bank to enable us to transport food and for the clients to collect. Please pass any on to Liz.

Many thanks Allison

Food for thought?

From Marc Ian Barasch a writer..

"A fashion editor had asked Audrey Hepburn for beauty tips and she'd written back:

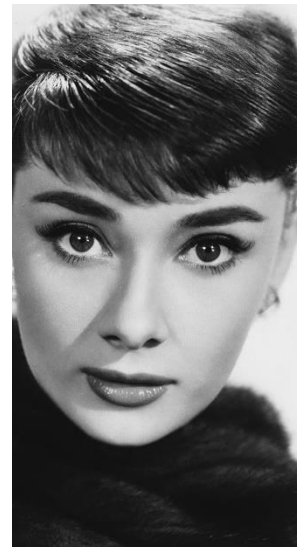
For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.

For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people.

For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry.

For poise, walk with the knowledge you will never walk alone.

If you ever need a helping hand, you'll find one at the end of each of your arms.



This homily, a sort of St. Francis Prayer for the Maybelline Set, is a graceful rebuttal to the fetish of self-improvement. Instead of being all about me, it's about us; instead of getting and having, it's all about giving and then giving some more."

Sent in by Helen C

CHURCHES IN WELWYN GARDEN CITY

SATURDAY 10TH JUNE 2023

TICKETS £20

8.15am Coaches from Our Lady's RC
Church, WGC

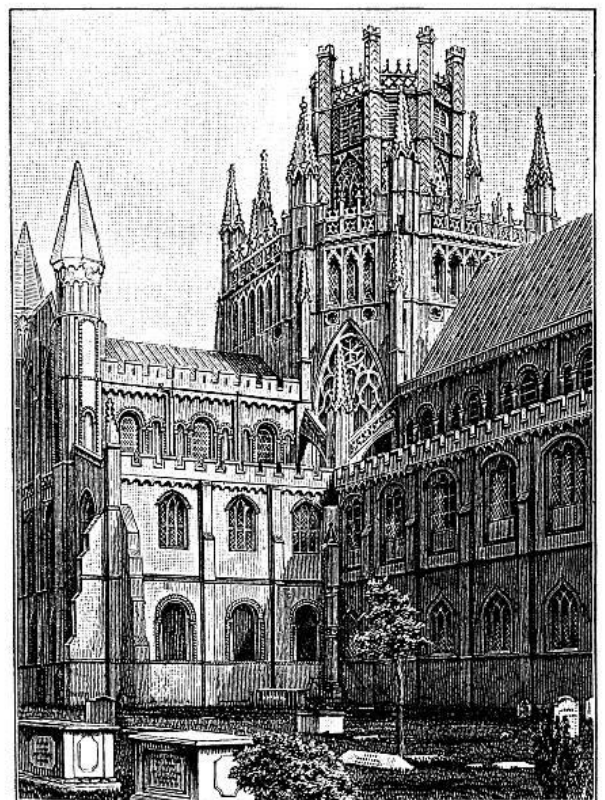
Special Morning Pilgrim Service

Cathedral Tour

Bring a picnic or enjoy lunch in Ely

Evensong in the Cathedral

6.15pm Coaches depart Ely



contact churchesinwgc.org.uk or Liz

Lunch in aid of URC Big Build Project

Tuesday 30 May 2023

Place: URC Main Hall

Time: 12.30

Price: £6.50 per head

Menu:

- Lasagne
- Garlic Bread
 - Salad
- Coffee/Tea

For catering purposes please rsvp by Friday 13 May



Building redevelopment plans at WGC URC

Not many buildings stay the same throughout their life even if they appear unchanged from the outside. In my career, the first office I worked in was a former wing of a high-class hotel in Westminster where the individual suites were converted into offices, my final office had once been a garment factory, but you wouldn't have guessed it from the outside. The earliest WGC houses will no longer be heated as originally designed, even if they have not been extended or remodelled inside.

Our own Church in WGC is no exception, I can think of at least four major changes, and in due course proposals will be brought to a future Church Meeting to proceed to the next stage of our major building redevelopment plans.

A lot of what I set out below is from memory or presumed. When first built at the very end of the 1920s the building was not entirely as visioned by its Architect, Louis de Soissons. Our main worship space was the Sunday School Hall adjoining the 1000-seater Church for all denominations (never built) although the dedicated space for young people is not marked as such on the original drawings still held in our archive and brought out from time to time. I guess that from 1930 when the new Church was officially opened until after the last war, the building must have been regarded as fresh and wasn't altered much, if at all.

The first changes happened in the mid-1950s when almost consecutively the pipe organ was removed at the far end of the worship space leaving the recess and stage that we would recognise today. At the other end of the building, the Lower Hall, Quiet Room and the upstairs accommodation were constructed. Old photographs in WGC books show the building as was. The line of the original external wall can be positioned by the ceiling beam in the ground floor Hall. Up until this time, the quite simple Kitchen was where the toilets are currently situated.

In the 1970s a big storeroom for bulk equipment for youth work was constructed off of the Lower Hall.

At the beginning of the 1980s a legacy enabled extensive rebuilding of the ground floor to be carried out. The WCs were repositioned to open up the Vestibule, and a vastly improved Kitchen moved into the 1970s storeroom, the

Church was rewired and electric tube heating replaced with convectors in the worship space.

Changes in the Vestibule meant the loss of one of the two pairs of doors leading into the worship space, that had effectively formed an air-lock. The existing doors are originals, the other identical set have disappeared. The changes in the 1950s and 1980s created the present layout which suffers from lack of circulation space meaning facilities can only be accessed by going through other spaces, our revised plans will rectify this situation.

The legacy mentioned earlier has been referred to in the past as the Phillips' graves money. The Church was left a sum of money from the estate of a couple in South Wales who had been married in the Free Church. The money came with strings that the Church looked after graves in Hatfield Hyde cemetery in WGC and in Newport 'in perpetuity'. Legal agreements are not supposed to bind any organisation with such an onerous obligation. At the time there were widely differing views on whether the money should be accepted or declined. In the end, a judicial opinion said that it should be taken on condition that the Church sets up the mechanism to fulfil the request at least in the short term and this is what was done, although recently the separate fund has been absorbed into our general fund. Regarding the graves that come within our oversight, we know details of who is buried, but not of their relationship to Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, information which has probably been lost without a lot of genealogy searching. However I may provide more details for the magazine in the future as a permanent record.

Philip Read

PS If Allison can provide space in this current magazine, there will be an early picture of the Free Church; it shows the building before the construction of the 1950s extension to the right. The outbuilding to the left is where the entrance to the car park currently exists, and was never built, but examination of the brickwork either side of the present Vestry entrance door will show provision for where the external walls might have been extended out at a later date.

And here is the P.S.....



A Thank You

To everyone at WGCURC

We wanted to express our heartfelt thanks to you all for the service for Jean Hughes on 17th February 2023.

Thanks to Robert for leading the service, Jane for speaking, Joyce for all her support with organization. Thanks also to Allison for her beautiful Order of Service booklets. Thanks to Helen for her reading, Liz for manning the prosecco, and to all the wonderful bakers for their cakes. Thanks to all those who helped with setting up the church, arranging flowers and making the lower hall look so lovely. Matt for his IT skills. And thanks to everyone who came to Mum's service.

Most especially thanks to each and every one of you who welcomed Mum and offered her love and friendship within the church family.

With all our love and thanks, Carolyn, Brett, Oli and Lucas.x

BOOK REVIEW

Conclave by Robert Harris

Robert Harris never fails to make fictional history interesting! In this book, he covers the events when a pope dies and the processes and rituals behind the way the new pope is elected – it's fascinating reading with interesting characters and a twist at the end that you can feel coming but I didn't guess until right at the end!

I really enjoyed it and would recommend it.

Sarah Connor

I found a well thumbed, beautifully bound book in the Harpenden Oxfam Book Store. It is full of ancient prayers made for special occasions, for everyday needs & life impacting moments. Thanksgiving, Confession, the WOW moment, what you are feeling, facing, celebrating is covered. Confirming throughout the ages we humans have needed the Love, Forgiveness and Provision from our God of Love. One to open the day:

Oh Heavenly Father I most heartily thank Thee, that it hath pleased Thy fatherly goodness to take care of me this night past. I most heartily beseech Thee, O most merciful Father, to show the like kindness toward me this day, in preserving my body and soul; that I may neither think, breathe, speak, nor do anything that may be displeasing to Thy fatherly goodness, dangerous to myself, or hurtful to my neighbour; but that all my doings may be agreeable to Thy most blessed will, which is always good; that they may advance Thy glory, answer to my vocation, and profit my neighbour, whom I ought to love as myself; that, whensoever Thou callest me hence, I may be found the child not of darkness but of light; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Thomas Becon ~ 1512-67 Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer

Taken with thanks from "God of a Hundred Names" by Rohan Knox

Betty Williams

Climate Meeting

In March, Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith hosted a Climate meeting in our Main Hall at WGC. From the enthusiastic comments, questions, and lively discussion, it's fair to say the audience were captivated by the presentation we received from Helen Burridge, Trustee of the charity SustainableStAlbans, who is employed by Herts County Council to co-ordinate with the borough councils on their plans for achieving Net Zero energy emissions. And also by the experience of Herts County Councillor Paul Zukowskyj who used to research the changes in vegetation in southern Spain and saw first hand the effects of global warming. We learned that Carbon Dioxide levels in the atmosphere are at their highest for 800,000 years, and that Nitrous Oxide and Methane are also contributing lots to the greenhouse effect.

Though it may seem like individuals can't do much now, and only largescale interventions by governments can change systems sufficiently to reduce global warming, Helen and Paul think efforts by ordinary people to reduce our own carbon footprints will still make a big difference if lots of us do them! And yes, reducing our airmiles, using cars less or going electric, eating less meat especially beef, and using less gas and electric at home are all positive actions to reduce emissions, along with buying local products without inbuilt airmiles or negative impact on forests. I was shocked to see that the carbon equivalent of a bar of chocolate is huge! Worse than eating pork and chicken! Relevant information for Easter, perhaps.... Another of Helen's graphs showed me that my train tickets to Aviemore in April for my spring holiday will save 90% of the emissions I would have caused by flying up to Inverness. So that seems like a worthwhile choice, though it will cost a bit more money, not less!

You can get an estimate of your own personal carbon footprint from the WWF calculator on-line, and compare it to the UK national average in 2020 (12.7 to 14.1 CO2 equivalent per person), or to the current national target on the net zero pathway (9.3 per person).

[WWF Footprint Calculator](https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/p) <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/p>

In preparing for the event, I also visited the youthclub at the Hive in Hatfield, run by OneYMCA, and seeded a conversation about the climate amongst the young people. In response, one of the teenagers has painted a provocative image of the earth wearing a facemask for our wall at church.

Thanks to members of Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith for helping to organise the event, to Matt Read for providing

support with Sound and projection, and several church members for tidying up at the end. Wendy



By Evan, the Hive youthclub, Hatfield.

Count us in!



SUSTAINABLE
St Albans

St Albans
City & District Council

The Miracle Maker DVD

I would like to thank Derek, Janet and John, Sharon and Sanjay, and Wale for their support with hosting another successful Film night for families on March 10th, attended by 14 young people and a similar number of adults. We watched the Miracle Maker, a great animation of the life of Jesus. Since it's faithful to the biblical narratives and social history of the time, voiced by a number of well-known actors, and not at all childish we also showed the film on the Sunday afternoon as part of Worship Café, to another 15 or so adults who were appreciative. If anyone would like to borrow the DVD to watch at home, do let me know. Wendy.lidgate@outlook.com

Last year we tentatively formed a music group to lead modern worship songs for the Sunday afternoon Worship Café, with Janet and



John singing to my piano accompaniment, and were soon joined by singer Tracey and Lee on guitar. Just recently we have been joined by Jonathan, aged 11, for occasional services and now also by Claire and Sophie (aged 11), so there was a throng of six singers on Mothering Sunday which was so encouraging, along with the supportive feedback from the congregation. If there are any other musicians or singers who would like to join us sometimes, do get in touch. Wendy.lidgate@outlook.com tel 07904 517384.

Welwyn Garden City Male Voice Choir



Perform in concert

Saturday 20 May at 7.30pm

To raise funds for Christian Aid

at the United Reformed Church

(opposite Sainsbury's car park)

Tickets £10.00 (including refreshments)

(from 01707.322339)

The good life in Lincolnshire.

Happy Easter everybody! I hope you are enjoying the warmer weather and lighter nights and that the awe and wonder of Easter finds a new way to surprise you this year.

I have been surprised to realise that salvation is not spoken of by Matthew in his gospel until Jesus is dying on the cross. I was also struck by the earthquake that opened the tombs as Jesus died - as he released his spirit or literally his breath, suddenly the dry bones lived - very reminiscent of Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones who only came to life when God breathed into them. Fascinating! As Jesus gave up his life, life was renewed. (Matthew 27 if you want to read for yourself).

Last time I wrote we were needing



some renewed life in our garden project as so many things that had held us up needed turning around. The good news is that the garden room is now water tight, the plumbing is in, the treatment plant is booked in for testing and the water will be

turned on by the end of March! We have a new fence, a new path and better external lighting so it does feel as if we are at last getting somewhere. There is light at the end of the tunnel but it is still coming closer slowly. The latest snag was in the shepherd's hut. Roger went in to make sure the leaky window hadn't produced a puddle that needed mopping up (the window is being mended on Friday), only to find two chunks of porcelain from the toilet bowl sat on the floor. Goodness only knows how that happened - we are writing to the manufacturer to see if they have any ideas of what might have caused it but no doubt it will be up to us to put it right!! The new toilet bowl is also being delivered on Friday.

I have long felt that if you are on the right path doing something that could be good for the kingdom you are bound to come up against obstacles along the way. I do trust and pray that this holds true for this project and that people do come and find refreshment, renewal and peace.

As I enjoyed painting wood preserver inside the garden room it seemed like a physical metaphor for the preserving of both sanity and faith that I hope people will find here.

We have our first bookings for the garden room. I have been asked to lead a quiet day for a group of lay leaders in the local Synod, the Moderator and local pioneer minister are coming to explore and another minister has booked a day in May. If they like what they find I hope the facilities will begin to advertise themselves.

We are hoping that the shepherds hut will be ready by Easter - May at the latest so if anyone would like to be our consumer research team for a short break - to help us discover what we have forgotten and make sure everything works, please get in touch.

Sometimes life goes like that doesn't it? We thought we would be ready last September but it has taken 6 more months.

Driving back from Sleaford a couple of weeks ago I turned off the main road to try to avoid a very wide load passing through Lincolnshire. Everyone else had the same idea it seemed and I had to find a passing place for a number of vehicles including a huge tractor with a wide unwieldy trailer. The next vehicle I met was a huge 24 wheel lorry - and this on a single track road! As I reversed about half a mile back to a farm entrance I knew I could pull into I couldn't help think that God was trying to tell me something!! Exactly what I am still pondering. But there are times in life when we think we have all our ducks in a row ready to move forward only to find we still have to back up and take time to ensure that is true. Once that lorry had rumbled past the road ahead was almost completely clear so I will hang on to that as God's affirmation that all is well and as Julian of Norwich wrote 'all manner of things shall be well'.

Until next time

Every blessing

Jane

Dear Hagrid,

I read so many poems about so many special four legged friends that have been lost. They all made me sad. But none of them seemed to be about you.

So, I am thinking about what made you so special.

The first thing I think about is Love. Wherever you went, whoever you met, there was this amazing aura of love that came from you and was given to you by strangers and friends alike. I saw the faces, over and over, they would see you and then a lovely kindly smile would appear.

If they knew you, they would say hello and have a little visit. If they didn't know you, they wanted to meet you. You always looked at me and I would say it's OK. Then you would stop n enjoy the love. The funny times when people would see you for the first time.

We stepped out of the elevator in the Maltings. A businessman was on the phone waiting to get into the elevator. As we walked out, I heard him say. "You won't believe this but a horse just walked out of the elevator." How many times were you photographed, Facebooked and Instagramed by people.

Overwhelming sometimes to be with you and your fans. Hoppy, my friend from Texas called you the Rockstar. So many places we travelled to, you were already known. You loved to go to Church on a Sunday. You always knew when it was Sunday. The only day you would get out of bed before noon! Along with your love there was a depth of compassion and empathy in you.

You always knew who needed you. I think it was the first Christmas after Dorothy died. I saw Tom and felt sad as it was the first time Tom didn't have a silly present to show us all. You noticed too. You got up and went and sat beside Tom. Sometimes the love of a big dog helps. You loved visiting Georgina. Whenever we were in town you would stop and look up towards St Nicks and that would say. Can we visit Georgina?

We usually made a bee line for Waitrose to buy a slice of cheesecake or some treat. You and Georgina would sit together on her little sofa. Content. Sometimes Jack was there and you were very fond of him too. You loved your visits. From the day Georgina died you never asked to visit again. You knew when you were needed and you were there.

You loved the shops and the pubs! Your very first walk was straight to the pub! You sang and you did your maths lessons. You loved adding subtracting dividing and multiplying, as long as the answer was never above 10. How everyone loved it when you got the answer! How proud you were when the clapping would start!

The clapping got you into trouble in the church. There you were, practically asleep. Jane was the Vicar and it was communion Sunday. There is singing and clapping. This is about me you think. And you run towards Jane. Poor Jane thinks you are after the communion. Roger her husband jumps up and looks like he might Rugby tackle you. I'm sitting next to Beth. She says, shouldn't you do something.? No. I don't know that dog! Nothing to do with me. When the bread was passed out so many hands appeared with their bread for you Hagrid. That was lovely.

The shops. Most all the shops in town had a stash of cookies. Always on your rounds. The Cleaners, were very special. You loved Johnsons, you would go in the door. Walk thru and if there was no one in reception you went into the back and soon the staff would follow you to reception. You would lead them to the cookie cupboard and they would give you cookies and pats. They would return to work and you would return to your rounds. I have never been so moved as the day I went in with cookies for them from you with the sad news of your death. The lady disappeared to the back room. They all followed her and they all cried and hugged me, one by one. Then they went back to work.

The Guard DOG. Bred as a Russian Military Guard DOG. You were true to breed. You guarded everyone you were with. Always putting yourself between us and danger. Whoever was in your company you looked after them as well. Before you were 1, we were in Rothamsted Park. We were at the top of the hill next to the paved path. There was a young family with twin toddlers. It happened so quickly. A baby was running straight towards the paved path. Two little boys about 10 years old were racing to the top on their bikes. We were all too far away to stop the baby. You stepped in. The baby broad sided you. Turned and carried on running in the opposite direction. You saved that baby and all of us were amazed. You rescued me so many times. I will be eternally grateful to you. People think they rescue dogs. Dogs rescue people.

You were so calm. The times you stood in the river at Batford Springs with your friend the Heron. Initially I would try to get my phone out to photograph. The

Heron would fly. You and your friend the Heron taught me that the experience was greater than any photograph. You two would stand side by side and would look up to the horizon. I often wonder what you spoke about or did you just enjoy the silence, The Magpies. We had 2 living in the garden. In the summer when the French doors were open one Magpie would waddle in whilst his or her mate would keep Guard on the patio. One day he came into the kitchen, there you were lounging about. The Magpie walked up to your dinner. Stood on the edge of your bowl and enjoyed a feast. You watched and kindly shared your food.

So many memories, every day for almost 10 years you walked by my side and you showed me the world through your eyes. Lesson 1. Love

Lesson 2. Protect and cherish both the humans and animals in this world. You taught me to be a more humane person.

The very Christian values we try hard to strive for, you had them all.

We all remember our very special pets with love. They make us cry, they make us laugh and they make us remember the Love they gave us. Thank you to God for our best friends. And Thank you Hagrid!





Holiday Club
WGC United Reformed Church
Thursday 1st June 2023, 10am to 12.15pm
Ages 5 to 11, Year 1 to Year 6
Donation suggested £5

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Please can I have any articles for the next magazine by the 20th May 2023.

Please send by email or contact me by phone for WGC URC & Wheathampstead articles. For Harpenden URC articles please contact Sarah Connor. I hope you have enjoyed reading this magazine. If you have, please consider sending us an article, I'm sure we would enjoy what you have to say.

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1. 8 - Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark – 1 Peter 3:20
2. Psalms
3. Gabriel
4. God
5. River Jordan
6. In the beginning...
7. Carbon Copy
8. The London School of Economics
9. A40
10. Four (New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, and New Hampshire)
11. Bohemian Rhapsody (in 1975, and the next number one was ABBA's 'Mamma Mia')
12. A, B, AB and O
13. Arrabbiata sauce
14. 23
15. Ronald Reagan, his full name is Cristiano Ronaldo dos Santos Aveiro
16. White around their eyes or eyeballs
17. The Lone Ranger
18. Monday = Dynamo
19. Stonehenge (he gave it to the nation three years later).
20. A Goldfish
21. Frank
22. Just Do It – Nike
23. Tomato (Dickens uses my word six times in *The Pickwick Papers*, always followed by another word - that other word is 'sauce')
24. Walk (W, AL, K)
25. King of Hearts