

# Welwyn Garden City, Harpenden and Wheathampstead United Reformed Churches Magazine



August & September 2023

Dear Church friends,

As is often the way in life several different but connected prompts, pokes, understandings, connections and examples of God at work helpfully seeped into my life over the last two weeks or so. Amongst a number of insights there were some thought provoking quotations.

The first came in the form of an Haiku by Matson Basho which reads:

‘My neighbour,

How does he fare?’

The second, a quotation from Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez, where he teaches that:

‘a spirituality that is not concrete is not real....’

‘...Our spirituality is how we hammer out the meaning of our encounter with God here, now, in this place, with these people, in the midst of this struggle.....whatever our circumstances.’

Little did I realise when I first read these words that they would become a central part of my thinking and acting over the following few weeks.

Around this time I spent 10 days in the company of some young folks who, like all teenagers were working out how to be, who they are and what they value, and whose main ‘struggle’ was ‘friendship’ others with them, they with others or not as the stories unfolded. With little encouragement, stories tumbled out and, as they began to tease out the meaning of friendship, the line from St Francis’s prayer, ‘seek not to be understood as to understand’ recurred again and again. Asking questions, me of 15 year olds and the fifteen year olds of themselves (and me of myself) was a difficult and delicate process but eventually personal qualities emerged that were valued and the discussion moved on to how we recognise such qualities in others and

ultimately in ourselves. Then the big question...but can characteristics change?

I was indeed blessed that during this time of soul searching a minister friend told the following story, which he had drawn from the works of Abraham Twerski an eminent psychiatrist, rabbi and speaker on spirituality. Twerski has many wise things to say about human imperfections, amongst other things. He also shares some touching stories, like this one on kindness:

'A rabbi was once sitting with several of his students. He said to one student, "Could you please bring me a cup of coffee with two spoons of sugar? " The student brought the coffee, and the rabbi sipped it slowly, continuing his discourse with the students.

A bit later, the rabbi went into the kitchen himself for coffee, and just as he was about to put the sugar in the coffee, his wife said, "Don't do that! That's salt, not sugar." It turned out that the student had mistaken the salt for sugar and had put two spoons of salt into the rabbi's coffee.

"How could you drink the coffee with all that salt in it? " the rabbi's wife asked.

" What else could I have done? " the rabbi asked. "If I had refused to drink it, that would have embarrassed the student who made the mistake. "This rabbi was a spiritual person....."

This generated lots of chat!

For me, this time spent with young folks was confirmation again that there is never a beginning or an end to spiritual growth.

In love,

Helen Cunningham WGC URC

## WGC URC Secretary's Notes

August is usually a month when Church Life and commitments are less demanding, but this year it has been challenging.

### Firstly The Rev Martyn Neads Induction

Finding dates due to holiday commitments when the elders from all three churches can meet to finalise plans for the Rev Martyn Neads Induction Service on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September 3pm at WGCURC followed by Afternoon Tea. We are delighted that Martyn will be joining our Mid Herts Pastorate and look forward to working with him and getting to know his wife Lyn and his son Alex. We hope you will be able to attend to welcome him. You may have received your personal invitation already but if not, I can assure you it is on its way.

### Secondly saying goodbye to Liz

At WGC we are also busy planning the way forward without Liz Laing as our Mission Developer as her contract comes to an end on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August. Liz is moving back to Edinburgh to be near her son, his wife and granddaughter. We will be sorry to lose Liz as over her years with us she has not only been an employee but a good friend and an active member of our Church Family. Liz is no stranger to Edinburgh as she lived there before moving to WGC so I am sure she will settle easily and enjoy catching up with old friends. We wish her well in her new job and health and happiness in her new life north of the border.

### Thirdly Launching New Pastoral Groups

A huge thank you to John and Allison for all their help producing these ready for their launch on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July. Your Pastoral Elder will be contacting you very soon to introduce themselves. As we now have

more Elders you may find you have a new Pastoral Elder and Pastoral Friends, but you will know who they are very soon. Until everyone has been contacted by their new Elder I will still be looking after Prayer Requests and News of Members and Friends but going forward it will be your Pastoral Elder you will contact with these requests and information. Your Pastoral Elder will also be the person who will contact Martyn if there is a need for him to visit or offer his support to a member of the congregation.

If you have information about a member of our congregation which needs to be shared with their Elder, you can find out who this is by looking in the Rotas Folder in the top drawer of the Tea Point. Due to GDPR there won't be contact details for elders and only the Christian names of those in their group. Please contact me, Allison or your own Elder for details of the elder you are trying to contact.

## **Other Items to Share**

### **Church Flowers**

I still have 7 spaces on the Sunday Flower Rota from August to December so if you would like to contribute on one of these dates it would be greatly appreciated. You can find the rota in the Rotas Folder in the top drawer of the Tea Point. You can add your name or contact me and either create your own display or one of us on the team will take care of them for you.

### **Thursday Club**

Last minute shopping, scone baking, cake baking and a series of phone calls to our members enabled us to welcome 25 club members and church friends to a very enjoyable afternoon in Ann's Garden. Thank

you, Ann and John, for opening your garden to us all once again on a week when you were having your kitchen redecorated you were very brave and it was as always much appreciated by us all. Thanks also to Mary for her lovely cakes and all who helped make the afternoon a very sociable and enjoyable one.

We are sorry that a few of our regular members were unable to attend especially Irene and Roger and we hope you will all be fully recovered by the time we meet after the summer break. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of every month from 2-4pm in the Lower Hall at WGC URC starting on the 21st September.

I will be working on the programme and hope to include some new and interesting experiences for you all so please bring friends along. New faces welcome, especially gentlemen and a few younger members.

### Fund Raising in support of our Big Build Project,

Sadly we had to cancel our Sponsorship event on the 29<sup>th</sup> July due to lack of support. Allison will be sending out the Sponsorship Challenge our Thursday Club took part in which you can do in the comfort of your own home. I am very proud of our church Thursday Club who have raised over £300 to date with some more to be added by Gift Aid.

Please give consideration to participating in the Sponsorship Challenge we do need your support to achieve our target of £50,000. To the end of June we had raised £ 4,974 made up from The Sunday Talents Table, Tea Dance Profits, Lucky Numbers, Spring Fair and donations from Church Groups. This does not include July figures or Thursday Club Sponsorship Money, but we still have a long way to go.

We are hoping to hold a Quiz Night in late September and of course our Annual Christmas Fayre on the 18<sup>th</sup> November. For several years we have donated 50% of the profits to Isabel Hospice and this will

continue. For the last few years we have succeeded in raising over £2,000 on the day. Could we raise even more this year?

Please put this date in your diary and think about how you could contribute to the success of the day. Allison and I would appreciate some volunteers to help with the planning of the event could this be you?

Please start collecting items for the Tombola, Hand Crafted items, and Preloved items to include jewellery.

**NB we will not be having a Book Stall or a Bric- a- Brac Stall this year.**

### **Finally a Plea for Help**

If you have and would be willing to lend a Cake Stand for the Afternoon Tea on the 9<sup>th</sup> September please let me know it would be greatly appreciated. Sharon from Harpenden has offered 4 and we have a few but we would like to have one on each table to save people having to move around.

Looking forward to being inundated with offers of help for my many requests and also looking forward to welcoming you all at WGC URC in September to welcome Martyn and his family.

Hoping the weather improves and we can all enjoy our summer holidays and plans

Joyce

## Chapel Gym and Halls

We are so pleased after all the years deliberating what to do with our church and halls that it has all turned out so well. We wanted to be an asset to the local community and are beginning to feel that we are achieving that. The gym has over 250 members and so many attend very regularly even at 7.00 in the morning! It is a happy place with extra classes happening with expert personal trainers. The youth sessions for 12 ~ 15 year olds attending between 4 - 6 are much appreciated. Extra classes are held in the hall for those wishing to do Pilates, Yoga and Resistance and hoping soon to start Tai Chi and Cardiac Rehab.

Today we are having our Community Meal with around fifty attending to eat a three course meal and they pay what they can afford. The Community Larder organised by St Helen's Church is being held in our hall, we are serving coffees for those dropping in to collect food. This is run mainly to support families during the school holidays. A Pets in Need charity runs a couple of times a week from our Welcome Room.

HACRO the Herts Association for Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders use the hall all day on a Thursday.

They cook their lunch and have varying activities some educational and some practical and have fun playing table tennis with the police who fetch and carry them to the site which has helped relationships develop. We have gained as they have included gardening, or should I say removal of weeds, on our site as part of their day.

We are very blessed to have all this going happening on a site which at one time we feared was going to turn in to housing development and so grateful to all the many involved in all of this and we still have our church as a very important part of it all!

Jackie and Jane Wheathampstead



Faith and Light Tea – Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>  
June - Harpenden

We had a lovely time serving tea for the Faith and Light group at St John's Church Hall on 4<sup>th</sup> June. Very many thanks to everybody who provided delicious cakes for the event and to my helpers Gill, Clare and Alex (chief washer-upper!). All the participants greatly appreciated the fine spread, and it was a privilege to be part of such a happy occasion. Looking forward to next year already!

Bronwen



THANK YOU

A recent accident left me vulnerable. Within moments of this becoming known to the Church Fellowship, love, help, support and concern knocked on my door. I deeply thank my Church Family for seeing me through what otherwise would have been dark times. Instead I was gifted with a lesson in love. Your witness of our faith will never be forgotten. THANK YOU.

Betty Williams - Harpenden

Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” Mark 11:24

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

## **Thank You**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at the URC for their love and support over the past 5+ years. As many of you know, the contract for the Mission Developer role, ends on 31 August. I have decided to move back to Scotland, to be able to spend more time with my family. My granddaughter is now 17 months old and I am looking forward to playing an important role in her life.

A few months ago someone asked me whether I was worried about the future and I responded that “my life is in God’s hands” since I knew that God always answers prayers and provides for us. My faith was far bigger than a mustard seed!

Friends and family emailed me information about jobs that were advertised in the Edinburgh area, and they couldn’t understand why I was so calm and relaxed about my situation. I always responded; “my life is in God’s hands!” It was one of those adverts which I responded to, who invited me for an interview. The morning of the interview, I prayed and asked God for guidance and as I opened my Bible, it opened to the book of Daniel. God provided for Daniels needs and I knew that it was a message that God would be providing for my needs. I have now been offered a position with a charity called Linkliving and starting on 4 September. I thank God for His mercy and answering my prayers.

I have been so blessed the past 5 years to have gained so many new skills and having been given an opportunity to play such an active role in worship. I will always treasure my time here and thank God for blessing me, by sending me to Welwyn Garden City, so that I could be part of the United Reformed Church.

Thank you to Matt, for being such an amazing line manager, who always supported and encouraged me to develop in my role. To Allison and Wendy – I

am going to miss the office banter – thank you for your love and support. To my church family who supported me in prayer and friendship. Thank you to my Steering group who supported me with their ideas and vision. For all the prayers from our Bible Study group and for all the Elders for their guidance and support. And last, but not least, all my volunteers who were always willing to help – thank you.

I am very sad to leave and will always treasure my time here at the URC. You will always remain in my prayers – God Bless.

Love Liz

### **Community Café**

We had a special treat on 13 June. Ash from MIND invited the Clarins lady from John Lewis, to treat everyone to a hand massage. Emma also donated samples of Clarins products to both the ladies and the gents who attended that day.



### **Time-2-Remember Tea**

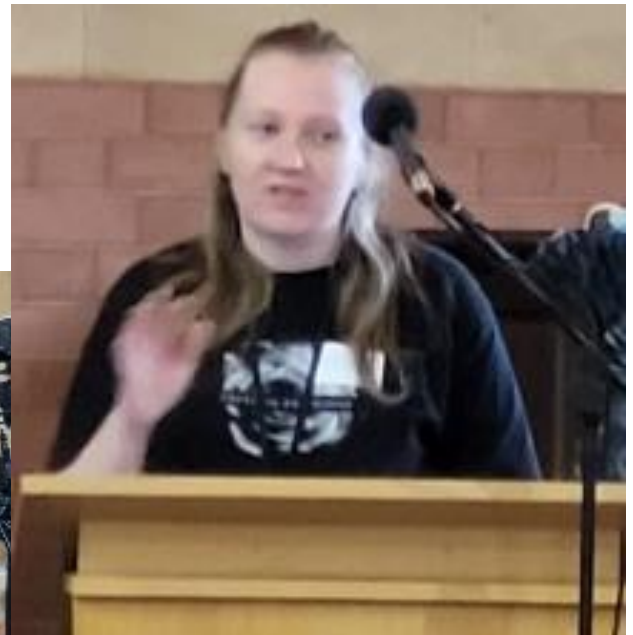
It was such a lovely service led by Robert and I felt blessed to have contributed to part of the service. Thank you to everyone who donated cakes and a big thank you to Joyce D, Hazel and Jenny Rayne who volunteered on the day.



Reflecting through being in vacancy - We have been supported and blessed with many speakers visiting at URC Harpenden.

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023 - Step visited URC Harpenden.

Step are a charitable organisation, visiting and supporting schools in Hertfordshire. After meeting Charlotte at a Project 267 breakfast, Charlotte and Mary, visited Harpenden URC and offered to lead a service for us on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July. The service was very creative and gave us time to reflect and pray as well as see the sort of things the step team offered to schools in the week. Charlotte and Mary set up various zones to interact with. The zones encourage reflection, discussion and prayer.

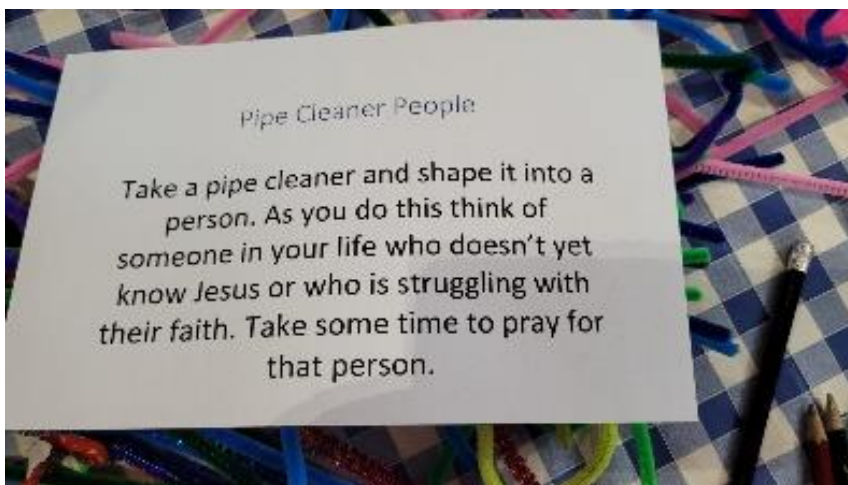


We heard about the work of Step from Charlotte and Mary, who are employed by Step.



Zone – praying for the world.

We moved around different Zones, reflecting and praying. Let us all remember to pray for the world and creation, our families and friends who live abroad.



Zone - Building and praying for families and friends. This was a good reminder to pray - Let us all remember those close to us in prayer.

Mary led a zone which encouraged us to think about having control of our life. This challenged us to stop and think about different areas of our life. This was a very interesting exercise and challenge. It challenges the decisions we make in our week from what we have for breakfast, to how we can help change the world, thinking about what we can do about the environment and climate change. The zone helped us to think about and ask the questions.

1. Do we have complete control?
2. Some control?
3. No control or no influence?



Sometimes it is good to be creative, as well being challenged and to do something different especially in worship. In worship we can come closer to God and to know ourselves and our calling which enables us to serve God and others. We had the opportunity with Step to worship in a less formal style and way which was more interactive and good for building our community, giving us time to share with each other and God.

Harpenden URC

## Reporting on Synod Green Day



# SYNOD GREEN DAY



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church  
Thames North Synod

## *Celebration – Reflection – Action*

at Cores End URC, Buckinghamshire SL8 5HZ  
on **Saturday 8 July 2023**

*A day for **all ages** to reflect on the wonders of God's creation – and our care for it*

10.30 am	<i>Arrivals and refreshments</i>
11 am	Worship, sensory walk and bible study
1 pm	PICNIC LUNCH
2 pm	Workshops and Activities (around 5 Eco themes)
3.30 pm	Worship in the Meadow and Tree Planting
4 pm	<i>Tea and departures</i>



**Limited places – book at [modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)**



As you know Wheathampstead has worked very hard over the past few years to try to refurbish our buildings so that they can be returned to full use. We have always been very aware of the environmental benefits of making this decision, rather than that of rebuilding – even though the financial incentives provided by the government remain in favour of the latter!

When we became aware of the synod's positive intentions to encourage 'green' practices we were pleased to encourage them. Jackie and I decided to take ourselves over to Cores End to find out more about what was being done elsewhere – and hopefully meet some like-minded Christians who had put into practice more practical ideas over a longer period.

We went, with our picnic, folding chairs, wellies and raincoats – it was July after all! It was quite an exciting journey which took us deep into the Buckinghamshire countryside and I was very grateful for the SatNav

in my car as many of the places we went through were unfamiliar. Amazingly we found the car park and there were spaces in it behind an 18<sup>th</sup> century church which was on quite a busy road. Fortunately as you could see on the poster the land owned by the church extended away from the road for some considerable way.

It was very good to discover that we were not alone. During the day there were about 50 people who came for most or all of the activities – some from areas of London using public transport and others like us who had car-shared for more cross country routes.

There was quite a bit of rain but it didn't stop us enjoying the different types of wild and more cultivated areas for the sensory walk and at lunchtime we all had our picnics outside. We had several periods of enthusiastic worship which were led by the minister of the church, Terry Hinks (one of the Synod Green Apostles). There were displays of literature from a variety of local and national groups and people happy to pass on their experiences during the lunch break.

During the afternoon we all ventured out into the meadow area for the formal tree planting – and it was good to see the synod moderator in less formal clothing than usual taking an active part!

A very enjoyable and relaxing day – we returned home feeling refreshed and re-energised.

By Jane Deller and Jackie Seller





*For families from different faiths*

**Sunday August 6th**

**in the garden at WGC United Reformed Church**

**AL8 6PR**

**3pm til 5pm**

Bring your family for a relaxing afternoon  
with playtime, toys and crafts.

No charge but donations appreciated  
Park in the church carpark for free

Contact: [Wendy.Lidgate@outlook.com](mailto:Wendy.Lidgate@outlook.com)  
tel: 07904 517384

## **Magazine donations**

We welcome any donations towards the cost of producing the magazine.

Please give your donations to Allison or Helen K(In a marked envelope). - we can collect gift aid on donations.

Please donate either using cash, a cheque made out to WELWYN GARDEN CITY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH or by bank transfer to this account

WELWYN GARDEN CITY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Sort Code :40-46-08

Account Number : 91680595

Reference : MAGAZINE or Car Park and your name ( so we can identify the payment )

## **Car park cards renewal**

Our car park barrier cards are due for renewal on September 1st.

If you would like to renew your car park card then please let Allison or Helen K. know and provide the payment for the next 12 months. It has been agreed by the Elders to increase the fee to £30 this year.

Payment please by either Bank transfer, Cash in a marked envelope, or cheque. Please see details above.

Swipe cards will remain the same, but the card that is to be displayed on the windscreen will change. Allison will issue these on receipt of payment.

Many thanks

Helen

## All Age Worship

As you may be aware, there's been a huge variety of developments in worship across UK churches in recent years, especially those which can include children and youth.

And I was thinking about the many approaches to All Age worship we have tried in WGCURC. I wonder which you attended, and which you most enjoyed? Or loathed?! And what part All Age worship will continue to play in the next decade? after my contract here finishes in 18 months' time.

Our church has offered all the following 6 formats (and probably others I don't know about):

1. Community-style services: with bible drama and discussion with the roving microphone, inviting prayers from the congregation out loud or in quiet at a table with tealights, and news of people's mid-week lives (dayjobs, families, caring responsibilities) and singing Happy Birthday, sometimes splitting into small groups around the hall. Our traditional congregation engaged well with the conversations despite some hearing issues. However, few families came to engage with them.

2. Messy church during the afternoon, following the Messy church movement's principles of sharing food, the bible and creative activities with families. Because God is the Creator, creative activities are considered innately spiritual. And since 2015 when I came to WGCURC, we have offered Breakfast Church, now Saturday Families church, adapting the Messy format to engage youngest children besides the junior ages, incorporating play besides crafts, hospitality, and gathered worship. Before COVID we often saw 40 to 45 people on Saturdays, roughly half adults and half under 16s. Recently we've built back to 20 to 25 people, though 6 to 10 is still a wonderful worshipful time!

3. Sunday morning services with an All Age beginning, then creative options on a table, or at the back, during the sermon and intercessions. In a Methodist setting, I am used to 60% of the adults getting 'craftie' or 'artistic' with one or more activities suitably linked to the bible theme, not just parents helping their children. But surprisingly at WGCURC, despite several attempts, most people sat resolutely in their seats! Optional wordsearches were slightly more popular, but not much... they are clearly seen as children's activities in WGCURC!

I love the bible verse spoken by Jesus to the woman at the well in Samaria, "God is spirit. His worshippers must worship in spirit and truth." This has inspired me since first training as a methodist local preacher between ages 21 and 25. It doesn't say, sitting in rows, singing with an organ, and listening to a preacher without visual aids.....all of which are harder for youngsters to engage with. And many adults struggle to listen to wordy worship, too! Over the 39 years since starting, I have been lucky to lead all sorts of worship with many different congregations, often with children present. And since the beginning, All Age worship has become a bit of a specialism for me...

#### 4. Special Sundays

When I came to WGCURC in Feb 2015, it soon became clear that church leaders really wanted to see some new families with children coming to fit in with traditional Sundays. They wanted to grow the congregation with younger people who would sit in their seats and mainly listen to worship led from the front. I did say these families would be hard to find in today's commuter-belt, but a strong steer is a strong steer! So rather than basing our Sunday All Age efforts around the children (movement, creativity, games, participation, story) just like our Saturday all age congregation, I have offered worship for special occasions based in seats most of the time, presenting

traditional elements in bitesize portions of plain English with plenty of visual aids and songs relateable to families. Storytelling comes into it's own to share the Bible, as does a great memory verse or a quiz.... And a good action song wakes most people up! We have sometimes provided additional movement for the young, with processions and organic drama, or providing an activity linked to the intercessions – such as when we heard about Jesus washing his disciples feet and children washed the toybox dolls during the prayers, or when they collected the congregations' written prayers to pin on a board, or build into a lego wall... Several times at Harvest and Palm Sunday we've engaged a truly age-balanced congregation with up to 13 youngsters amongst 40 to 50 adults aged from their 30s to their 90s. Many of our traditional congregation have shared with me their surprise at finding these occasions truly spiritual, and how they found God's voice in it despite the fast pace and (sometimes) background noise. This past year, both Matt and John have worked at making communion short and accessible as part of All Age and that has been a blessing too. So we know we can worship God in spirit and truth with all ages and many of our traditional congregation at WGCURC...

5. The service with the Sunday Monkey, I devised as a shorter teaching service highly geared for ages 6 to 10 and accessible to all ages, and followed by snacks and tabletop games and making a collage of the biblestory. We planned it as a 'stepping stone' for families to form a habit of coming monthly on Sundays, perhaps before the parents were ready to engage with full sermons and long spoken prayers or traditional hymns. And after two rounds of written consultation questionnaires for the main congregation, we bravely launched FamilyWorship@10 in the main hall in January 2019 before an 11am extra-traditional worship service, with the idea that both congregations would share in the coffee-time from 10.45 til 11. Families gradually got

drawn in, and we developed a loyal group of supporters amongst the grandparent and great-grandparent generations, too, making it truly age-balanced. COVID interrupted this soon after the service in March 2020, just as the format had settled sufficiently to advertise... And since COVID, everything has reverted to 10.30 am. We found the Sunday Monkey's format didn't work for the whole Sunday congregation straight after COVID – because families were slow to return and one, two or three children and 50+ adults was not sufficiently age-balanced to carry the format. Poor monkey didn't know where to hide! So through 2023 [FamilyWorship@10.30](#) is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays in the Lower Hall in parallel to the Main Hall worship service and enjoyed by our families with occasional visits from just one grandparent figure. We have a wide range of music to choose from with videos from youtube or FamilyFriendlyChurchesTrust. There are currently 6 different families often represented, and two other families I have started to invite, and I am particularly pleased that this format works for some of our children with special needs who love the music and smaller congregation.

6. Attempts to build a short All Age time into every Sunday have been less consistent. Very good at times, then forgotten at others. So unfortunately our youngsters have often sat through boredom and landed in Young People's Church pent-up with frustration! And being few, they may find there are only one or two other youngsters here.... Attracting families to traditional Sundays was always going to be a hard sell. Since they are mostly working long hours, parents are short on family time WITH their children. As some recently have told me, "It's hard to find activities we can all do together so church is brilliant" (ie all age church) and "I have never understood why churches invite children then send them off somewhere else (in the building)". Also our leaders for Young People's Church cannot commit to help very

often due to their other responsibilities, and if they did they would miss most of the worship time in church – particularly if the All Age time is only a few minutes.

A conversation last year with our synod Childrens and Youth officer confirmed that URC preachers have precious little opportunity to train (nor practice!) in offering All Age worship. Though our Roots subscription provides great ideas every week, including all age prayers and song suggestions and introduction, it's still a step to follow them without training. So, during my final year of this contract, I plan on sharing bits and pieces of expertise with some training opportunities for anyone who would like to learn techniques for all age worship, whether for an age balanced congregation or when the youngsters are few or don't turn up! I hope they will be applicable to Sundays and settings like Messy Church or Saturday Families Church or whatever worship events WGCURC may need in the future. If you would like to come along, do get in touch. God bless, Wendy tel 07904 517384 [wendy.lidgate@outlook.com](mailto:wendy.lidgate@outlook.com)

Wendy WGC

## CHURCH FAMILY CORNER

Quite a few birthdays to celebrate in August, starting with Mary S. on 3<sup>rd</sup>, then Don B. on 4<sup>th</sup>, Joyce N. on 15<sup>th</sup>, Sheila L. on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Barbara G. on 26<sup>th</sup> and finishing with my other half, John, on 30<sup>th</sup>.

Moving on to September, Mike E. is first up on 3<sup>rd</sup>, followed by Rosemary T. on 6<sup>th</sup>, Aiden R. who will be 9 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ted C. on 24<sup>th</sup>, Orla C. who will be 5 on 25<sup>th</sup>, and Wendy L. on 29<sup>th</sup>.

We send our birthday congratulations and best wishes to all these friends and hope they each enjoy a happy day.

We have four Wedding Anniversary congratulations to mark in August and September:-

\*First on the list, Olive & David Jones, will be celebrating their 71<sup>st</sup> Anniversary on 2<sup>nd</sup> August .

\*Also reaching their 71<sup>st</sup> Anniversary are Ann & Fred Robinson on 20<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Two remarkable Anniversaries that deserve to be highlighted!**

\*Derek & Barbara Groves will celebrate their 62<sup>nd</sup> on September 15<sup>th</sup>

\* Wendy & Tim Higgens will be celebrating their 4<sup>th</sup> on September 28<sup>th</sup>.

We send our greetings to all these friends and hope they will be able to celebrate in style when the date arrives.

Please remember those in particular need of our thoughts and prayers, especially for Joanne, Sandra and Philip's daughter, as she continues her chemotherapy treatment. We pray for God's Blessing on her and her husband and children, Luke and Jessica, at this stressful time.

We thank God for all His Blessings as we look forward to welcoming our new minister, Rev. Martyn Neads, in September. Please keep him and his family in your prayers as they prepare to move from Swanage to the Harpenden Manse before his Induction Service on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September .

Ann Meers On behalf of our Pastoral Teams WGC



## Intergenerational

My son was recently telling me how much he is enjoying the teamwork in his job (accountancy traineeship in London) and associated social life. He says it's always a 'young' team (age 25 plus or minus 1 to 4 years). Whilst I'm very happy for him, I did find it on the tip of my tongue to say, "older people can be fun and interesting too, you know!" But I remembered that all through their education, our young are segregated into classes of their own age, with precious few opportunities to mix with children older or younger than themselves, nor to get acquainted with many adults unless they are fortunate with extended family. So it's not surprising if they are more at ease with their own age as adults too.

When my own children were young, I especially valued the community holidays where the children all got along in a gang of many ages, older ones looking out for little ones, and got to have proper conversations with different adults too. Methodist Summer Fellowship was a particular favourite where the programme always included plenty of all age sport and all age worship, and during my long stint on the organising committee, craft workshops further increased the opportunities for people to enjoy company with others much older and younger than themselves. After 4 or more days together, people all mix up at the dining tables, too! In fact, everyone speaks to...everyone! The barriers of age break down, and people become very generous in wanting things to work for the others rather than thinking of themselves. So you get older people looking out for everyone else's children, and the children carrying bags and opening doors for the older ones, etc. etc. I have great photos of chess between a 15 year old and an 80 year old, the table tennis final between a 50 year old and an 18 year old, and the legendary wheelchair race down the sloping corridor towards the glass doors cheered by all the able-bodied which, er, was way too dangerous in hindsight...

The movement for Intergenerational Church is about "learning, worshiping and growing in our relationship with Jesus together, as a Church family" quoted from Kay Morgan-Gurr on the website of the Evangelical Alliance. And it's not just about Sundays. The movement is building from the growing recognition that if the gospel message is one of unity for all people, then that must include

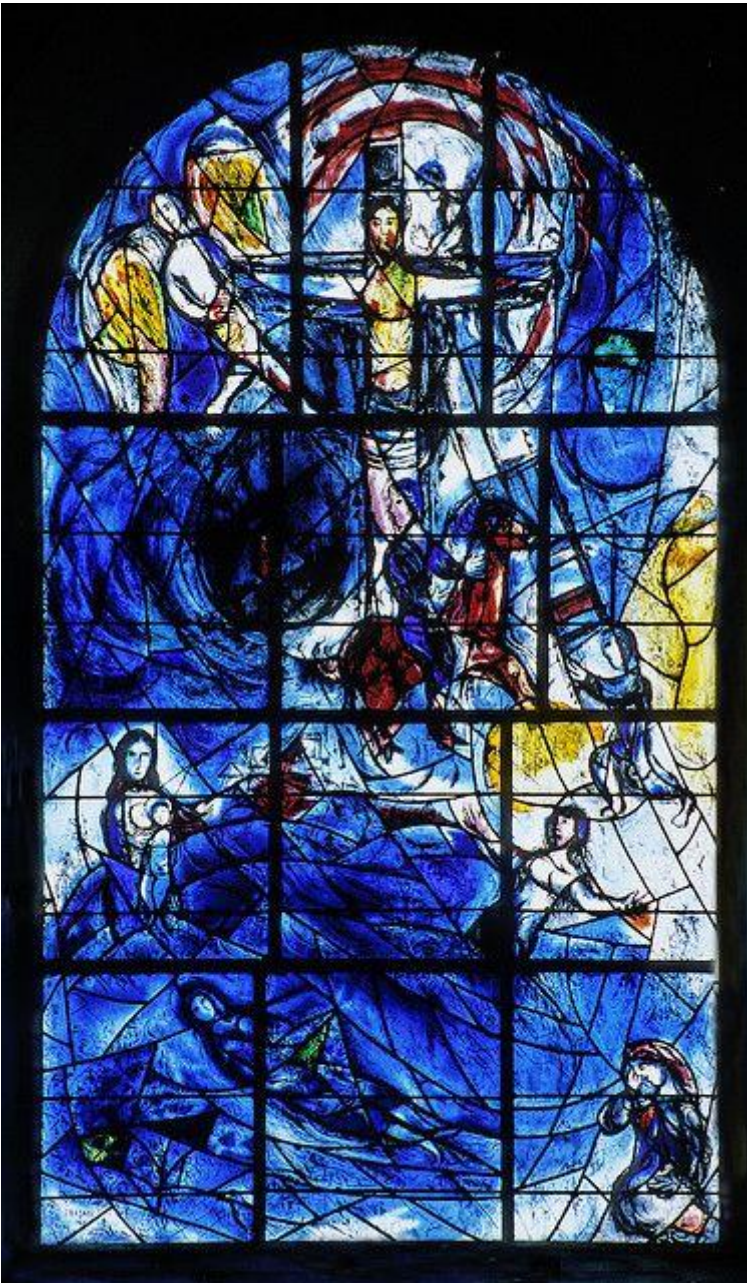
unity between generations, too. And people of different ages have much to learn from each other.

Our recent Family Gamesnight at WGCURC on July 21<sup>st</sup> was a great example of being many generations together. Thanks to Allison and Claire for the games, which were enjoyed by ten youngsters, ages including 17, 14, 12, 11, 9, 8, 7 and 4. And during the breaks it was great to watch our two teen footballers patiently coaching the younger ones. Besides parents in their forties, we included two grandparents and two of us in our fifties! The church garden is beautiful on a summer's evening and no-one wanted to rush off at the end....



Our Young People's church sessions are a great time of sharing across generations, too. Being small, we are more like an extended family group than a 'class' and have a relaxed dynamic where everyone has the opportunity to explore a bible passage in conversation, activities and play with others much older and sometimes younger than themselves. And the young people get to make friends with others from a different school year.

Wendy



## All Saints' Church, Tudeley

**with stained-glass windows by  
Marc Chagall**

I only just became aware of this Church. It's importance in the Art World is significant. We have a very beautiful Church shared by the C of E and URC. Marc Chagall a Russian Jewist Abstract artist was asked to create a stained glass window in memory of a 21 year old girl who died in a sailing accident off of Rye. Chagall was only asked to do one window. He was so moved by the beauty of the Church he did all of the windows. It is stunning and moving tribute. And work of Art. Maybe worth a day trip to see.

<https://www.tudeley.org/>

Becky

Greetings to our Church family

Having been told about a conversation recently about homelessness, I was shocked at the lack of knowledge around this topic. It's a subject very dear to my heart and is the calling on my life from Father God. Some of you may know of my background in this field. If not please feel free to chat to me about it. The information has been gathered from the Gov.uk website, and please feel free to explore this yourselves.

I thought I might share some information about this topic and what makes homelessness such a complex thing.

Currently in the UK, there are registered 271,000 homeless, 123,000 of that group being children. This flags up the first issue. Registered numbers do not reflect the true scale of this problem. There are a number of 'hidden' homeless. Ones that chose for whatever reason not to approach the authorities. This can be for many reasons: distrust fear of abuse to name two.

Local authorities can only do so much, so they set criteria to help the most needy and vulnerable. Unfortunately if you do not fit their restrictive criteria you fall through the net. Those in the priority need category are those with children, mental health issues, physical/mental disability, those leaving care, prison or the armed forces and those fleeing domestic abuse (I'm assuming those who have been involved in sex trafficking would be included in this). 16-17 years olds are eligible for assistance too. This means if you fall outside of this category, there is very little help available. Council waiting lists extend for years, and private renting is expensive and full of pitfalls. I am not sure of the number of elderly people who may be losing their care home provision.

Rough sleepers, (individuals who sleep on the streets), those many think of when the homeless are mentioned are a relatively small group. Latest figures (autumn 2021), estimate it to be 2,440. This again does not reflect the true figure, partly due to the pandemic and the governmental strategy to get the homeless off the streets. There is evidence to suggest this figure has risen on the easing of lockdown. From what I've been able to research numbers are not clear. Along with the previously mentioned reasons for inaccurate recording of numbers, this figure only records those asking for help from agencies/charities, this only accounts for London and the South East, and excludes certain groups of people. It should be noted that whilst a small number do use alcohol and drugs, it would wrong to assume that all homeless people are involved in this type of behaviour.

Reasons people experience problems are;

Ending of tenancy, poverty, short term tenancies and leaving supported housing (including asylum seekers) and the end of family/ friend support (sofa surfing). Unemployment, benefit crisis/ overpayments, relationship break down and domestic violence all contribute to our housing crisis.

One of the groups experiencing a rise in homelessness are the 65-74 age group, up by 11.9%.

As you can see this crisis is not going away any time soon. I firmly believe that the Church in the UK has a duty to help those individuals who are experiencing a very concerning housing crisis. We can get involved corporately and individually with relief projects, eg YMCA, Shelter, CAB, HYH and church projects around the country. Or even set up our own here in WGC! In Matthew 25 v35-40. Jesus addresses the people and their treatment of those less fortunate. Surely challenge for us all.

Tracy



### **Sunday Fellowship Lunch**

On the third Sunday of the month, we go to lunch after the morning service at the Dr's Tonic. If anyone would like to join us, we would love you to com.

Luncheon Group

## **Phillips' bequest**

In an article for the Church Magazine earlier this year talking about changes at WGC Church, I mentioned that the last major remodelling and refurbishment of the premises took place in about 1980. The building was completely re-wired and other features introduced such as the high-level cross above the main entrance and a notice board.

Some if not all of the funding came from some money known at the time as the Phillips' bequest, an amount in excess of £100,000, probably worth 3 or 4 times as much today.

The money came unexpectedly; and it came from a couple called Mr. and Mrs. Phillips who lived in the Newport area of South Wales. The story goes that they were married in the then Free Church, WGC presumably in its early days and were incredibly grateful of this fact.

At this point, I should mention that these are my recollections and others may remember things differently. However, the legacy was not without controversy for two reasons:

Firstly, the money came with a requirement to look after family graves in WGC and in Newport. No end date was given when this obligation would end, and in law one party cannot be bound to another 'in perpetuity'.

Secondly, there was a view that the Church should decline to accept the money, an alternative view being that we should nevertheless take the money and give it all away.

In the end, top level legal advice was sought, the opinion being that we should take the money and fulfil the condition for as long as the Church was able. And this is what happened. A separate fund was set up with the accruing interest being adequate to cover annual upkeep and occasional flowers. The fund has since been absorbed into our general fund.

There is one grave in the St. Woollos cemetery in Newport and contains Florence Kate and Herbert Leonard Phillips and their son Roger Charles. There are no dates. I have a map with the position of the grave marked, but no grave reference. I have written to the Steward at the graveyard asking for more details and still await a response. The upkeep in Newport was delegated to Newport URC and for many years, an elderly lady member there tended the grave. She

has now passed on and the URC is now part of Stow Park community church. However, the grave is still looked after, for which we make a small donation.

Closer to home, there are two graves in Hatfield Hyde cemetery, off Hollybush Lane in WGC. It is a very tranquil space. Following some investigation work with an immensely helpful chap at the Council, I have ascertained the following details:

The first grave has the reference Plot C351, and the people in the grave are Beatrice Eleanor Parker (interred 21 February 1959) and Gladys Hannah Phillips (25 September 1980). This grave has an arch over it which had been damaged and rebuilt by the Council.

The second grave has the reference Plot D116, and the person in the grave is Henry James Page (interred 21 May 1963).

Both graves are mostly stonework, without headstones, and are largely unmarked, periodic weeding is all that is required to keep them looking tidy.

In the early days, Norma Collie took responsibility for the upkeep of the graves, thank you Norma.

Please have a word with me if anyone has better information which can be added to Church archives or wants to find the graves within the cemetery.

Philip Read



## The Good Life

It's been a busy couple of months here and not all in the garden.

I have been attending St John the Baptist Church in Great Hale.

It is a little



church with a big heart for its community and I think I have mentioned previously the great events that they put on. This year for their patronal festival weekend they decided to put on a musical play about John's life. I was asked to be involved with the choir – I resisted the title of Musical Director and enjoyed the role of planning rehearsals, organising the music etc. Rehearsals were almost every week with extra choir rehearsals so it was quite a commitment for everybody and especially as the music was not what most of the singers were used to singing!! In the end we had 26 people taking part, a live band, 8 singers in the choir, actors, dancers and a narrator. It was a great production with a good mix of music that added to the story and Nick who played the part of the adult John had an awesome voice. On the day we had over 50 people in the audience and we all experienced a change of atmosphere after the interval as Jesus was baptised and John imprisoned. Someone commented that they knew the story but had never been so caught up in the significance of it before and it was very moving.

Musically we did have one little glitch! The band play by ear and are very good. They had practiced and learned the songs from You Tube videos. The choir on the other hand were used to reading music and retained their music copies even into the performance. There was one bar that was different in the music to what had been arranged by the composer for the You Tube performance and it became a real stumbling block! The difference between what was written and what we were experiencing jarred ( I am sure there is a sermon there worth considering!!) and although we had practiced it many many times it wasn't until the performance that we actually got it right!!



It was lovely to be part of something different and to be involved with the community and get to know more people in that way. Hopefully – weather permitting we are all coming together again for a BBQ at the beginning of September.

The weather has been rather crazy for the garden. The hot weather frazzled the grass but made ideal conditions for weeds to grow in the lawn – how does this work? The vegetables we have cultivated need care and attention to keep them pest free even though we have companion plants of marigolds, nasturtiums and herbs planted with them yet weeds thrive and seem to manage to remain pest free! Despite all this, the rain has helped produce lovely beetroot and carrots, kale and a very few mange tout – my fault for getting carried away with the beetroot planting whose leaves completely swamped the mange tout! You live and learn. We experimented with growing tomatoes in our veg growing area and that

has been a complete disaster! We thought it was a necessity because Zoe, our latest dog, is very keen at emptying all plant pots regardless of what is in them. We can't be supervising her all the time so decided to put all out pot crown veg safely behind a fence. It stopped her at her 2<sup>nd</sup> favourite game (the absolute favourite is digging holes) but it is far too windy there for the tomato plants to thrive. You live and learn! Next year we plan to build something to keep them safe back in their favoured position near the house.

Fruit has done amazingly well this year and we have been inundated with raspberries and strawberries much to our granddaughter's delight. She



had loved picking them – and eating as she picked which was lovely to see.



WE still feel a bit as if it is two steps forward and one step back but we have our first visitors staying next week. We could do with a few more to help us iron out any glitches so if you fancy a couple of nights as our guests please come and help us out. It will help with testimonials for the web site which is under production.

I read a lovely story I thought I would share with you. A woman was having difficulty getting a taxi at the airport when a very shiny cab pulled into the taxi rank. The driver, dressed in a white shirt and tie jumped out, introduced himself saying it was his privilege to be her driver this morning. When she got into the cab she found it as pristine as the driver and there little unexpected touches she was surprised to find. The driver asked not only for her destination but for her preferred route explaining which was the quickest under current traffic conditions. Before they set off, he offered tea or coffee, or a cold drink and a snack. There was a little sign in the back of the cab explaining which radio stations she could choose from and also stating that her driver was happy to chat, to act as a tour guide or to leave her to her own thoughts, whichever she preferred.

Intrigued, she had to ask him if he had always run his cab in the same way. He replied that it had only been for a couple of years. He had heard a story suggesting people stopped quacking like a duck about everything that went wrong for them and started soaring like an eagle. He looked at all the cab drivers he knew and heard them quacking like ducks – himself included – about how bad everything was and how hard it was to make ends meet and he decided to stop quacking and start to soar. That's when he made the changes and introduced more things after asking his passengers what they would like. He had doubled his turnover in the first year and now people rang him to book he

thought his income would quadruple by the end of the 2<sup>ND</sup> year of being an eagle instead of a duck.

The saying goes – If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck it is a duck!! Well I have caught myself quacking more than once and decided to soar instead. The Bible encourages us too -Proverbs 23:7 As they think, so they are! Paul encourages the Philippians ‘Whatever is good and whatever is true think about these things’ (4:8) and of course God himself promises in Isaiah 40:30 ‘But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.’

Oh, how I need to be reminded of that some days! Will you soar too?

With love and prayers for all those on the prayer chain at this time and for your celebrations around the arrival of your new minister. I hope the move goes well and you all soon get to know one another and enjoy all God does as you journey together.

Every blessing - Jane

- **Beetroot Chutney**
- 1 long or 2 round shallots, finely chopped
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp [red wine vinegar](#)
- 2 tsp caster sugar
- diced to make 4 tbsp gherkins
- 2 tsp yellow mustard seeds
- 500g cooked beetroot, cut into 1 cm dice
- a handful dill, chopped

### Method

Put the shallots, chilli, vinegar and sugar in a bowl. Stir and leave for 5 minutes until the sugar has dissolved.

- Add the remaining ingredients, apart from the dill, stir well then leave to macerate for 1 hour. Stir in the dill and serve



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Please can I have any articles for the next magazine by the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Please send by email or contact me by phone for WGC URC & Wheathampstead articles. For Harpenden URC articles please contact Sarah Connor Many thanks,  
Allison Giles

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. If you would like to contribute and are not really sure what, please contact one of the people above, who I'm sure could give you some suggestions.

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