

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



August & September 2021

As I was reflecting on what to write for this magazine I realised that this is the last magazine I will write for in this way. There is so much I would like to say but where do I begin?

Firstly I want to say thank you for travelling with me. In WGC for the last 14+ years and 5 years for Harpenden and Wheathampstead. Roads are rarely flat or straight and there have been some twists and turns and we have seen some changes in that time.

In WGC our study groups have expanded, and we have deepened our relationships with one another and with God through sharing together. The addition of Wendy and Liz to our staff team have bought a delightful expansion of our reach to families and those on the margins, and the biggest change, the amalgamation of the Free Church and Woodhall Lane. What a blessing that proved to be and that blessing will continue as the legacy from the sale of the building will help fund the new building being planned at the moment.

Reflecting on this I realised that each church has plans for new things ahead. Harpenden are just beginning to see new things happen as we emerge from the pandemic and Sharon is able to begin the work that has been over a year in planning since she became part of the team. It will be our 200th anniversary next year as well with a lot of plans afoot. What an amazing milestone to celebrate.

At Wheathampstead we are all systems go for the charity, the refurbishment of the church building and working towards the opening of The Chapel Gym. With amazing community support this will be a huge blessing to the community and the church. What exciting times ahead for all of us.

Some people have asked me how I know it was God calling me to make a move. God is capable in speaking to us in many different ways. There was a lovely quote in the book read by the Cluster Book Club last month when one of the characters realised '...that she had put all her confidence in her ability to hear from God instead of God's ability to speak to her in a way she would recognise and understand.' (Two steps forward by Sharon Garlough Brown).

We could narrow this down to three main areas. There are the internal nudges, sometimes even divine disquiet as God 'stirs the nest', rather like the mother eagle who pushes her young out of the nest in order for them to fly (Deuteronomy 32:11). All of this can get caught up with human emotion and our

own desires (exactly why we discern together in Church meeting when we have decisions to make) so it isn't good to rely on that alone.

Another way God speaks is through the written word in scripture. In my case, when I was wondering if the restlessness, I was feeling was mine or God's it was a verse that said to stay where you are until you are told to go – or words to that effect. When that verse came up again in a different context this year, I realised the message had changed. I was settled by this time, but God was saying it was time to go.

The other way God speaks is through other people and it is always good to listen to what people say to you. It was my spiritual director who pointed out that the idea of a future ministry that was taking shape in me, with a clarity I had not experienced before, was as much God's calling as a move to another church. Friends and family have said something remarkably similar. So, I stopped arguing with God and listened. That obedience, especially when it affects others, both family and churches is never easy but we are all in God's hand and trust God when God says:

For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

So where are we going? Our new home is in Heckington in Lincolnshire.



Heckington has a couple of claims to fame. It has the only 8 sailed windmill in Lincolnshire and the parish Church is one of the top 100 churches in the country. It also hosts the biggest village show in the country with an average of 30,000 people visiting the village on the last weekend in July. This year it is one day only and very limited tickets on sale. Our road is closed that day so not a good day to visit!!

During lockdown they also started a community radio – a DJ from Radio Caroline days has retired there, which was a great help when people were so isolated. The radio included the service from the parish Church each Sunday. The old URC building is now a Community Centre, so the closest URC is in Sleaford 15 minutes' drive away.



Our home is a barn conversion that stands in 2 acres of land. As you can see from the photos, some of it is pretty much a blank canvas and as we have discovered, will take a lot of work to get it to a place where the work is minimal.

I am not sure we will achieve our long-held dream of self-sufficiency – we are probably a few years late to start on that now!!! But growing our own fruit and veg will be a delight. Whether the hen house gets new occupants is also a matter of debate!



I am really interested in permaculture principles that amongst many other things, encourage you to work with nature rather than against it, ensure everything you do is sustainable and has more than one purpose. So, you plant edible hedges and ground cover that you can eat. Lots to learn as we begin that task.

The biggest plan is for a log cabin for people to stay for holidays or retreats and a garden room for group use, crafts or simply for those in ministry to have a day away with no agenda but to spend time with God. Will it all happen? I have no idea but it is in God's hands as we all are so we will see what develops.





Thinking of making that move I am sad at leaving you all and not ever being a person who likes to miss out on the action, I am sad not to be part of the exciting plans for the future. It is hard to imagine not having the busy life of a minister that I have enjoyed over the last 26 years but looking ahead I am excited by the possibilities of being 'freelance' and excited for all of us to see how God shapes what is coming next.

Please pray for us as we make this change and go through all the upheaval and emotions of parting and starting somewhere new.

You will all be in my prayers with praise and thanksgiving that when God calls God also provides from the superabundance of Gods store house.

Continue to pray for one another and for the future. Look for all that is good in each other, and the life of the church and the blessings God pours out each day. They remind you of God's faithfulness when the road gets a bit steep or rough underfoot. Then look forward with hope for the person God has already planned to come and share your journey in the future. They don't know it yet so patience may well be required – but who knows when I went to Lymington it was the shortest vacancy on record!!!

You are in my heart, and this comes with love and prayers that whatever the future brings God is with us and blessings will abound!

*Jane*

PS I look forward to the invitations to come and help celebrate once all your exciting plans have been achieved!

*"Farewell to Jane and Family from Welwyn Garden City URC"*

In Ecclesiastes Chapter 3, we read that for everything there is a season; a time to go, and a time to come. Yet the Spirit blows where it will. And for those who are led by the Spirit, they must follow.

God has blessed this Church with many years of service by Jane and Roger. Jane has been our Minister, our teacher, and our friend and has been with us on this continuing journey of faith; especially with the amalgamation with our daughter Church at Woodhall Lane, which brings the story full circle. The next step was the forming of our cluster of Churches within the Heartland Local Area Group, namely Harpenden, Panshanger and Wheathampstead.

We have studied the Living Word and together we have broken bread and given thanks. Hopefully we have survived Coronavirus, learning to meet together on Zoom and participate in worship in our own homes. Who would have thought it, eighteen months ago, that going to Church would ever be illegal in Britain. When this is all over, we should never under-estimate how quickly religious observance can be snuffed out.

Jane has been with us at every step of the way, supported by Roger.

So with joy and sadness, we mark and celebrate the ending of her ministry with us.

Jane, hand in hand we have walked with you, and we just hope that as we set off on our own that you have well and truly marked the path we should take. We hope and pray that any new Minister who might choose to come to us, will lead us in the same direction.

Jane, after September, we will not forget you and we wish you and Roger and all of your family the very best in everything that you do. Remember that endings are only new beginnings, and may God bless you and may Jesus be ever with you for guidance.

Please remember us too in your prayers.

Amen.

## *"Farewell to Jane and Family from Wheathampstead URC"*

When Rev Jane was given the responsibility for two other churches Wheathampstead had both a closed church building and hall, a very small congregation and was holding its services in the village Anglican churches. Jane soon learnt that this was not the complete picture and that there had been five years of plans to open the buildings once again with the vision of being an active church in a different way and hoping to get the community involved.

There were problems with the Synod agreeing to this and without Jane's supportive and tactful intervention this project would not have happened. She has encouraged us practically and spiritually so much over this difficult and challenging time. We are sad that the venture of the the Community Gym will not actually be quite completed before she leaves although we are intending to have our first service back on the site with Jane.

Her imagination and help has been truly inspiring and we are hoping that 'Prayer and Pilates' and 'Spiritual Stretches' will be part of our activities going forward!

We will all miss her so much but will remember her time with us with affection and we wish her and the family health and happiness in the future and look forward to hearing all about her ventures in Lincolnshire.

## *Thoughts and Memories of Jane from Harpenden*

With the formation of the Heartland Group and the Mid Herts Cluster of which we are part Jane was formally inducted to the Group at Harpenden URC at a special service on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2017 presided by the Thames North Synod Moderator, the Revd Dr Andrew Prasad.

It was appreciated that this represented quite a transition for Jane from being virtually the full-time minister at WGC to the being minister to the 3 churches within the cluster – quite an increase in workload and responsibility. With the added travelling this certainly was an added burden and it is fair to say there were a few ‘heart-in –the-mouth’ occasions on Sundays when Jane’s appearance at Harpenden was shall we say – close to the mark!

Jane very quickly adapted to all of us at Harpenden with her open style of worship, involving us and at times questioning us on our understanding of God’s word. She has taken us on a journey of faith through her preaching and her strong belief in the power of prayer which regularly featured in her services and is certainly one of her lasting legacies to those of us at Harpenden.

We can also say that we were continually blessed with Jane’s superb singing voice during our worship and during our choral services which will be greatly missed.

Jane was also instrumental in our quest for seeking Synod support for our Children & Families Minister and there is no doubt that bringing Sharon on board has brought new life and hope to the Church.

Jane has been a great one in keeping us on the straight and narrow regarding the necessity of having all our operating procedures in place not without some healthy debate at times as to how these should be implemented! Jane has also taken on board the use of modern technology forced upon us all by Covid resulting in many of us becoming experts in the use of Zoom!

Finally from all of us at Harpenden we are truly extremely thankful to Jane for her ministry, leadership and guidance over the past four or five years and we wish both Jane and Roger and family God’s continued blessing in their future.



## **Celebrating 100 Years of Worshiping Together.**

### **18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September**

Plans are well underway for our Weekend of Celebration in the hope that all can go ahead as planned. (COVID restrictions permitting)

**We are producing** 1) A Centenary Recipe Book

2) A Church Pictorial Calendar

3) A History of the Church Booklet

**We are offering** 1) An opportunity to add to a Time Capsule

2) An opportunity to plant a Crocus Bulb at the front of the church which will bloom in spring in the shape of the URC Ichthys.

Entry will be free with Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Donations welcomed.

**We plan** 1) To have a bench for the community installed at the front of the Church to celebrate 100years of service to our community.

2) To plant a tree in support of The Woodland Trust.

### **The programme to date**

#### **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September**

The Church will be open from 10-4pm to the community.

\*The History of the Church on Display

\* Talks on the History of WGC at 11am and 2.30pm

Hopefully more to be added.

Refreshments will be available all day with cakes, tray bakes and samples from the Recipe Books to taste and enjoy hopefully encouraging Recipe Book sales.

**All profits from Recipe Book sales will be donated to Essex & Herts Air Ambulance**

### **So How can YOU help!!**

Celebrating 100years of Worshiping Together is a significant milestone in the history of our church and we need your help to make it a memorable occasion so please read on and offer help where and how you feel able.

### **Flowers for the Weekend**

We have not been able to enjoy flowers in church for over a year and until we have a set regular pattern of services in church I will not be able to compile a Flower Rota but I would like to have a profusion of flowers in church for the Centenary Weekend. If you would like to make a donation towards purchasing flowers or help decorate the church please get in touch with me.

We will be decorating the church on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September from 10am.

### **Volunteers for**

#### **Setting up**

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September from 10am

#### **Refreshments**

Norma C and Linda S have kindly offered to serve in the morning of Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> Sept but I need 2 volunteers for the afternoon from 1-4pm.

#### **Also**

If you have submitted a recipe for cake, tray bake etc or preserve recipe for the Recipe Book would you be willing to provide a sample to serve with the tea and coffee or have as a taster to encourage sales of the Recipe Book?

**Welcome on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup>**

2 Volunteers for each of the following times

9.30-11.30

11.30-1.30

1.30-4pm

### **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>**

WGC, Harpenden and Wheathampstead congregations and our friends past and present will be receiving invitations to attend in the coming weeks.

The afternoon Worship will be led by our Thames North Synod Moderator Rev George Watts and Jane followed by an Afternoon Tea. (NB no morning Worship)

I am looking for Scone bakers using Jessie's Recipe which many of us in church now use. The advantage of Jessie's recipe is that you can freeze them and after 15mins in the oven from frozen they are just like freshly baked scones.

If over the summer you can bake and freeze a batch using the recipe below I would be extremely grateful. We can put the frozen scones in the church ovens on the day. If you haven't got freezer space you can bring them to me and I can store them in my freezer until needed. (Unfortunately we won't know how many scones we need until later but if frozen this won't be a problem)

### **Scone Recipe**

1lb S/R Flour

2 eggs

6oz Soft Marg

4tbs Butter Milk

- Rub marg into flour – beat eggs with Buttermilk and add to mixture
- Roll out about 1" thick (use a 2 in cutter which will make scones of a suitable size for our needs) Bake for approx. 20mins on 210°C/ gas mark 8.
- From frozen reheat 160 for about 15 mins

I hope this article makes our intentions for the weekend clear and I look forward to hearing from you with your offers of help and welcoming you at church during the two days of celebration. Your involvement will make the weekend of celebration enjoyable and successful so please give some thought as to how you can help by contacting me.

Either email joycen2@hotmail.com or mob 07886392602

Thank you in anticipation Joyce

## URC Harpenden over the summer

We started the summer with a Quiz – well done to Gill and Tony on winning, it was a very close result. We had jokers available to double up on points on a chosen round. A break time teaser was - If you had sum up your July or summer with an item - what item would represent it? It was very impressive to see some of the items that summed up July – in particularly the lemon that Gill and Tony brought back from Greece.

A few questions from the quiz night to get your brains ticking



1. How long in miles is the M1?
2. How tall is the Shard in metres?
3. Where was the time capsule found and how old was it?
4. Which anniversary did the NHS celebrate on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2001
5. What did the hungry caterpillar eat on Saturday and Sunday?



## Baby Roo's on Tuesday Afternoon 1.30 -2.45

It was great to start a new baby group called baby Roo's for 0-1 years. It was great to have some mums and babies relaxing and chatting, meeting one another. The group will resume Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September. Each family have their own safe space and toys, the parents were appreciative of being able to come and return to a little bit of normality and to be able to be out again. If you know

A poster for the 'Baby Roos' group. At the top, there is a large rainbow arching over a circular logo that says 'Baby Roos' and 'Mother and Baby Group @ Harpenden URC'. Below this, a white box with a red border contains the text 'NEW !!! Baby Group', '0 – 1years', and 'Tuesdays 1.30 – 2.45'. To the left of this box is a smaller version of the 'Baby Roos' logo. Below the white box, a 'Booking Only' box contains the text 'To book and secure your place please contact- Sharon.sookrahur@gmail.com'. To the left of the booking box, a list of dates is provided: '29th June', '6th July', '13th July', '20th July', and '£10.00 for 4 sessions'. At the bottom left, a small box says 'The group will be held in URC CHURCH, Stoughton Road AL5 4NG'. At the bottom right, there is a logo for 'The United Reformed Church' featuring a cross and a rainbow.



families with babies, please pass on the Baby Roo's information.

Please can you pray for these new groups and activities or alternatively If you would like to go on a rota and come in and help or chat to parents please contact [sharon.sookrahurc@gmail.com](mailto:sharon.sookrahurc@gmail.com)

### **Summer holiday activities**

Pet's corner – Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 10.30

We started our summer activities, on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July with a pet's corner followed by a picnic.



We really enjoyed having Ian from Wycombe petting farm bring an assortment of small pets eg, rabbit – cottontail, guinea pigs, tortoise etc. he did a talk about each pet then the children had the opportunity to have the pets on cushions on



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activities. We are very grateful as we received funding from URC Youth and children for our holiday activities.

Then on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August we have our teddy bears picnic with activities for families.

If you would like to help with activities or visit, please contact [sharon.sookrahurc@gmail.com](mailto:sharon.sookrahurc@gmail.com)

Please remember to let families you know have the details of the activities.

Summer services at Harpenden are fortnightly in person (8<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> August) and continue on Zoom when hosted by Welwyn Garden City.

Have a great summer!! We hope you can rest and refresh before we start a new term. We look forward to seeing what God has in store for us all over the summer as we head into a new term !! God is Good – all the time.

Remember to checkout our FB page [\(4\) Harpenden United Reformed Church | Facebook](#) and remember to like the posts as more people get to see what is happening at URC Harpenden.

Sharon, Harpenden

## THANK YOU

I shared my thoughts with my friend, Laura F-G, about wanting to write an article on 'Thank You' and she inspired me so much that I decided to do so.

Our conversation was about how grateful we are to God for answering our prayers and as we continued sharing, we realised that there must be so many more people, who are also grateful that their prayers have been answered and what a blessing it would be if we could all get together and share true stories and experiences that show us God is good.

*Is this something that you would like to be part of? If so, please contact me.*

About two weeks ago I took a very ill cat to the vet for an emergency appointment. I prayed (very loudly) all the way to Wheathampstead and asked for healing for the cat. When Layla still hadn't eaten by the following day, I prayed even harder. 24 hours later she started eating and hasn't stopped since! I am so grateful to God that I haven't stopped thanking Him and telling everyone I meet about this miracle. God is great.

Laura F-G shared this lovely prayer with me and now I would like to share it with you: (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/gratitude-bible-verses/>)

### **A Prayer for Gratitude**

Dear God,

Thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives, thank you for your goodness and for your blessings over us. Thank you that you are able to bring hope through even the toughest of times, strengthening us for your purposes. Thank you for your great love and care. Thank you for your mercy and grace. Thank you that you are always with us and will never leave us. Thank you for your incredible sacrifice so that we might have freedom and life. Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough, for who you are, for all that you do, for all that you've given. Help us to set our eyes and our hearts on you afresh. Renew our spirits, fill us with your peace and joy. We love you and we need you, this

day and every day. We give you praise and thanks, for You alone are worthy!  
In Jesus' Name, Amen.

### **Arrow Prayers**

Someone mentioned the term 'Arrow Prayers' to be me. Google describes it as; 'Arrow prayers are quick, one-sentence prayers that you can shoot off amid any life situation. These prayers are useful when you are in the middle of a crisis, problem, or daily activity. They can also be prayers of thanks or praise when we are delighted with God'.

I have often said 'Arrow Prayers' – praying to be on time for a train or a meeting. Laura also shared her 'Arrow Prayers' that included prayers for parking spaces, looking for a bespoke gift for her daughters 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and the challenge of finding a specific size trainer for her son.

### **Answers to Prayers**

So many of Laura's prayers have been answered, most recently the provision of Proton Beam Therapy procedure for her friend Amanda's brain cancer. CT and MRI scans also have confirmed Amanda's tumours are shrinking. Laura's latest CT scan confirmed she has no metastasis (her cancer is stable) and her children have found fabulous job opportunities.

She added "Sometimes my prayers are silent, like a quiet knowing that God has gone ahead and provided for me, so I always Praise the Lord afterwards. I never cease to be amazed."

### **What are you thankful for?**

Would you like to share a time when your prayers were been answered?

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Laura F-G for delivering our Order of Services every week and providing Pastoral Care to all whom she meets.



During the first lockdown Janet Mortimer shared a song with us all. It is a song Laura is particularly grateful for: “I find this song inspirational, uplifting and comforting, all at the same time, and it is wonderful opportunity to thank the Lord and praise the Lord for all his blessings upon us. The words are a constant reassurance of God's presence at all times ... so I am thankful to the songwriter and artists that made this wonderful creation”.

'May His presence go before you  
And behind you and beside you  
All around you and within you  
He is with you, He is with you  
In the morning, in the evening  
In your coming and your going  
In your weeping and rejoicing ....'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zp6aygmVzM4>

#### **Hall Hirers**

- Our Community Café' visitors have been meeting every Tuesday, since 29 June, outside Sainsbury's under the lovely new umbrellas.
- The CWQR had their first meeting in the garden on 10 July.
- Carers in Herts are meeting in the garden on 21 July.
- Jean is starting Knit& Natter on 25 August.
- Sing & Sign have enquired about hall hire and plan to start 15 September.
- We have also been blessed with two new one-off bookings. The first is the Hear2Listen.org.uk group of NCS students in the lower hall from 19-23 July and again 9-13 August and the other is the Worshipful Company of Gardeners to WGC on 26 July.

I usually have one or two meetings with prospective hall hirers. At the first meeting they want to view the room. On occasion they make an immediate decision regarding the hire or else a second meeting is arranged. Every hall hirer signs our updated hall hire agreement and our Fire Evacuation Process document. They also receive a copy of our safeguarding policy. I cover housekeeping with them, point out the fire evacuation routes and our covid regulations. They in turn provide us with a copy of their public liability insurance cover, safeguarding policy (where needed) and risk assessments.

## Centenary Celebrations



Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September everyone will be invited from 10 am – 4pm to view the history of the church as well as our original building plans.

Tony Skottowe (Chairman of The Board at Welwyn Garden City Heritage Trust) will be sharing the history of WGC with us at 11 am and 2.30pm.

During the day, everyone will have an opportunity to plant a bulb in the shape of an Ichthys, in front of the church.

We will also offer those who have lost a loved one to Covid, an opportunity to place a memory or photograph of that person, in an envelope which will be buried inside a time capsule.

As soon as we receive confirmation of the other events for that day, we will share it with you.

A Centenary Recipe Book, A Church Pictorial Calendar and a Booklet about the History of the Centenary of the Church will be on sale. Profits of all sales will be going to the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance.

Refreshments will also be served during the day.

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> a joint service at 2pm led by our Thames North Synod Moderator Rev George Watts and Rev Jane Weedon, which will be followed by an Afternoon Tea at 3pm. We are in the process of finalising the invitations and once printed, they will be sent out.

## Communications Team

Thank you to those who volunteered to be part of the WGC URC Communications Team. We have allocated roles for both internal and external communications, discussed the Terms of Reference and currently preparing Communication Strategy and Social Media Strategy documents.



## **Links Update**

### **Tree Cathedral:**

There will be a worship service held at the Tree Cathedral on Sunday 5 September from 3.30pm – 4.30pm with the Trinity United Reformed Church St Albans singing group leading with songs of worship.

More details to follow.

### **Visit of John Bell on 7 May 2022 - Wigmore Church:**

There will be two sessions on the day and tickets will go on sale at £10 for one session or £15 for both sessions. Refreshments will be available but please bring your own packed lunch and chair.

It is hoped that churches will be able to hold fund raising events to help to contribute towards the costs which includes John Bell's fee, his travelling and accommodation costs.

More information to follow.

## **Facebook**

Please like **The URC Community Group of Welwyn Garden City** Facebook page and feel free to share any of the posts that you feel may be of interest.

**Thank you for reading my article. God Bless you and your loved ones – Liz  
(Mission Developer)**

## **New reality, same Mission – Robert Harvey**

I have been thinking about a booklet which our Elders and others in our church have been studying. It is a booklet that our national church has sent out about responding to the pandemic. It's called (as above) "New reality, same Mission." It points out that the mission to which God calls us is one that gives priority to the needs of those who suffer most, particularly in times like the present. We are all in this together and must share with and care for those who have the greatest problems.

How have we been we doing this? Joyce has been sending out to us, from members of the congregation, prayer requests for relatives and friends who are sick or in distress and we have been praying for them. People in the wider community have been invited to leave ribbons on the memorial garden fence asking for prayers for loved ones. Volunteer food shopping has been offered for those who need it. Liz, our Mission Developer, has channelled support to the New Zion Food Bank and to local charities like the Resolve Homeless Charity and the Women's Refuge and has arranged Zoom meetings and community walks. Wendy stays in contact with the families who have come to the children's services and activities she has arranged. These are some of the things we have done to share the love of God.

Also, of course, many people in the congregation have given help to others individually. One of them has given me permission to tell you about what she does – Melva Spalding, the daughter of Janice Spalding who died in February. Melva is a great cook and baker and so she makes cakes and scones every Friday for six elderly friends of her mother. She also has them to lunch at weekends in threes. (It has to be in threes she has only three chairs at present. Melva sits on a stool.) Meals showing the love of God at work, in our midst.

*Perhaps you would like to share in the next magazine what God has led you to do to help people around you or far away?*

## Finance Matters Harpenden

Over the past 16 months since covid lockdown restrictions came in to force we have benefitted financially from reduced operating costs relating to our utility usage and salaries which have had the benefit of the government's furlough scheme.

Last year we had an operating loss of £10938 and with some of the above savings still in place albeit slowly coming to an end I would anticipate now that 2021 will come in at a slightly higher deficit of around £14K mainly due to the severe cut back in hall lettings.

As has been mentioned before we have seen a significant increase in those who are participating in either regular monthly standing orders or making regular direct credit payments into our church account which greatly helps with both the forecasting and monitoring of the church finances as well as easing the administration process through not having to make so many trips to the bank.

Our Gift Day collection which took place throughout the month of June has reached a total including gift aid of £2710 which compared with last year's total of £1981 is an excellent result and thanks to all concerned.

Our Manse which is rented out with the proceeds helping to part fund the cost of our Children & Families Minister and also part shared with WGC has had tenants for the past 18 months who are associated with WYAM but are now leaving on 20<sup>th</sup> August. However as some of you may have read in the local press a family living in Tennyson Rd suffered a severe fire to their property and are currently homeless and having to find suitable accommodation to rent via their insurance company and, having to move very quickly, we have hopefully managed to organise a tenancy agreement with them for a minimum period of one year which is certainly a blessing to the family who will only be moving around the corner.

Finally our Pre school whilst closed for the main part of last year has managed to soldier on this year with at times much reduced staffing due to covid issues and together with increased covid related costs it is anticipated it may run at a loss this year compared with a £5684 profit last year.

Norman Deas Treasurer

## CHURCH FAMILY CORNER

The summer months seem to be disappearing fast and I am now looking at the birthday list for August and September. First on the list is Laura's daughter Erin who will be celebrating her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday on 2<sup>nd</sup> August. We send our congratulations to Erin on this special milestone!

Here are some more for August:- Mary S. on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Don B. on 4<sup>th</sup>, Joyce N. on 15<sup>th</sup>, Lucas H. who will be 17 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Sheila L. on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Barbara G. on 26<sup>th</sup> and last but not least, my other half, John, who will be 80 on 30<sup>th</sup>!

Moving on to September, we have Rosemary T. on 6<sup>th</sup>, Aiden R. who will be 7 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ted C. on 24<sup>th</sup> and Orlagh C. who will be 3 on 25<sup>th</sup>.

We send our best wishes to all these friends and hope that they will enjoy their special days when they come round. Happy Birthday to you all!

Three Wedding Anniversaries to celebrate now. Firstly, Olive and David Jones on their 69<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, followed by Derek and Barbara Groves on their 60<sup>th</sup> on 15<sup>th</sup> September, then Wendy & Tim Higgins on their 2<sup>nd</sup> on 28<sup>th</sup> September. We send many congratulations to our friends on their special days.

We were sorry to hear of the death of Jan Hicks on 5<sup>th</sup> June and send our condolences to his family at this sad time.

During this past 18 months we have been able to keep in touch through the wonders of Zoom and the efforts of those delivering the printed service sheets, but I'm sure we are all looking forward to the time when we can be back in church permanently, able to sing the hymns, drink coffee and enjoy each others company again and we pray that this will be able to happen very soon.

We continue to remember those in need and pray for God's Blessing on us all at this difficult time. Please pass on any new concerns to our pastoral teams so that no one gets forgotten while we are still "socially distanced"!

Thank you, on behalf of the Pastoral Teams

## LOVE IN A BOX

Mainly thanks to Carole, we were very pleased to be able to send 72 boxes off to the Mustard Seed Mission Charity despite all the restrictions this year. Mike, down at the warehouse in Eastbourne, is having to manage without the help of the large number of volunteers who usually sort out the thousands of boxes that arrive from all over the country in November so it was up to us to seal our own boxes and send the shipping cost money separately this year. Despite the fact that many schools were not able to take part this year, a full van load was picked up from further north so the driver had to return to Eastbourne and a second volunteer driver came to us early the next day for his first pick up (we were still in our pyjamas when he arrived!!) before going on to more places in the Home Counties. As Mike wrote "we have never failed in 27 years to send gifts to the children in Eastern Europe and we will do our very best for them this year".



We are very grateful to Carole for masterminding the project again this year and we send her our heartfelt thanks for all the effort she puts into it.

Thank you to everyone who took part, either with a donation or by preparing a box.

Ann Meers

## SHOE BOX APPEAL

Here we are again asking for your support for the shoe box appeal.

Carole is working very hard to fill shoe boxes ready for collection later in the year. We are still very short of funds and Carole would really appreciate more support. Each shoe box requires £4.50 to cover transport cost and Carole spends a lot of time, as well as her own money, on sourcing suitable toys and treats. The hats, gloves, scarves and teddies are supplied by the knit and natter group, despite not yet meeting together and Liz donates toilet necessities as she can get them from time to time.

However, we are still short of basic items plus the transport cost so if you are in a position to help in any way, please contact Carole on 01707 880760. Your donation will be greatly appreciated.

Many thanks for your support



## A WAY WITH FLOWERS



As a little girl I always liked flowers. My dad grew roses. He entered many local shows and won numerous cups and medals. He made sure my mum had flowers for the house and even although I was not allowed into the garden I loved the roses with their pretty colours and scents.

When I married this changed because my husband grew nearly 200 chrysanthemums and he ensured I had plenty for the house, which had a bonus because they often lasted over 3 weeks. My favourite was a rustic red coloured incurving bloom.

I first started arranging flowers when I went to Woodhall Lane Church. I was a member of a team of three arrangers. People would donate money for flowers to commemorate loved ones or special occasions. The local grocer was very good and gave the church a special discount on the cost of the flowers. I learned a lot from the other team members about arranging and presentation at this time.

When I moved to this church I joined the flower arranging team where I received lots of encouragement and support. I love working with the team, sharing ideas and experimenting with different shapes and flower combinations. It's good fun to be part of such a lovely group.

I'm responsible for arranging the flowers for Sunday service every four weeks. It is really satisfying to see the end product, although many times I stand back and think it doesn't look quite right and need to move one flower then another flower and that can go on for some time! I feel really pleased when someone makes a nice comment about the flowers. I think people who come to our service appreciate the flowers, how beautiful they look and how they help create a calm atmosphere. Perhaps the flowers help us to leave our worries and concerns at the door and focus on our worship. Having the arrangements taken apart after the service and sent out to absent friends is also a way of giving

pleasure to them as well as telling them we are thinking of and praying for them.

We use our skills on other occasions, at Christmas when the church is alive with lovely arrangements and when we celebrate, 'Allelujah. Christ is Risen' on Easter morning.

Of course none of this would happen if we did not receive gifts and donations of money to cover the cost of the flowers. Please give generously and remember if you pay income tax you can Gift Aid your donation and the government will increase your gift by 25%. Please have a word with Joyce or Helen if you would like to make a donation.



I have learned a lot through flower arranging and developing a gift I can share with others and feel very good about being part of the Church community.

Barbara & Helen C, WGC

~~~~~

### **Car park barrier cards renewal**

If you have a car park barrier card, they are due for renewal on October 1st. The renewal charge is £25.00 for the year. Please renew using either bank transfer or by cheque.

#### **Bank transfer details are:**

HSBC

Welwyn Garden City United Reformed Church

Sort Code : 40-46-08

Account Number : 91680595

Reference : Your name and CAR PARK

#### **Cheques are payable to : WGC United Reformed Church**

Please send your cheque to me at the following address :

Treasurer

WGC United Reformed Church

Church Road

Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6PR

Can you please continue to display the red permit card in your car when you park. If you no longer have a red permit card then please contact Allison at [allisongiles@hotmail.com](mailto:allisongiles@hotmail.com) or phone office and leave a message 01707 333326.

## 50 years of Volunteering!

Over fifty years ago I took a shy daughter to Brownies! And on that first evening I stayed and helped out where I could for games and activities; and then each week I stayed and stayed and stayed! I eventually became a Unit Helper. So, here I am 51 years later with some of those Brownies and Guides now parents themselves bringing their own daughters to Brownies and into Girlguiding.

Over these past years I have been registered as a non uniformed volunteer and have worked with 17<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> WGC Brownie Units and some Guide Companies for activity days, craft and of course flower arranging! What fun we have had - the girls learning and me encouraging and guiding them through their projects and challenges.

There have been so many 'Pack holidays' as they were once called where we have been away for, sometimes, a whole week or just 3 or 4 nights in purpose built accommodation, sharing so much with each other.

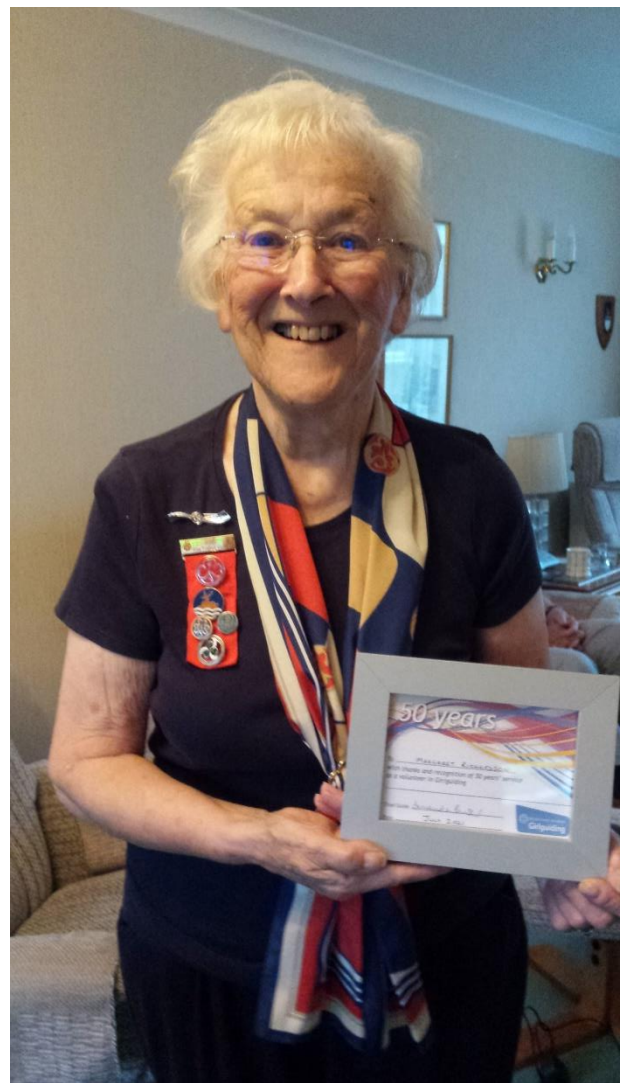
I am now an Occasional Helper and join in special events and meet up with friends in Guiding through Trefoil Guild (Guiding for Adults). To have been recognised and thanked for 50 years with a delightful silver bar brooch and framed certificate is a privilege.

If you want to help to aspire young women, just go onto the Girlguiding website and simply volunteer!

[www.girlguiding.org.uk](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk)

Margaret Richardson

aka Snowy Owl



Hi all

During lockdown and continuing through our reduced physical presence in our Church we have been graced with a virtual congregation in the form of Sharon's Scarecrows. They have been colourful and artistic in their design, outfits and placement, changing guises as the seasons and Lectionary dictates. I really enjoyed the installation and they kept many of us company during long periods when working up in the Church.

At first I felt a little apprehensive of the figures, especially with the lights off, on my own, but I grew to love them. However we had mixed comments and it was decided at Elders that sadly it was the time to say goodbye to our little friends. We may not be dispatching them in the same manner eluded to in the film quote from Scarface (Al Puccino) but by Al Sookrah! And Sharon of course! So as Elders we would like to say a heartwarming thanks to Sharon for her creative genius and helping us to remain Socially Distanced in those early days. Obviously we still need to adhere to the rules regarding indoor public praise etc (2m apart, numbers, no singing etc ) for the time being. So well done Sharon et-Al (pardon the Alan pun)

So as we consign the Scarecrows to recycling please remember the good times we had with them. We pass them over to Gods safe keeping via the charity shop and the recycling centre! Who knows, perhaps in a few weeks they might revisit you all in the form of a Sunday paper, Amazon package or even perhaps a Gideon Bible?

Worzal Gummidge and Aunt Sally move in mysterious ways!

God Bless, The Harpenden Elders

## Heaven's Grocery Store

As I was walking down life's  
highway many years ago  
I came upon a sign that read  
Heavens Grocery Store.

When I got a little closer  
the doors swung open wide  
And when I came to myself  
I was standing inside.

I saw a host of angels.  
They were standing everywhere  
One handed me a basket and said  
"My child, shop with care."

Everything a human needed  
was in that grocery store  
And what you could not carry  
you could come back for more.

First I got some Patience.  
Love was in that same row.  
Further down was Understanding,  
you need that everywhere you go.

I got a box or two of Wisdom  
and Faith a bag or two.  
And Charity, of course,  
I would need some of that, too.

I couldn't miss the Holy Ghost  
It was all over the place.  
And then some Strength and

Courage  
to help me run this race.

My basket was getting full but I  
remembered I needed Grace,  
And then I chose Salvation for  
Salvation was for free  
I tried to get enough of that to do for  
you and me.

Then I started to the counter  
to pay my grocery bill,  
For I thought I had everything  
to do the Masters will.

As I went up the aisle I saw  
Prayer and put that in,  
For I knew when I stepped outside  
I would run into sin.

Peace and Joy were plentiful,  
the last things on the shelf.  
Song and Praise were hanging near  
so I just helped myself.

Then I said to the angel  
"How much do I owe?"  
He smiled and said  
"Just take them everywhere you go."

Again I asked "Really now,  
how much do I owe?"  
"My child" he said,  
"God paid your bill a long, long time  
ago." *Anon*

*Many thanks to Ann R for sharing this with us*

Dear All,

As the sun has returned these last couple of weeks in July, round-bale silage making has been completed, and now hay making has begun. The rain in June was very good for grass (and weed!) growth, but our fingers were itching to get the mower running. For round-bale silage, it is a case of cutting the grass on the first day, raking it into rows on the second day and then baling it on the third day, although this process may be speeded up if the weather is really good because the grass would otherwise wilt too much before being baled. Our contractor, Paul, has a marvellous McHale baler that makes a bale and then tips it into another section of the machine for wrapping while the next bale is being made. It then tips out the wrapped bale and so the process continues. Very clever stuff - as long as it keeps working - there are rather a lot of electronics as well as mechanical motions that can run into problems that aren't easy to fix without the assistance of an engineer.

Hay making obviously takes a few days more as the grass needs to dry out completely. Rather than raking the mown grass directly into rows, it is spread from the rows, usually twice over three days, before being raked back into rows for baling when we are satisfied that it is fully dry. Hence the high pressure system this week (I'm writing this on the 19th July) is ideal, and we have a 10 acre field cut for hay which is drying nicely. Paul has a square baler for baling this, which makes 6-, 7- or 8-feet by 4 feet by 3 feet bales with six strings around them. Despite these bales clearly being oblong, they (and the baler) are still referred to as "square"! When Rose comes to the farm at the weekend following the end of term, I will expect her to pick up on this anomaly, because she has been learning all about 2- and 3-d shapes at school. Down at Sandwich, work has been going well for Sarah at the Pfizer Business Park, where the business is based. They are now putting together work for an ISO accreditation, so that current (and more) clients will provide them with food samples for testing. They have also recently been inundated with golfers and golf-fans down there, due to the Open Championship going on. However, Sarah informs me that most of the small roads in the town were marked off as out-of-bounds

to the golfing crowd to save things getting out of hand. Rose has been getting along well at school. We will be welcoming them both here on the farm for some holiday. I plan to put up my tent in the orchard for Rose and myself to do some "at home" camping with breakfast eaten outside, even if we do get it from indoors! It would also be good to take her to the seaside. In Somerset we are blessed by having a short distance, either north or south, to get to the sea but with stay-cations being the order of the day, we fear we may be like a lot of sardines in a tin whichever direction we go in. But then the beauty of living in the countryside is that you only have to walk outside the back door to enjoy the air and sunshine (when it is shining!). So we wish you all a relaxing summer, even if you have to stay at home.

Love and best wishes,  
Stephen, Sarah and Rose

Allison's Admin

Please could anyone who has, or would like to be on the rota for reading at WGC, please let me know either by email or leaving a message on the Church answerphone (01707 333326) .

Thank you.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Feeling Grateful

## Word Search

What are YOU thankful for on Thanksgiving Day and all the other days of the year? Here are a few ideas to get you started.

ANIMALS  
BED  
BIRTHDAY  
BOOKS  
CARS  
CHALLENGES  
DAD  
EARTH  
FAMILY  
FLOWERS  
GRANDPARENTS  
HEALTH  
HEARING  
HEART  
HOME  
ICE CREAM  
JOKES  
LAUGHTER  
LUNGS  
MOM  
MOON  
MUSIC  
NATURE  
OXYGEN  
POPCORN

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| T | Q | Q | D | E | S | J | Q | E | S | L | A | O | R | G | U | Q | T | Z |
| A | R | Y | G | C | R | B | G | T | Z | T | C | O | J | U | Z | C | E | C |
| S | T | N | E | R | A | P | D | N | A | R | G | X | N | H | T | S | F | M |
| T | W | M | A | E | T | J | N | N | E | I | S | Y | P | Z | R | A | K | S |
| E | O | A | R | A | S | M | I | O | A | D | I | G | W | G | Y | A | N | E |
| H | B | S | T | M | X | M | C | T | O | I | V | E | A | N | Q | O | I | G |
| C | S | I | H | Z | A | B | Z | V | R | M | K | N | N | I | V | B | L | N |
| U | B | Z | Z | L | Z | N | O | I | T | A | C | A | V | D | Q | O | H | E |
| O | H | P | S | U | N | S | H | I | N | E | E | Y | N | A | L | Q | H | L |
| T | G | O | F | B | I | R | T | H | D | A | Y | H | X | E | K | T | U | L |
| D | E | P | Q | C | P | X | P | T | Y | K | H | E | A | R | I | N | G | A |
| X | X | C | T | H | G | I | S | L | F | A | M | I | L | Y | G | B | F | H |
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| Z | Z | L | C | L | A | U | G | H | T | E | R | H | Z | P | H | L | A | A |

RAIN  
READING  
SCHOOL  
SHOES  
SIGHT  
SMELL

STARS  
SUNSHINE  
TASTE  
TEACHER  
TOUCH  
VACATION



### Contact Details

|                                           |                   |              |                          |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
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| WGC URC Admin / point of contact          | Allison Giles     | 01707 333326 | allisongiles@hotmail.com |
| Harpenden URC Admin / point of contact    | Sarah Connor      |              | shconnor@gmail.com       |
| Wheathampsted Secretary /point of contact | Jackie Seller     | 01582 832707 | jandjseller@gmail.com    |

Please can I have any articles for the next magazine by the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021. 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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