

WELWYN GARDEN CITY
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



DECEMBER 2018 & JANUARY 2019
MAGAZINE

As I sat down to write my Christmas greeting for this magazine I asked myself what it was I really wanted to share. I found a longing for the gifts of faith and hope, joy, peace and love to be your most precious gifts this Christmas. That longing began to take shape as a prayer.

What is my prayer for you this Christmas?

I pray that we all find time in the business of the season to allow Christ to be born anew in our hearts this Christmas that we might see people through his eyes and find him in every person we meet.

I pray that everyone who reads this message will have the gift of knowing they are loved and cherished by us and infinitely more by God.

I pray that everyone who comes to our Christmas services and celebrations will go away with something to treasure in their hearts; a seed sown for God to water and nurture, for faith to grow.

I pray that people who find Christmas a difficult or lonely time will be surprised again by Christ's joy.

I pray that you will know peace. Peace in your hearts that stubbornly refuses to go away even when there should be no peace. Peace that can only be the presence of the Prince of Peace. God with us.

I pray that the message of Christmas will rekindle hope. God took such risks to take on our human form, to walk among us, to understand what it is to be welcomed and adored but also rejected and misunderstood, to open the way for us to find God waiting and longing for us to turn to him. In a time of darkness for many I pray that we might be hope for others too. That people may discover Gods upside down view of the world for themselves where the last is first, the hungry are fed, the lost are found, peace becomes a reality, justice is done and broken hearts are bound.

I pray that everyone who finds their way to our churches whatever their need may find acceptance and encouragement and love.

Wherever God needs us to be the answer to our own prayers I pray we have the courage to step out in faith and hope and joy and love, moving out of our comfort zones into Gods, to share in his work in our community.

I also pray for peace in your hearts and homes in the midst of the busyness; special times with family and friends and quiet moments too sit in awe and wonder at the enormity of the story.

As John Betjeman wrote 'God became man in Palestine and lives today in bread and wine'. **Christmas by John Betjeman (1906-1984)**

May the Light of God lead us, the power of God hold us, the Joy of God bless us and the Love of God enfold us this Christmas and throughout the new year.



Wishing you all a very
Happy Christmas!

With love from

Jane and Roger

Secretary's Notes

It is difficult at times to decide on what to write as my Secretary's Notes for inclusion in our magazine and then something will pop into my head repeatedly and I find myself thinking perhaps God is sending me a message to use this as the basis of my notes. This month I keep hearing in my head an old nursery rhyme which has been handed down from generation to generation which reflects the Christmas festival of celebration of being a time of plenty for many of us but that charity should be given to the less fortunate according to the givers means.

The rhyme is :-

Christmas is coming

The geese are getting fat

Please put a penny in the old man's hat

If you haven't got a penny a ha'penny will do

*If you haven't got a ha'penny **God** bless you.*

Our church's vision is to become a Community Hub in the centre of Welwyn Garden City and we are endeavouring to support and meet the needs of families and individuals in the groups we host in our building throughout the week. Sadly there is a growing number of people who are homeless, suffering financial pressures, lonely, or perhaps struggling with physical or mental health issues.

You may read this and think what can I do?

My belief is as Christians we need to, especially at this time of year, bring God's blessing and the joy of Jesus birth to those less fortunate than ourselves by giving in any way we can as the rhyme suggests.

So please give some thought as to how you could bring the joy of Christmas into someone's life. It needn't be by giving money as you may not have the means to do this. You could always invite a lonely neighbour into your home, offer someone assistance with their shopping or perhaps transport to a hospital appointment.

Just a few examples but there are many ways that each of us could find to brighten up someone's life at a time of year which for many is difficult.

Please try to think of a way that you could bring the joy of Christmas into the life of someone less fortunate than yourself.

Let's all try to think out of the box.

Wishing you all a very Joyous Christmas, a Happy and Healthy New Year and may the Blessing of Jesus be with you all this festive season

Joyce

Up and Coming

As we head towards Christmas I need your help to decorate the church for the festive season and of course dismantle all the décor in the New Year. Specific talents aren't required just a willingness to help would be greatly appreciated in order to create a festive atmosphere in the church. As we are holding our Carols by Candlelight Service later this year by popular demand the preparations will be carried out in two phases enabling groups to continue using the church for their activities.

On Friday 7th December at 10am we will work on phase one the main decorations without the candles in the centre aisle.

On Friday 21st December at 10am we will complete the work by adding the candles in the centre aisle and preparing the church for Carols by Candlelight and the Longest Night drop in and short reflective service.

On Friday 4th January at 10am we will have the task of packing Christmas away for another year.

As Confucius is renowned to have said "Many hands make light work" (excuse the pun). So please come along and offer your help while enjoying each others company as we prepare our Church for the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Joyce

Last week I decided to look up the definition of Prayer. I was brought up reciting the Lord's Prayer by rote. I had listened to prayers all of my life. I had even prayed to God, at least in my head, though not necessarily spoken out loud. But I had never checked the dictionary definition.

I found out that the word prayer stood for praise, repent, yield, to ask for or make a devout petition to God, a prayer of thanksgiving, adoration or confession. Just about everything we can think about.

Every day I thank God for blessing me with the ability to get out of bed and do as I wish for the whole day. I only speak it inside my head and yet I can vocalise it to other people.

I have every admiration for people who can share prayer with a whole congregation. We have many in our church who can move me by the power of their prayer. So often they seem to refer to me in some way or other and I can go home feeling restored by their faith.

We sing hymns with such enthusiasm, enjoying the sound of the words that accompany the music, but – do we really listen to the words. I find that so many hymns are pure prayers.

'Father lead me day by day, ever in thine own sweet way, teach me to be pure and true, show me what I ought to do'. A devout petition prayer.

'At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, every tongue confess Him, King of glory now.' A prayer of praise.

'Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to Thee. Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise'. A prayer of service.

'Tell me the old, old story, of unseen things above, of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love. Tell me the story simply, as to a little child, for I am weak and weary, and helpless and defiled'. A prayer of reassurance.

'The Head that once was crowned with thorns, is crowned with glory now. A royal diadem adorns the mighty victor's brow.' A prayer of sheer glory and joy. I used the first verse as a call to worship for the service in April and the service was concluded with singing the whole hymn.

How often do we say, 'God works in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform', but that hymn continues, 'He plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm'. A prayer of amazement.

I believe that although I am not good at vocalising my prayers, I do pray and not always just for me. But with God's help I may one day be able to present the prayers of intercession with confidence and joy. Pray for me please.

Jean Hughes

A Christmas Prayer

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father,
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing
which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven,
for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

WORSHIP TEAM.

I would like to thank all members of the Worship Team for all their hard work and dedication throughout another year. We have so many lovely comments each month and it is all due to your contributions. Let us take this enthusiasm forward into the New Year with refreshed spiritual vigour, in God's love. Jean

Love in a box

We have wrapped, packed and despatched 124 boxes this year. But these things don't just happen, a lot of work and preparation is involved.

Thanks to John Lewis for supplying many empty boxes, which can actually be quite a challenge as the size is important as well as needing a separate lid.

A very big thank you goes to our knit and natter group, who meet fortnightly on a Wednesday. They have produced over a 100 hat, mittens, and scarf sets, alongside 100 little teddy bears. £180 was also donated by this group to buy all the bits and pieces to fill the boxes and help with the transport costs.

Thanks to Ann and John Meers who have the boxes collected from their home by the organisation called Mustard Seed. The boxes are checked by them before being transported to Moldova in Eastern Europe, for children who receive these boxes, this possibly is their only gift.

Thanks to all who have contributed in any way. Let us remember these children in our prayers and be thankful that we are able to bring happiness to them.

Carol



WELWYN GARDEN CITY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH CHRISTMAS 2018

Sat 24th Nov	10.30- 3pm	Christmas Fayre Traditional Christmas Fayre. All proceeds shared between Church Window Fund & Isabel Hospice.
Sat 1st Dec	10- 11.30am	Breakfast Church Bring the family for a relaxing morning with breakfast, playtime & crafts finishing with a bible story and simple Christian songs. Suitable for up to 9 years.
Sun 2nd Dec	10.30am 4pm	Gift Sunday Bring unwrapped toys, gifts and toiletries to be collected by Santa for children & mums in the Women's Refuge, YMCA residents (men & women) and CAP clients. Pet Service You and your pet are invited to a special Pet Service - a blessing of all animals
Sun 9th Dec	10.30am	Family Worship
Sunday Dec 16th	4-5.15pm	Christmas Special for young families. Christmas story and simple carols in church, playtime and crafts for families with children up to age 7. Older siblings welcome. All children must be accompanied.
Fri 21st Sun	6-9pm 6-6.45pm 6.45-9pm	The Longest Night A welcoming space for all, and especially for those who don't find Christmas easy. Short reflective service Opportunity to talk, light a candle & remember loved ones. Refreshments served
Sun 23rd Dec	4.30pm	Carols by Candlelight Come and see the Church at its very best! Traditional carols and the Christmas story in a warm and friendly atmosphere. Please note the extensive use of candles. Mulled wine, coffee and mince pies from 3.30pm
Mon 24th Dec	11.30pm	Candlelight Communion
Tues 25th Dec	10am	Christmas Family Worship Coffee and mince pies from 9.30am

LOVE IN A BOX

We managed to collect 126 boxes this year which is a fantastic achievement and mainly due to the hard work that Carol Tucker and her friend Barbara Gale put into the project. The Mustard Seed Mission Charity is run by Lisa Smart and it was her son who arrived to pick up all our boxes and another 63 from Mary Magdalene Church. David had left Eastbourne at 4.30am in the large van to drive firstly to Coventry, then Leicester etc. before getting to us around 1.30pm. He then had one more pick up to make in Hertfordshire before returning to the warehouse where volunteers will unload the van while he goes home to bed!

David told Jenny & I that the charity had moved to a cheaper warehouse to save on rental costs which meant they could use larger trucks for volunteers to drive over to Moldova where the boxes can be stored until nearer to Christmas. The first truck was due to set off in the next few days.

So a huge thankyou to everyone who contributed in any way to help the children who will receive our boxes to enjoy a very happy Christmas. Thank you all!

Ann Meers



Interfaith Group launches new membership scheme

Our local interfaith group, WHIFG, just launched their new membership scheme to encourage many more affiliates in the borough.

WHIFG Charitable Aims

The promotion of religious harmony for the benefit of the public through:

- Promoting discussions for understanding
- Recognising the importance of spirituality
- Bringing a faith perspective to bear in civic affairs
- Supporting faith groups in their social action

'Increasing Dialogue and Peace'

People of goodwill who are in agreement with the group's aims are invited to pay an annual subscription of just £10. Membership forms are available from Wendy (tel 07904 517384), along with more information about interfaith activities and other ways to take part. Please think about subscribing, and mention it to other people.

The photos show students dressing up with Dina, one of our trained schools' visitors at the Freshers' Fair in September.



Annual Report: Autumn 2018

Children Families and Youth at WGCURC

During the year our mid-week network of young families has continued to expand, reflected in growth at Breakfast Church, and supported by a few more volunteers. Our groups provide much needed activities for many families in a friendly environment – three groups most weeks.

We have also begun to discuss more clearly the big challenge we face: how to develop a critical mass of worshipping parents and children in our church on Sundays, when listening reflective worship and young children do not readily mix? Especially now some of those who were coming on Sundays in 2017 have moved away. And so we embarked on a journey of 'Family-Friendly' experiments....

For April's 'At-Home' discussion morning, we plotted on the spoke-wheel picture all regular groups at our premises. This showed Under12s present at about 1/3 of them. (Yes, there are invariably school children at Slimming World(!) besides our own groups). But teens-25s were largely absent. A youthclub is still beyond the reach of our current volunteer base, so it has been good to have teens on the premises at occasional events especially this summer.

Thanks to our **CYF Steering Group** – Jane, Joyce, Ann Meers, Derek Groves and Allison Giles - who continue to debate families' needs, support me and set priorities. We have done well against targets set in our one-page strategy for 2017-18.

Our mid-week network of groups continues with weekly Baby Group and Chatter and Tots, and fortnightly Parents and Tiddlers and Breakfast Church. All groups are well supported and have been promoted by the Childrens' Centres.

Although Baby Sing and Sign moved to a cheaper venue, we still let a hall to Pregnancy Yoga, and groups with young children, including this year to Homestart's invitation-only toddler group who are glad to share our toys. The Childrens' Corner is also well used by children accompanying parents to Slimming World and Zumba.

Breakfast Church turned 3 years old in May. We currently have 15 families attending regularly, plus other visitors, with children aged from 6 months to 9yrs, and occasional teenagers. Now most of the children who joined in 2015/6 have started school, it has been great to see new people coming with toddlers, several of whom know each other through our mid-week groups.

Thanks to Phillip and Sandra who host with me once a month, to Margaret K and Waly who help me host the other session each month, and to John D who often helped until July. Family life is busy, so few of our families make every fortnight.

Attendance is growing as follows:

Stats: Breakfast church

May 15 to April 2016	met 17 times, averaging 4.4 families
	Including helpers, we were on average 16.9 people
May 16 to April 2017	met 19 times, averaging 3.5 families – 13.5 people
May 17 to August 2017	met 7 times, averaging 5.7 families – 19.9 people
Sep 17 to August 2018	met 18 times averaging 6.2 families – 21.7 people

The largest Breakfast Church congregation was 43 people on October 20th 2018 (11 families), and there were 37 on May 5th (10 families). During summer we have made great use of the garden to soak up some energy and noise, and since September are using both Lower and Main Halls.

Junior church were thrilled to begin September 2017 with 7 families participating on Sundays (though never on the same day). Sadly, at October 2018 we know 3 of these have moved away, so junior church in 2018 has often been down to one or two children. Nonetheless, we held the first 3 sessions of discipleship for teens upstairs on first Sundays, whilst hosting younger children downstairs - fielding 4 leaders on the same day! Big thanks to our loyal team, of Allison, Matthew, Derek and Ann. It remains difficult to plan the rota when all of them also support Sunday morning worship in other ways: including Vestry rota, Coffee rota,

Readers rota, Projection, Welcome rota, Flower distribution, not to mention the Worship Team. Perhaps there are other church members who could share this load? The Roots material continues to assist leaders in bringing lessons and inspiration from the bible, flexibly for different ages. And thanks to worship leaders for providing 15 minutes of Family-Friendly worship in every church service – this has been much appreciated.

We again ran **Holiday Club** at half-terms for ages 5 to 11, slightly fewer sessions than in 2017, welcoming 9 different children during the year, six from Breakfast church. In the two hour morning, it is great to explore a bible theme in detail. Thanks to our helpers this year: Allison, Derek, Margaret K, and Christine.

Our **Family-Friendly** Sundays between March and August enabled us to invite some families with toddlers to worship with the main congregation, besides older children. 23 different children joined us for one or more of these services led by Wendy. So now we have agreed a follow-up experiment. Between January and June 2019, once a month the Family-Friendly service will be at 10am before a Conventional Service at 11am. It was good to consult on this proposal with a questionnaire and receive the support of the church meeting, along with their affirmed aspiration to be 'all age' church. And we recognised that multiple congregations may develop which do not necessarily worship together nor 'integrate'. We hope shared coffee time will assist with networking on 'two-service' Sundays to contribute to the shared identity and fellowship of WGCURC. The first dates are Jan 13th and Feb 10th and March 10th.

Also, on Sunday October 14th 2018 we enjoyed a Family Friendly Harvest Festival including 13 children, most of whom stayed for the yummy soup and snacks lunch.

Teens and Twenties

Last autumn, we were glad to encourage a group of young men(18+) to start a table-top games club on Monday evenings, and hope they manage to keep going. In December, Christine welcomed an enquiry to bring Stanborough School's Christmas concert to our Main Hall, and during the summer Liz and Jane have hosted two groups of teen volunteers from the

National Citizenship Scheme: each time 14 young people have volunteered their skills – in our garden, and painting the Quiet Room and adjacent lobby. We were also impressed by 267Project's Kindness event in June when teens offered carwash and cream teas on a Saturday at our site and took giveaway flowers out into the town centre. And we have sometimes welcomed teens on Sundays and at Breakfast church. (teen discipleship – see Junior Church).

Social events hosting families included the Macmillan tea-party, Harvest lunch, November fayre, January BirdWatch and Summer BBQ. And we were thrilled to see 9 families for our Young Families Christmas Special, along with 9 helpers. And 5 families when the Dad's played volleyball on a hot Sunday in August. Further improvements to the garden have been a particular blessing.

Whisper Interfaith Project

Wendy has again been co-ordinating **Whisper** (Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Schools Peace Education Resources) which has enabled 2200 children to experience a faith visitor in the school-day in the year since Sep 2017. We still have strategic backing from the Herts SACRE (county RE committee, Wendy attends twice a year) and also now from the Borough Council who awarded us £2000.

Look up our facebook blog via the church website with details about our lessons, assemblies and the Peace Room we again took to the borough's Crucial Crew event for teens in March. During the year, faith visits to schools have been arranged for Julian (Buddhist), Dina (Hindu), Maryam (Shia muslim) and Berdakh (Sunni muslim), Reynold (Jewish) and Sukhmanjit (Sikh). Wendy often accompanies the visitors, and also gives christian lessons. We had a few visits with primary schools, and held a 'Twilight' teachers meeting here at WGCURC to encourage more bookings, in conjunction with SARRETT (the St Albans RE teachers network). And we included more secondary schools with assemblies about the Holocaust, and Question and Answer sessions for year 10 comparing approaches to Crime and Punishment in 3 different faiths. For January 2019, Wendy is working with the borough to organise a bigger HMD event in WGC for schools.

Wendy also attended most meetings of The InterFaith Group committee, and helped them to hold stalls at the university Freshers' Fayre, WGC Healthfest, Hatfield World Culture Day, and in Hatfield library. We have agreed to branch out from the dialogue events which largely attract retired people and see what we may do for working people and families. Our first tea party in April at WGCURC included 5 families, and our storytelling event with Khayaal theatre company on a Sunday afternoon in June attracted 60 adults and 20 children – covering costs too!

The evening meetings and other events are always interesting and help everyone to deepen their (own) faith. WHIFG – Interfaith Group - is run by a lovely group of friends and if anyone from church would like to participate in any way please speak to Wendy or look out for the posters. From October 2018, Wendy has been elected IFG Chairman, too.

Many, many thanks to everyone who gives financially, with their time and energy, and in prayer, and in caring for our church to enable this work. I'm excited to see what more God may do!

Wendy Lidgate October 2018

KNIT AND NATTER. A very big thank you to all the ladies in the knit and natter group. We meet twice a month, which is only 24 times a year, but the work produced belies that as everybody works at home in between the meetings.



We have made so many items this year, from 100 of each hats, gloves, scarves and teddies for the shoe boxes. Many twiddle muffs and numerous soft toys for the Christmas Fair stall, including 2 hand-knitted nativity sets. We must offer our thanks here to Alan, who has made two stables to complete the nativity scenes and to John, who has donated a dolls house to add to our craft stall.

To all of you I wish you a very happy Christmas and the best of health in the New Year. Jean

Family Worship



Come to our family worship

At 10am

On January 13th

February 10th & March 10th

Playtime and refreshments for all

From 10.30am

Traditional Service

At 11am

On January 13th

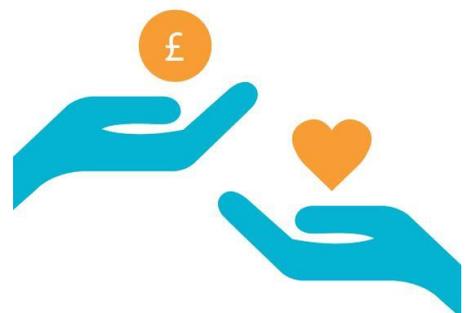
February 10th & March 10th

Coffee will be served at 10.30 and then

again after the service

Thanksgiving

This is an opportunity to give thanks for our blessings and to thank everyone for their generosity over the year. Church life depends on us all for our financial contribution to sustain our Ministry and Mission. We see generosity all around us – we can see the fruits of our generosity in the good order of the building and the work we already do and give thanks for the ongoing support of our volunteers who give their time freely to support our worship and the groups running during the week. Without our volunteers we could not sustain church life as it is today. We see it in the donation of goods to support our events - Harvest, Food bank, Gift Sunday, Christmas Fayre,



**Giving to
the Church**

Love in a Box supported by the work of Knit and Natter to name a few. The church also supports charities - among them the local Isabel Hospice and globally Christian Aid and last Christmas's Rohingya appeal.

How our Giving makes a difference

Our Giving and other income provides the finances to send our contribution to the URC to support the wider Ministry and Mission. In addition, the monies given allows us to support the exciting work with the Children and Families and with our Outreach Mission work now and in the future. The United Reformed Church Synod provides a grant for this work and the shortfall per year of over £12,000 is covered by our Sunday giving and by pledges for the Children, Youth and Family work.

The costs in keeping our premises maintained, insured, cleaned and for the utilities is about £30,000 per year which is part of our commitment to provide space for varied community groups to meet. Our goal is to further develop our church as a Christian Community Hub which will allow us to provide more facilities for the community and for working with our partners. We also aim to set aside monies for our future growth and development.

How to support the Church

Jesus teaches that Giving should be:

- **A priority** – not just spare change after all other needs have been satisfied
- **Prayerful** – an act of worship and thanksgiving
- **Planned** – but allowing spontaneous generosity
- **Proportionate** – a realistic proportion of our income
- **Given in community** – for a common purpose for a communal need
- **Sacrificial** – there is a cost to our giving – less to spend on ourselves. Those who have more to give will give more.
- **Not just about money** – but also how we use our time, talents, gifts and possessions that God has entrusted to us so that our living starts to resemble the overflowing generosity of God
- **Cheerful and joyful** – Whether time, money or hospitality we give with grace, from the heart as an offering to God

To help us grow our work then please consider your current giving and your plans. Would you like to give to specific area of church work e.g. our

Children and Family Work or our Mission and Community Work - if so then please discuss this with the Treasurer. All discussions are confidential.

Our current project for the building this year is supporting the Window Fund to replace the large windows in the Main church with new double-glazed ones. A gift for the Fabric of the church is always appreciated.

We can provide several secure ways to donate. Many of you use the envelopes which are dated for each Sunday in the year as a way of making your offering towards the work of the Church. They are a useful way of keeping track of your giving and perhaps make you think more about regular giving rather than just putting something in the plate as and when you are in Church. The boxes of envelopes run from January each year but we always have some spares which can be taken up at any time during the year. Anyone who does not already use these envelopes but who might like to start using them only needs to be speak to the Treasurer, one of the Elders or Mary Sartin.

Regular or one-off giving can be done using bank transfer or a standing order to the church account allowing Gift Aid to be claimed. If paying by cheque make it payable to Welwyn Garden City United Reformed Church and send to the Office address c/o Treasurer. Please contact the Treasurer for further details about standing orders and ways to donate.

As well as financially then please consider what you can give of your time. We have several active Church groups which need more volunteers to sustain them e.g the Children groups including Breakfast church , Community Café. There is always an opportunity to support Church life – e.g. to help with the maintenance of the Building and Grounds, Administration and Finance to name some examples.

Gift Aid

Again, many of you will be aware of this scheme and take advantage of it if you are able. The big plus of this scheme is that for every £1 given to the Church we can claim 25p back from HMRC. The only criteria are that you have to be a UK taxpayer and you have to have signed the necessary declaration form. The only person who has knowledge of information relating to this is the Confidential Registrar whose job it is to

keep records of monies paid to the Church, be it through the envelope scheme, by standing orders or specific gifts. Mary Sartin is our current Confidential Registrar and she has the task of submitting returns to HMRC to claim back the 25% on all gift aided offerings.

Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme

This is another way in which the taxman will actually give us a little extra money. This scheme was only brought in a few years ago and there is always the uncertainty of when it might be withdrawn. It allows the Church to submit returns to HMRC for any cash gifts which are collected within our building. Each individual gift can be no more than £20 at any one time but it does mean that Sunday morning collections of loose money can be included as can money in envelopes where the holder of that envelope is not themselves able to sign an individual Gift Aid declaration form.

How you can make a lasting gift to our church.

It is always a great encouragement whenever someone leaves a gift in his or her will to our Church.

It's their testimony to the faithfulness, goodness and generosity of God and their thankfulness for the life of WGC URC.

I want to encourage everyone in our church family, old and young to make a will, review it regularly, and consider the difference a gift in your will could make.

Many people give regularly to the mission and ministry of the church. We are stewards of everything we own, not just our income and gifts in wills are a natural part of that giving.

They are a valuable and lasting way to invigorate the life of WGCURC and transform its future. We welcome all gifts in wills, however large or small, and we promise to use your gift to make a difference in our church. We have been fortunate to receive such generous gifts in the past.

A gift in your will can be an expression of your gratitude and thanksgiving towards God, and can help keep your local church alive, and transform its future.

The Elders have written a Legacy Policy confirming that, however large or small, they will use your gift to make a real difference to our church.

The policy is to use gifts in wills to help fund significant development projects in the future. Since needs change over the years, we encourage church members to leave a gift in your will for the general purposes of the church, rather than for a restricted purpose.

The Treasurer will discuss with executors the most appropriate use of the gift in the light of current projects and the donor's known areas of interest in the church (e.g. children and youth, music, buildings).

We encourage everyone to take these 3 easy steps:

- 1) Make a will and review it regularly.
- 2) Consider leaving a gift to our church.
- 3) talk to the treasurer for more information.

Suggested wording for your will:

“ I give ___ % of my residuary estate

OR

I give the sum of £___ (pounds only) free of all taxes to Welwyn Garden City United Reformed Church for its general purposes, and I declare that the receipt from the Treasurer of WGCURC shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors and trustees.”

“LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.”

With thanks

For more information contact:

Helen Kaye – Treasurer 01707 322464

Mary Sartin – Confidential Registrar 01279 793 050

LOVE IN A BOX

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So a huge thankyou to everyone who contributed in any way to help the children who will receive our boxes to enjoy a very happy Christmas. Thank you all!

Ann Meers



CHURCH FAMILY CORNER

My Family Corner for the last magazine got lost so apologies to all those birthday people who missed a mention in our October/November edition.

However, we should still send congratulations to Thomas D. who celebrated his 18th birthday on 4th October. On reaching this milestone, youngsters these days are more likely to be given driving lessons than the key of the door!

Also missing a mention last month was Charlie and as I am typing this on 15th November, his 5th birthday, we send greetings and hope he enjoyed his special day.

So on to our December birthdays. First on the list is Melva S. on 3rd, followed by Margaret Br. On 4th, Roger S. on 5th, Philip R. on 7th, Muriel M. on 15th (101!) and Howell W. on 29th.

Moving on to January, first up is Ivy S. On 13th, followed by Rory F. who will be 12 on 16th and Linda S. on 20th.

We hope all our friends will enjoy their special days when they come round and we send them all our very best wishes.

Now other news!

Wale's son, DeeDee, is going to Nottingham University to study Industrial Economics (and play rugby too!) Good Luck, DeeDee!

The twins, Howard and Alexander, have now moved into the Reception Class at Templewood School, Charlie is also in Reception and Jonathan is now in Year 2 at their respective schools. How time flies! We hope they are all enjoying the new school year.

We send congratulations to Margaret Basch's granddaughter, Rachel, who will be getting married to Max on 1st December at St. Francis church.

At our recent Church Meeting, we were very touched to hear that Don Bull is funding the cost of our 4th replacement window in memory of Pam, his wife for nearly 59 years until her recent death. Thank you, Don, for this very appropriate memorial to Pam.

We were sorry to hear that Etta had broken both her wrists a while back but after a lot of physiotherapy I am very pleased to report that she was back in church last Sunday as was Margaret Christie after her hip replacement. We are very pleased to see you both back in church now. Keep doing the exercises!!

Also needing to keep up the exercises is Cherylle who has at last had her hip replacement operation and is now home recuperating. We send our good wishes to Cherylle for a speedy return to fitness.

We also send our good wishes to Howell who has been in hospital for a hernia operation. We hope you are feeling better now, Howell.

Please continue to remember those who are in special need of our prayers at this time, including Laura and Sophie, and pass on any other concerns to Jane, Joyce, Liz or your Elders.

Thank you.

Ann Meers, on behalf of our church Pastoral Care Friends.

Our partnership with Sainsbury's has allowed us to provide the much needed donations for existing community projects, donations to various charities and donations to local schools. Ian from the New Zion Christian Fellowship Food Bank has been able to collect several carloads full of donations and we have also been able to donate food to YMCA Youth workers, who do wonderful missionary work with the WGC and Hatfield Youth. The fresh produce we receive we share with everyone who



attends the Community Coffee Morning and the Cellar Group with the rest of the donations used for Tuesday Lunches and Thursday Cellar Dinners.



Our Community Cafe' and Lunch Time Discussion Group continue to grow from strength to strength with the help from all our lovely volunteers who are very supportive.

We were delighted to receive a cheque for £215 from Waitrose recently. I applied for nomination for the Waitrose Community Matters Project and we were chosen for the month of September. Thank you to all who dropped their green tokens in the Waitrose box. These proceeds will be used towards the upkeep of our Community Garden.

What's on in WGC at Christmas 2018:

Singing in the Howard Centre - Saturday 1 December between 3-4pm
Carol Service outside the Howard Centre - Thursday 20 December at 6.30pm

Canterbury Pilgrimage

The Churches in WGC are planning a pilgrimage to Canterbury on 15 June 2019. They hope to fill 3 coaches and the anticipated cost will be £20 per person.

Itinerary:

- Busses leave WGC at 8.30 am
- Church Service at 10.30 am
- Guided tour at 11.30 am
- Picnic Lunch afterwards
- Even Song at 3.30pm
- Busses leave at 7pm

God Bless,

Liz

Christmas Fayre Round up

I am extremely grateful to each and everyone for your help and support in the run up and on the day. It would take several pages to name everyone but I would like to offer my special thanks to:-

Michael for all his hard work setting up the Fayre and Grotto, then dismantling everything and setting up the Church in preparation for Sunday Worship.

Shaun for assisting with the preparations and clearing away on the day.

However my personal star on the day is Melvyn Deans who must have had washer woman's hands after standing in the kitchen washing and drying dishes for the duration of the Fayre. You were greatly appreciated by everyone working in the kitchen and serving teas.

There was a real buzz in our church on Saturday with so many people from our local community supporting our Fayre. The children enjoyed Millie's Madness, Father Christmas and the various children's activities.

All the other stalls and activities recorded amazing takings and their final totals will be found on the spreadsheet.

I do think it is worth a mention that Catering totalled one 5th of the total profit raised on the day totalling £500.09 with costs of a mere £42.

We share the profit equally between Isabel Hospice and our Church Window Fund so both will receive £1,177 as a result of your efforts.

Thank you one and all as our success is the result of your hard work, donations, and commitment.

Joyce

List of what each stall took, after the prizes etc have been deducted. Well done to all.

Catering and Refreshments	£308.59	Face Painting	£41.00
Teas and Coffees	£191.50	Father Christmas	£150.00
Door	£139.85	Plants and Garden Items	£181.05
Raffle	£286.10	Children's Crafts	£22.00
Preserves	£171.00	Tombola	£137.00
Crafts	£277.60	Children's Card Game	£26.40
Christmas Bits & Bobs	£72.41	Stall Holders	£10.00
Bric-a-Brac	£106.90	Hospice boxes	£14.81
Pick - a - Bottle	£121.20	Books	£93.71
Home Baking	£85.40	Totals	£2,595.62
Children's Toys	£47.70		
Sky's stall	£25.90		
Jewellery and Nic Nacs	£85.50		

Advent Message 2018

The colourful autumn leaves and beautiful scenery fill us with wonder. They will slowly give way to cold bleak winter. Four seasons remind us of God's desire for change, diversity and rebirth.

Farming, fishery, food supply and small businesses face uncertainty while Brexit talks reach their height. The conflict within and between certain nations sees no end. Children suffer with malnutrition, unclean water and abuse. The need for foodbanks in the UK continues to rise.

We are called to share the good news of the Gospel in this context. The Great Commandment of Matt 28 is often read as discipling individuals. However, discipling the nations includes the free global market, politics, justice systems, re-distribution of wealth and care for the environment. What a challenge to disciple some of these faceless powers!

A band of 12 with the authority of the risen Christ set out to change the world. We do not lose hope of being God's chosen instrument in making a difference. We are not defeated until we accept defeat. In the Thames North Synod, we make small beginnings and one-degree shifts that ultimately lead to cultural change.

I have witnessed good news on my visits. A joyful event held recently at St Andrew's Borehamwood demonstrated that the closure of the church building will be a new beginning to engage in mission with Chesterfield Road church. New premises for Adeyfield, still under construction in the heart of Hemel Hempstead town centre, are stunning. The congregation is geared up to give all it must to share God's love in the community. I have been amazed at how the churches in the Local Area Groups support and care for one another. I look forward to all our congregations engaging with the Discipleship and Stepwise initiatives in 2019.

The URC is a rich Church but behaves like a poor one; a strong church but behaves as though weak. Yes, we are like fragile clay pots, but we have spiritual treasure which comes from God. According to an Indian parable, the branches of a tree loaded with fruit lowers humbly and accessibly down to the ground, but a fruitless tree stands tall in pride. Our belief in God-incarnate reminds us of Christ-like humility. The fruits of the Spirit make us humble.

A family good news! Many of you have been praying for Jennifer (our daughter-in-law) who suffered serious illness. She is out of danger, improved and is stable. Thanks to God and to you for your prayers.

May, in this Advent season, the love of God prevail so that no one feels lonely or sleeps without food, water or a warm bed, and may the hope burning within us take away all of our doubts!

The peace of Emmanuel (God with us) and the melody of angels be yours in this advent season!

Andrew Prasad (Rev Dr)

Moderator

The URC Thames North Synod

Can you make the tea on Wednesday afternoon?

Baby Group has been popular this term, with twelve or more Mums and their babies along on many Wednesday afternoons.

If any of the ladies could spare an hour to make cups of tea for the group between 2pm and 3pm on some Wednesdays it would be much appreciated. (Prepare a trolley in the kitchen, then serve a drink to everyone in the Main Hall, and wash up afterwards).

God Bless, Wendy tel 07904 517384

CHURCH DIARY DECEMBER 2018

Saturday 1 st	10.30-11.30am	Breakfast Church
Sunday 2 nd	10.30-11.30am Advent Sunday 4.00-4.30pm	Advent Sunday Gift Service with Communion led by Jane Pet Service
Tuesday 4 th	10-12noon 12.30-2pm 7.00pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group Elders
Wednesday 5 th	1.30-3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 6 th	9.30-11.30am 11.30am 2 – 4pm 4.15-6pm 8pm-9pm	Chatter'n Tots Staff Meeting Thursday Club Cellar Exploring the Bible at Sanjays
Friday 7 th	10am 2.00pm	Decorate the Church for Christmas Parents & Tiddlers
Saturday 8 th		SYNOD
Sunday 9 th	10.30-11.30am	Morning Worship led by Martin McPhee
Tuesday 11 th	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 12 th	10-12 noon 1.30-3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Knit n Natter Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 13 th	9.30-11.30am 1.00pm 4.15-6pm 8pm-9pm	Chatter'n Tots Thursday Club Christmas Lunch Cellar Exploring the Bible at Sanjays
Friday 14 th	10.00-11.30am 2.00pm	Exploring the Bible Parents & Tiddlers

Saturday 15 th	10.00-11.30am	Breakfast Church WGC Male Voice Choir Carol Service
Sunday 16 th	10.30am Fellowship Lunch 3.30pm	Morning Worship led by the Woship Goup WGC Family Christmas Special
Tuesday 18 th	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 19 th WGC	1.30-3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 20 th WGC	11.30am 4.15-6.00pm 8pm-9.00pm	CYF Steering Cellar Exploring the Bible at Sanjays
Friday 21 st WGC	10am 6-9.00pm	Setting up for Carols by Candlelight & Longest Night Longest Night
Sunday 23 rd WGC No Morning Service	3.30pm 4.30pm	Coffee & Mince Pies Carols by Candlelight
Monday 24 th Christmas Eve	11.30pm	Christmas Eve Midnight Service including Communion
Tuesday 25 th Christmas Day	10.00am	Christmas Day Service led by Jane
Thursday 27 th	4.15-6pm	Cellar
Sunday 30 th	10.30am	Joint with Harpenden & Wheathampstead @WGC Led by Jane

December dates Jane will be available at WGC (Subject to change)

1st, 2nd, 7th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 30th

CHURCH DIARY JANUARY 2019

Wednesday 2 nd WGC	1.30-3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 3 rd WGC	9.30-11.30am 11.30am 4.15-6pm 8pm-9pm	Chatter'n Tots Staff Meeting Cellar Exploring the Bible at Sanjays
Friday 4 th WGC	10.00	Dismantle and pack away Christmas Decor
Saturday 5 th	10.00-3.00pm	Elders' Planning Day
Sunday 6 th WGC	10.30-11.30am	Morning Worship including Communion led by Jane
Tuesday 8 th	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 9 th	10.00 -12 noon 1.30-3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Knit n Natter Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 10 th	9.30-11.30am 4.15-6pm 8pm-9pm	Chatter'n Tots Cellar Exploring the Bible at Sanjays
Friday 11 th	10.00-11.30am 2pm	Exploring the Bible Parents & Tiddlers
Saturday 12 th	10.00am	Worship Team Meeting
Sunday 13 th	10.00 am- 10.45 am 11am – 12 noon	Family Friendly Service led by Wendy Morning Worship
Tuesday 15 th	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 16 th	1.30-3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 17 th	9.30-11.30am 2-4pm 4.15-6pm 8pm-9pm	Chatter'n Tots Thursday Club Cellar Exploring the Bible at Sanjays

Friday 18 th	10 am 7.30pm	Exploring the Bible Winter Ball
Saturday 19 th	10 – 11.30am	Breakfast Church
Sunday 20 th	10.30am Fellowship Lunch	Morning Worship led by the Worship Group
Tuesday 22 nd	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 23 rd	10.00 -12 noon 1.30-3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Knit n Natter Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 24 th WGC	9.30-11.30am 4.15-6pm 8pm-9pm	Chatter'n Tots Cellar Exploring the Bible at Sanjays
Friday 25 th WGC	10.00-11.30am 2pm	Exploring the Bible Parents & Tiddlers
Saturday 26 th	10am – 12 noon	Big Garden BirdWatch
Sunday 27 th WGC	10.30am 11.45am	All Together Worship Church Meeting
Tuesday 29 th WGC	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group Jane Ministers' Conference
Wednesday 30 th WGC	1.30-3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry Jane Ministers' Conference
Thursday 31 st WGC	9.30-11.30am 4.15-6pm 8pm-9pm	Chatter 'n Tots Cellar Exploring the Bible at Sanjays Jane Ministers' Conference

January dates Jane will be available at WGC (Subject to change)

2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 24th, 25th, 27th, 29th, 30th, 31st



What is the tradition behind Boxing Day?

There are a number of stories behind the origin of the term 'Boxing Day'. It used to be customary for employers to give their employees or servants a gift of money or food in a small box on this day. This is still customary for people who deliver letters or newspapers, although the gift may be given before Christmas Day. In feudal times, the lord of the manor would gather all those who worked on his land together on this day and distribute boxes of practical goods, such as agricultural tools, food and cloth. This was payment for the work that they had done throughout the passed year.

Other stories relate to servants being allowed to take a portion of the food left over from the Christmas celebrations in a box to their families and the distribution of alms from the Church collection box to poor parishioners. These traditions have evolved into the Christmas hampers that many large employers distribute, although these are now often distributed in the week before Christmas.

We still give people Christmas Boxes especially sending shoe boxes full of gifts through 'Love in a box' to children who have nothing.



What To Give An Optimist And A Pessimist

-- Funny Christmas Stories --

A family had twin boys whose only resemblance to each other was their looks. If one felt it was too hot, the other thought it was too cold. If one said the TV was too loud, the other claimed the volume needed to be turned up. Opposite in every way, one was an eternal optimist, the other a doom and gloom pessimist.

Just to see what would happen, at Christmas time their father loaded the pessimist's room with every imaginable toy and game. The optimist's room he loaded with horse manure.

That night the father passed by the pessimist's room and found him sitting amid his new gifts crying bitterly.

"Why are you crying?" the father asked.

"Because my friends will be jealous, I'll have to read all these instructions before I can do anything with this stuff, I'll constantly need batteries, and my toys will eventually get broken." answered the pessimist twin.

Passing the optimist twin's room, the father found him dancing for joy in the pile of manure. "What are you so happy about?" he asked.

To which his optimist twin replied, "There's got to be a pony in here somewhere!"

What's on in the Church

December / January 2019

Group Name	Day	Time
Welwyn Garden Craft Club (2 nd Mon)	Mon	2pm - 4pm
Strong Zumba	Mon	4.15pm-5.15pm
Men's Games Club	Mon	7pm - 10pm
Hatfield Tai Chi	Mon	7pm - 9pm
Pregnancy Yoga	Mon	7.30pm - 9pm
HomeStart Parent & Toddler Group	Tues	10am - 12noon
Community Coffee Morning	Tues	10am - 12noon
Lunchtime Discussion Group	Tues	12.30pm - 2pm
Slimming World	Tues	3.30pm, 5.30pm, 7.30pm
CBT Skills Group	Tues	5.30pm - 7.30pm
Knit and Natter (2 nd & 4 th Wed)	Wed	10am - 12noon
Carers in Herts (3 rd Wed)	Wed	12noon - 2pm
AA Meeting	Wed	12.30pm-1.30pm
Baby Group	Wed	1.30pm - 3.30pm
Zumba	Wed	4.15pm-5.15pm
NHS Carers (1 st Wed)	Wed	6pm - 7.30pm
Somewhere2sing	Wed	7pm-9pm
Christian Meditation	Wed	7.30pm - 8.30pm
Pregnancy Yoga	Wed	7.30pm - 9pm
Chatter & Tots	Thurs	9.30am - 11.15am
Thursday Club Social Group for 50+ (1 st & 3 rd Thurs)	Thurs	2pm - 4pm
Cellar Club - Food for the Homeless & Vulnerable	Thurs	4.15pm - 6.30pm
Slimming World	Thurs	5 - 9pm
WGC Folk Dance Club	Thurs	8pm - 10pm
Trefoil Guild (2 nd Thurs)	Thurs	8pm -10pm
Explore The Bible & Prayer Group	Fri	10am - 11.30am
Start to do Art	Fri	1pm - 2pm
Parent & Tiddlers (2 nd & 4 th Fri)	Fri	2pm - 3.30pm
Archaeological Society (1 st & 3 rd Fri)	Fri	8pm - 10pm
Breakfast Church (1 st & 3 rd Sat)	Sat	10am - 11.30am
Tea Dance (1 st Sat)	Sat	2pm - 4pm
Chiltern West Gallery Quire (2 nd Sat)	Sat	2pm - 5pm
Worship Service	Sun	10.30am - 12noon

Please be aware that some of the groups do not run during December. Please contact the office on 01707 333326 or Liz Laing or community and mission coordinator for further details