

Welwyn Garden City, Harpenden and Wheathampstead United Reformed Churches Magazine



June & July 2024

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you.

How many of us ever take the time to count our blessings? How often do we spend time thinking about, and giving thanks for, the things that God has done in our lives?

I would hazard a guess that, while there are probably some people who regularly recognise the blessings that come from God and thank Him for them, there are many more people who don't think about such things on a regular basis. Not because any of us actively decide to forego thanking God for His goodness, but simply because, if we're not careful, we can, all too easily, slip into a position where we take the things in our lives that are good, those blessings of God, for granted, and forget to give thanks for them.

We need to get into the habit of recognising the blessings of God and thanking Him for them, and we need to do so all through the times and seasons of our lives when things are going well. We need to do this so that the habit becomes part of our lives. Then, when difficult times come upon us, we will not find it such a struggle to see the blessings of God shining through the darkness of the cloud that is enveloping us.

*When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God has done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

This quote is the first verse and chorus to an old hymn; a hymn in which

each of the verses encourage us to focus on the blessings of God amidst the struggles of life, and then the chorus continues to reinforce that message after each verse.

Focusing on the blessings that God pours out on us is a good thing for us to do, for we all know that we cannot escape hardship or difficulty. We will all find ourselves in a hard and dark place at some point in our lives, for that is the reality of life as we currently know it. Yet we can begin to cope better with such difficulties when we are able to recognise God's continued presence in our lives. He will never leave us nor forsake us, for the truth is that He will walk beside us and carry us when we are unable to take another step.


We should take the words of encouragement that Paul writes to the Thessalonians as our guide:

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

[1 Thes. 5:16-18]

May we seek to rejoice, pray and, above all else, give thanks to our generous God.

In His name,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Paul', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Allison's Admin
(instead of Secretary's Notes)

Normal service will return once Joyce is fighting fit, but until then I'm afraid your stuck with me!

Thankfully, Joyce is doing well and although still in some pain, is managing to do more and get about better. She would like to thank everyone for their prayers and wishes, cards and visits.

I personally would like to think that this has made several of us realise that we can not continue to do things in the same way as we always have, and not rely on someone always being there to pick the slack up. We have all relied on Joyce in the past and it is now time for us to see where we can share the work and actually lessen it in some places. Thankfully some people have taken more on, but, now for the really tricky part..... getting Joyce to agree!!

I too would like to make a few thank you's. The first go to Mary Bedford for stepping up and helping me to run Thursday Club, Joyce Deans and Linda Sutton for continuing to make the refreshments and collecting people and Hazel for offering to do a music quiz for the next meeting. It has been wonderful to see people pulling together to keep this important group going.

My second round of thank you's are to the Read family. Once again, we all enjoyed a fabulous quiz night with the questions devised by Matthew and the raffle and setting up by Philip and Sandra. We all had a fun evening and £327 was raised for the building fund. The next one will be in October, so please consider joining us, as it really is an excellent evening.....especially if you are on the winning team and carry off a large bar of dairy milk chocolate!

The spring Pop up Fayre was on Saturday 25th May and we raised £502.45p. Many thanks to everyone that manned a stall, donated items, manned the car park and came along to support. We were blessed with fine weather, which made a huge difference to previous years.

I will be looking for volunteers to man a charity car park for the vintage festival on Saturday 22nd June. If we have enough volunteers, this should only mean pairs of people doing an hour at a time. If you feel this is something you could help with, please let me know.

Dates for your Diary

Church meeting Sunday 9th June – Papers will be sent out prior, and some paper copies will be available.

Male voice choir concert 29th June 7.30pm -Tickets are available form Robert. Please let him know if you are able to help serve tea and coffee

Joint service at Harpenden 30th June 10.30am – if you require transport , please let me know. Address is Vaughan Road, Harpenden, AL5 4ED

Time to remember tea 7th July 3pm. - Any offers of baking will be greatly appreciated.

Worship Café 14th July at 3pm

Thursday Club garden party 18th July – Offers of baking greatly appreciated.

I think this is all, but probably not! So please look out for other emails from me.

Allison.x (WGC)

Words of Jane Bower from Downing Place URC. As reported in the URC's magazine, Reform May 2024

This is part of Jane's response to the question 'What makes church thrive?'

- Step out of your comfort zone, well out if necessary
- Accept change for the better, even when it hurts
- Don't always try to fit people into roles – look at the gifts they have and use what God has put in front of you
- Play as well as work – relish social events, humour, food, music, drama
- Abandon things that aren't working
- Don't build the path and then get cross if people don't follow it. See where they need to walk and then pave those areas
- Learn from all others. There is no human from whom nothing can be learned
- Share feelings and problems candidly
- Forgive

Learn from Jesus, who forged changes, called unlikely people, and pulled them out of their comfort zone

Submitted by Wendy (WGC)

Wheathampstead News

Easter is very nearly forgotten by now and we have moved on past Ascension Day and celebrated Pentecost with our friends at Harpenden. All has gone well during this time although sadly our WCT outside Good Friday service was held in the church this year because of the weather forecast, which turned out to be wrong!

The Worship Room has been well used for meetings as well as our church services.

Church meetings include our own Elders meetings and we have welcomed other elders from WGC and Harpenden to a joint pastorate meeting. Wheathampstead is fairly central in the Heartland Group of Churches to which we belong ie St Albans and Luton and Dunstable and we three so the meetings tend to be held here. The larger joint meeting of all the churches in the Group was held recently to consider activities that we could do together so look out for those, details coming out in the future.

Eight of us attended the WGC Quiz Night and had an enjoyable evening wracking our brains and we were very grateful not to come last this time!

Our next Songs of Praise is on Sunday 21 July at 3pm so hopefully we will see some of you there. The singing is always amazing with an occasional rest for stories and prayers followed by tea and cake, not to be missed.

Jackie and Jane (Wheathampstead)

Mid-Week Worship at Harpenden

Communion Service

Led by Rev Martyn

At 10.30 am

6th June & 4th July

And on the following first Thursday of each month



Bible Study at Harpenden

2pm on the second Wednesday of each month

2pm on the fourth Thursday of each month

12 June, 27 June, 10 July, 25 July.

And the same pattern for each consequent month



**O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed...**

... and maybe you were one of the many lucky enough to see the Aurora Borealis in May – and possibly again later in the month. The lights appear due to a ‘solar wind’ streaming from the Sun’s surface and reacting with our magnetosphere. The coloured lights mostly appear regularly around the poles which is why we at our latitude don’t often get to see them.

Another ‘wonder of the universe’ was brought to our attention in 1990. On 14 February 1990 Voyager 1 was on a mission to explore our planetary neighbourhood for the fringes of the solar system. Carl Sagan the astronomer was on board and he requested the NASA commander to turn its camera for a last look at Earth. At this point Voyager 1 was 4 billion miles from Earth and the picture taken shows the Earth as a tiny point of light only 0.12 pixel in size. This picture was the most famous picture of Earth ever taken and became known as the ‘Pale Blue Dot’

On returning to Earth Sagan wrote the following:

‘Look again at that dot. That’s here. That’s home. That’s us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and



peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every 'superstar', every 'supreme leader', every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived here - on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.'

Sagan had much to say to the world regarding the security and frailty of life on the 'pale blue dot'. He stated that the issues relating to climate change have been highlighted by scientists for many decades but governments have been too slow to act. The problems were ignored by each generation, preferring to leave them for the next generation ... and so on. Now **we** face the 'crunch time' and although this generation is beginning to act targets are still a long way from being met.

There are so many wonders of the universe that are currently being revealed to us via pictures relayed by space exploration. There are so many wonders of our world revealed by televised programmes that we can feel moved to sing:

**Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, how great Thou art.**

Vivienne Kendall (Wheathampstead)



Back in 2019 Jean Hughes and I thought it would improve the Church Magazine if it included occasional profiles of congregation members, to help to know a little of others in the pews around them. To kick it off I did a bit about myself which appeared in the next magazine. Shortly thereafter our lovely Jean died and the plan fell into abeyance. Allison would like to start up the profiles again and I have offered to help by talking to anyone who is willing to write a few words themselves or, if you prefer, by talking to you and preparing it (preferably with your favourite picture).

I have a copy of what I did to show you how easy it is - but please approach me rather than waiting for a tap on your shoulder! Graham Daniels 01707 321053 or grahamdaniels4@virginmedia.com

Graham (WGC)

Faith and Light Tea – Sunday 5th May

Faith and Light is an ecumenical worship group in Harpenden for a mixed group of members: adults with learning disabilities, their families, carers and friends. Once a month the group meets at St John's Church Southdown for fellowship and worship, ending the afternoon with the all-important tea. On the 5th it was our church's turn to provide and serve the tea. I am very grateful to all the kind people who provided the delicious cakes for this occasion – I was overwhelmed by the response. Thank you all so much. Also, thanks to my family who always make themselves available to help serve the tea and wash-up. It is a very special, happy afternoon enjoyed by all those involved. Many thanks again for your support.

Bronwen Davis (Harpenden)

CHURCH FAMILY CORNER

The year is flying by and we are nearly into June already with a number of birthdays to mention. First on my list is Catherine H. who will be 90 on 5th, Paul Mc. on 13th, then Joanna D. on 19th, Ryan C. who will be 15 also on 19th, Liz L. (now living in Edinburgh) on 20th and last, but not least, Richard Raj. on 22nd.

Moving on to July, Michael C. on 1st, Tracey C. on 2nd, Norma C. on 8th, Jessica A. who will be 16 on 10th, Brian R. who will be 90 on 11th, David J. on 15th, Jenny R. on 22nd, and Matt R. on 24th.

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

If you are feeling left out and would like us to mention your birthday, anniversary or any other news, then please find me on a Sunday morning or contact Allison in the church office on 01707 333326 or email: officewgcurc@gmail.com.

We have 2 Wedding Anniversaries to celebrate in this edition,:-

* Melvyn & Joyce Deans' 60th Anniversary on 27th June

* Arthur & Rosemary Taylors' 52nd Anniversary on July 1st.

We send congratulations to both couples and hope they enjoy their special day when it comes round.

We were all very sorry to hear of the deaths of two more of our long-standing members recently, Fred Robinson and Irene Simpson. Ann & Fred had been married for 71 years and Irene & Roger for 70 years. We send our heartfelt condolences to both Ann and Roger and their families at this very sad time.

We are still praying for Scott, Jenny, Xander and Howard as Scott continues being cared for in the Lister hospital. He is now on a general ward and prayers are needed that his medical condition will improve so he can be transferred to QVM again for rehab without problems this time.

Please remember to pass on any other concerns to our minister, Martyn, an Elder or Pastoral Friend so that no one gets forgotten.

We thank God for all the Blessings we receive as members of our Church Family here in Welwyn Garden City.

Thank you, Ann Meers

Christian Aid

Each year, Christian Aid gives us an example of how they can transform the lives of people living in desperate need. This year, it is Aline Nibogora who lives in Makamba Province in Burundi where more than 70% of people live in poverty.

Aline experienced great cruelty from her violent husband who forced her to flee and prevented her from taking their children with her. He also turned the local community against her. Aline had to wander the streets asking anyone for a place to sleep and receiving insults and contempt.

What Aline needed was a small income so that she could start to build a life for herself and for her children with whom she longed to be re-united. Her life changed when she went to a community workshop run by trainers funded by Christian Aid. Her group learned how to borrow money and set up small businesses. As a result of support like ours, Aline was able to set up as a grocery wholesaler and eventually earned enough to rent a house. Her three eldest sons now live with her and can afford food, clothes and essential health care.

Our main giving to Christian Aid this year will again be sales of tickets for the concert by our friends the Welwyn Garden Male Voice Choir on 29 June at 7.30. (Tickets from me on 01707. 322339 except between 16 and 25 June when John Mortimer on 07395.671831 will kindly take over sales). But if you would like to make a donation now, I have Christian Aid envelopes and would be glad to give you one.

Robert Harvey (WGC)

A personal account from Sandra Read from Welwyn Garden City URC

Our Journey

A year has passed since daughter, Joanne (Jo) received the diagnosis of breast cancer. It was devastating news to her and all the family. She felt so well, and it was hard to believe such a small lump was life threatening.

The hardest thing that she had ever had to do was to break the news of her cancer to the children - Jessica aged 15, and Luke 12 years old.

Jo's long locks of fair hair were all cut off in readiness for her chemotherapy, which she called the "Red Devils" as the transfused liquid is red.

The side effects were really grim and restricted her daily acts of living. She battled through these treatments with great courage. Jo sustained a fall during treatment, which when she was X-rayed at a later date showed she had fractured her ribs.

After Christmas, she had surgery to remove the breast lump and auxiliary node biopsies.

Jo recovered well after surgery but had to wait a few weeks to heal prior to radiotherapy. As she began to improve physically and mentally, frustration set in, with Jo wanting to return to a normal life. Her life became a continual round of appointments and treatments.

On the positive side, she has met so many lovely people and fellow patients. The medical staff have been brilliant.

Radiotherapy was for four weeks. She did suffer radiation burns which looked like sunburn.

God has been so good to us as a family. The Church prayers and concern has upheld us.

Her neighbours and good friends have rallied around to provide food for evening meals on treatment days. Some have driven her to appointments and even Luna the dog has been walked by one of the ladies. Things could have been so much different without this help.

Jo's journey is nowhere near over. She has three-weekly treatments until August. Then preventative therapy for seven to ten years.

Meanwhile she has been able to help with supporting breast cancer treatment by fund-raising.

This Sunday she is doing the “Race for Life” in aid of breast cancer. I suspect she will be walking rather than running.

At the beginning of June, Jo is hoping to return to work. This will be a very gradual process but is one step closer to a normal life for her.

As a family, we are immensely proud of her strength and determination to beat Cancer.

Sandra (WGC)

Misgivings, ON REFLECTIONS , AFTER THE POST OFFICE SCANDAL

Is this the demise of our mostly honest world
As mistrust of the top develops, is unfurled
Seen in all walks of life across the board
Whether home based or from abroad
Scandals like insidious cyber crime
Or violence in the streets so out of line
Is it fear of climate change reducing the range
Of worldly well being, inducing this change

What forces people to these inhuman acts
For media’s report displaying the facts
Ordinary folk being denied fair progression
Not withstanding the current depression
Has the rule of law lost its grip
With lost control of our through life trip

Onwards and upwards, mind’s ease, is the only way
Bringing back balance at the end of the day

- Martin Sexton. April 2024

Many thanks to Allen K for submitting this poem

Men United in Song Gala Concert

We were fortunate to be able to accept, on behalf of Welwyn Garden City URC, the kind invitation of the Welwyn Garden City Male Voice Choir to attend a Gala Charity concert for Prostate Cancer UK, held at the



Weston Auditorium at the University of Hertfordshire on Saturday 18th May. The concert included contributions from the Welwyn Garden City Male Voice Choir who were the sponsor for the “pop up” choir “Men United in Song”.

Men United in Song was formed just eight weeks before the concert and many of the performers hadn't sung since school days. In eight weeks they learned eight pieces including parts and harmonies. Their performance was amazing and very moving. This was an incredible achievement in such a short time. Many of the choir members had personal experience of the challenges of prostate cancer.

We were made very welcome by the concert organisers at the University, and our church was singled out and thanked for our support and providing the venue for the registration stage of the Men United in Song Choir. We also had

the opportunity to meet Annie Brewster, High Sheriff of Hertfordshire.

So far the choir has raised nearly £10,000 for Prostate Cancer UK. On the following Saturday, 25th May, the Men United in Song Choir were joined by four other regional Men United in Song Choirs for at a concert in the Albert Hall, Nottingham, with the sponsoring choirs also participating. A performance of over 400 singers!



Janet & John (WGC)



Wheathampstead United Church

Invite you to join them for their Songs of Praise
service

Sunday 21st July

at

3pm

Led by Rev Martyn Neads





**WELWYN GARDEN CITY MALE
VOICE CHOIR**

**PERFORM IN CONCERT
ON SATURDAY 29th JUNE
7.30pm at WGC URC**

Tickets available from Robert H (01707. 322339)
or John M (07395671831)

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 BASEBALL
 BASKETBALL
 BEACH
 VOLLEYBALL
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 CYCLING
 DIVING
 EQUESTRIANISM
 FENCING

FOOTBALL
 GYMNASTICS
 HANDBALL
 HOCKEY
 JUDO
 MODERN PENTATHLON
 RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS
 ROWING
 SHOOTING
 SOFTBALL
 SWIMMING
 SYNCHRONIZED
 SWIMMING

TABLE TENNIS
 TAEKWONDO
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 VOLLEYBALL
 WATER POLO
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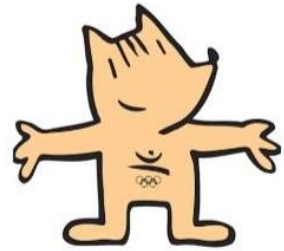
GUESS THE MASCOT

GUESS THE MASCOT FOR EACH OLYMPIC LOCATION & YEAR THE MOST CORRECT WINS!



















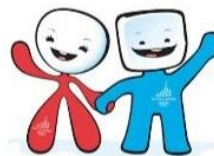














- A. RIO 2016
- B. SYDNEY 2000
- C. SEOUL 1988
- D. TURIN 2006

- E. NAGANO 1998
- F. MONTREAL 1976
- G. MUNICH 1972
- H. LOS ANGELES 1984

- I. LONDON 2012
- J. CALGARY 1988
- K. LILLEHAMMER 1994
- L. BEIJING 2008

- M. ALBERTVILLE 1992
- N. ATHENS 2004
- O. ATLANTA 1996
- P. BARCELONA 1992

Please can I have any articles for the next magazine by the 18th July 2024.

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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Contact Details for the Magazine

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