

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

CHILDREY

GROVE

WANTAGE

SECTOR

NEWS



The Methodist Church



April 2020

Minister : Rev Keith Underhill – Tel: 01235 763321
keith.underhill@methodist.org.uk

Should you need a Minister when Keith is not available, please talk to one of the Stewards listed below, who will put you in touch:

Alison Phillips : 01235 760335
Ian Sturt : 07426 772761
Doug Legge : 01235 751463

Please send material for the **Weekly Notices** to :

Grove

Jenny Marriott : 01235 767624

Wantage

Gill & Gordon Skidmore : 07710 214601
email : wntgmethodistnotices@gmail.com

Contributions for the **May Newsletter** should be sent to the editor by email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 19th April 2020**
to
wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com
Tel : 01235 766655 / 07710 214601

Don't forget the Circuit Calendar can now be viewed on the Circuit website.

Sunday Services and Church Activities

All worship services, business meetings and church activities have been suspended for the time being. This means that until we are advised otherwise, there will be no Sunday services in any of the churches in our Circuit.

Grove web site is found from www.wantab.org.uk

Wantage web site www.wantagemethodist.org.uk

Circuit web site www.wantab.org.uk

From the Manse...

You do not need me to remind you that we are currently living in very uncertain times as the reality of the coronavirus pandemic makes itself known and we find we are having to adapt quickly and to do things differently.

With so much information being shared it is sometimes difficult to know what to think and the fear of the unknown can at times be very real indeed. In the midst of wall-to-wall coverage and empty shelves due to panic buying, it can be hard to put things into some kind of perspective.

The Methodist Connexion continues to monitor the situation and keeps the churches updated on good practice and what we should be doing to help look after ourselves and others.

As Circuit Superintendent and your minister, I can assure you that I will pass on any guidance that I receive from the Methodist Connexion as soon as it arrives. I have refrained from including the current guidance that I have just received in this letter as by the time this is printed and you have read it, the situation may well have changed yet again and new advice issued.

You will be able to find current and up-to-date guidance on our church website and in the weekly notice sheet.

The Connexion also reminds us that there is a bigger picture and that the Methodist Church is wider than just Britain. It reminds us that we are learning from our sisters and brothers around the world who are dealing with a difficult and uncertain situation and we are asked to hold them in prayer, particularly those in affected areas.

Rev Paul Wood, Interim Director of the Ministries Team, said: "As we deal with the practicalities of protecting people from coronavirus, we continue to remember Our Calling to care for the other, whilst always being mindful that our call is always to respond to the good news in Jesus. We are a people of hope and we need to declare and model good news in these difficult times."

Head of Mission, Jude Levermore said: "Our Calling is to respond in love and service to the needs of our communities. The aim of this advice is to help us do this even while the extent of the issue is still unclear. We are grateful to our sisters and brothers around the world who hold us in prayer as we hold them. We should not be afraid "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7.

So, in faith and in hope we do what we can, looking after ourselves and one another and seeking to help others in these difficult times.

A prayer for these days:

God of all hope we call on you today.

We pray for those who are living in fear:

Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other's reactions to them.

May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.

We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.

For those people who are worried about attending worship.

For those needing to make decisions in order to care for others.

For those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend.

Grant us your wisdom.

Holy God, we remember that you have promised that

Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.

Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.

Amen

Love and God Bless,

Keith

CORONAVIRUS

As your Minister and Circuit Superintendent, this is the first "Keeping in touch" letter to let you know what is happening in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic.

This letter is an opportunity for me to share with you updates from the District and Connexion.

Due to the fact that things are changing so rapidly, I would recommend that if you are able to access the internet, that you regularly check the Connexional website, where all updates will be posted, please go to <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus-guidance/>

Information will also be posted as soon as possible here.

You may have already heard that as of Tuesday 17th March all worship services, business meetings and church activities have been suspended for the time being. This means that until we are advised otherwise, there will be no Sunday services in any of the churches in our Circuit, including ours.

While funerals may still take place, we have been informed that the number of people attending is limited as per the Government's advice.

There will be a simple order of service that you may wish to use in your homes each Sunday over the coming weeks. If you are aware of someone who might appreciate this but has no access to the internet, please would you consider printing a copy off and passing it on to them.

We are also looking into the possibility of posting some videos onto the websites if possible.

Each week Wesley's Chapel in London will continue to live-stream worship, adapted for no physical congregation.

Service times

Wednesday 12:45

Thursday 12:45

Sunday 9:45 and 11:00

All these services will be available

at: www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA

More information about all of this can be found at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/seasons-and-themes/worship-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

As we think how we can best care for one another and offer on-going pastoral support, we are being recommended to carry out pastoral 'visits' by phone.

During this period, I will make it a priority to ring around and speak to as many of our congregations as possible and if pastoral visitors are able to be in regular contact with those on their lists, then hopefully we can try to keep a sense of being isolated to a minimum.

Remember that many people are anxious and a reassuring phone call and an offer to pray might be very much appreciated.

We are also being asked to think proactively about who in the church might need extra help should they decide or be required to self-isolate. Is there the need to create a plan for shopping for more vulnerable members of the community for example?

In connection with this, you may have heard that Ray Collins has with the help of the Wantage Chamber of Commerce, formed the Wantage Coronavirus support group, which aims to help elderly and vulnerable people living in isolation or those choosing to self-isolate in Wantage and within a 5 mile radius.

I am liaising with Ray on this and will be able to let you have more information soon. There may well be those within our congregations who would either like to help and be part of this new initiative, or who would benefit from what is being offered. In the meantime, you can find out more about this on Ray's Facebook page.

You may have also heard that today, Thursday 19th March Sainsbury's supermarket has set the first hour aside for elderly and vulnerable customers.

Please do not forget the needs of our Wantage & Grove Foodbank, who will be under even more pressure than usual during the coming weeks.

The latest Government advice of the coronavirus can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#diagnosis-and-analysis>

Lastly, Rev'd Helen Cameron the Chair of our District is in regular contact with all the Superintendent Ministers in our District offering updates and guidance.

She reminds us that; " it is vital that we know and celebrate and share that we are the Church even when we cannot meet and gather as we are used to doing. Our task will continue to be to support the weak and the most vulnerable and find ways to support and encourage one another and to practice still belonging to one another — just expressed differently."

These are difficult and unprecedented days and we seek to live through them with hope, love and faith.

Please take care of yourselves,

With love and God bless, *Keith*

Films to make us think. Wednesday evenings during Lent are now cancelled.

Childrey

Prayers:

Prayers are asked for Amy Rose Legge and her family, Keith & Leonora, David, Barbara, Shirley, Jean and all those unknown to us who are in need of our help.

We also pray for the continued success of the "Open the Book" Project where the teachings and stories of the Bible are taken into the Ridgeway C of E School in Childrey on a weekly assembly basis by a dedicated band of leaders from local churches using our premises as a base.

Christian Love to all.

Grove

I am sure you are all aware that, due to the Coronavirus outbreak, all our church services and activities have had to be cancelled for the moment.

Keith is doing very well with keeping everyone informed of the situation and in touch with each other.

It is still the aim to prepare and circulate our Church Annual Report 2019/20 at the beginning of June as planned, see the paragraph below.

If anyone would like a book to read or a DVD to watch, don't forget the Book box and the box of DVD's in church. Ask one of the stewards or other keyholders if you are unable to access them yourself.

Grove Tuesday Fellowship

Kath Gourlay

We are not meeting until further notice. I am sure that we will all miss our meetings and hope it won't be too long before we meet again on Tuesday afternoons.

Just a note about my niece who picked up the virus in Italy three weeks ago. She is making progress, has more energy and her blood pressure is back to normal. She is filling in her time making Christmas cards!

Hope to see you soon in the not too distant future. God Bless

Warmed Hearts house group Contact Peter Hemmings (01235 762504) for more information.

Film Club – the films already planned will be shown at a later date, when normal life can be resumed again.

Our Church Annual Report 2019/20.

Please may we have reports from all the various groups and activities which are part of our church life, to give as full a picture as possible of what has taken place during the past year and what we are looking forward to also. Your reports should be given to Veronica **by Sunday, 3rd May**, so that the Annual Report Booklet can be prepared ready for circulation with the June church newsletter. Thank you.

Church Financial Situation. A message from the Church Treasurer *Eric Thomas*

Like many small businesses, the church is not receiving its regular income because of the closures brought about by the coronavirus situation. Fortunately, over the past years we have had a reserves policy, which has meant that we have accumulated funds for such a situation. We still have to meet our regular outgoings, most of which cannot be reduced. We are currently assuming that it is unlikely we will be able to resume our “normal” activities before September, which means we will be dipping into our reserves.

Consequently, we are inviting those who can to consider ways in which they can contribute what would have been their normal weekly collection.

This could be done in a number of ways. The options could include

- at regular intervals sending a cheque made out to Grove Methodist Church for me to bank. My address is 7 Miles Drive, Grove, Wantage, OX12 7JA
- for those who have internet banking, either setting up a standing order to the church account or making periodic cash transfers. If those who are interested email me at eric.thomas@virgin.net I can supply them with the bank details.

Continuing to receive contributions from those members who can Gift Aid them is especially important as we can then claim the money from the Government - £5 for every £20 given.

If anyone has a query, I am happy to have a phone call from them. My number is 01235 762723.

Thank you to all who support or arrange various events.

The March coffee morning for M.H.A. raised £147.80. Cards for Freyja’s Fund raised £60. Thank you to everyone.

Thank you to those who have already committed to hosting a coffee morning in 2020. September, October and December are still without hosts.

If you are able to help by taking on one of these dates, please contact Peter Hemmings on 01235 762504.



Opening times

from 23rd March 2020

Our **café** will be **closed** for eating in.

However we will open the shop between

11am and 12pm

Monday to Saturday

for people to purchase books, cards, gifts & fair-trade Groceries.

There will also be some take away items available.

Cornerstone Christian Centre is a Registered Charity No. 1046923

Registered Office: Grove House, Grove, Wantage. OX12 7PF Company No. 3060710 V.A.T. No. 685-6254-96

Available for Take-Away
Monday –Saturday 11am-12:

Drinks—coffee/tea/cans/mineral waters

Cakes—slices or whole cakes

Homemade scones (plain/fruit/cheese) & Teacakes

Eggs

Home made soup—fresh or frozen

Home made quiche

Home made Chilli—frozen for you to heat at home

**Puddings—apple crumble pie/brownie/sticky toffee
pudding—frozen for you to heat at home**

Ice cream scoops

**Call: 01235 772280 to order ahead, card payment
available over the phone.**

**If you or someone you know is struggling with
making meals at home, please let us know and
we will see how we can help you.**

Wantage

With the current situation with regard to the Coronavirus we will have to cancel future events including the lunches. We will try to let you know what we are doing in the coming weeks. Up to date information will be posted on the web site.

<https://wantagemethodist.org.uk>

WMC175 Calendar of Events during 2020

May Mark Topping presents “Encounters with John Wesley” - Postponed

June Firebrand - Postponed

Firebrand

Because of the precautions being taken regarding the management of the Coronavirus pandemic, it has been decided to stop preparations for this and to decide about the rescheduling of the production after the emergency has passed.

Wantage 175 Exhibition at Museum

The Vale and Downland Museum have kindly offered Wantage Methodist Church free exhibition space for 2 weeks in the Squires Room in October. The Squires Room is quite small and we should have no trouble filling the space with information about the origins, past history, current and future life of the church. The museum will also loan us a lockable display case (for any precious items), other display units and a flat desk unit where people can browse photo compilations etc.

The Museum staff have suggested that visitors prefer to look at items and photos rather than read a lot of words! With that in mind we are asking people to hunt out any items (such as a commemoration item, baptismal card etc.) or photos (perhaps of a wedding at church, the youth club, performances etc.). If we get too many photos we can compile a photo album for people to look through.

At this early stage can you let June Grunwald know if you have anything of interest on 01235 760488 or jnurdglaw@live.co.uk.

An opportunity to clear those cupboards and get into the loft!

Wantage Methodist Church Annual Report for the 2020 Annual Church Meeting

This has been published and is being distributed to the Wantage people with this newsletter. Thank you to all who have contributed.

In view of the present situation, the Annual Church Meeting has been postponed. An agenda and details regarding nominations for Church Stewards and Church Council representatives will be published with the notice calling the meeting.

WORSHIP & BIBLE STUDY

Films to make us think. Wednesday evenings during Lent are now cancelled.

Tuesday Afternoon House Group

In early March we started to study this year's York Lent Course entitled "Superstar".

We are currently unable to meet due to the Coronavirus situation. We shall miss our meetings, but we can look forward in faith to the time when we can meet again and meantime we can individually continue our prayers for others. I will keep the group updated with information for prayers.

Please also note that the visit to St. Mary's Convent on 7th April has been cancelled.

If you have any queries you can contact me (Eileen Rennie) by telephone on 01235 224284 or e-mail: m.rennie50@ntlworld.com

Lent Study on Thursdays will not meet due to the Coronavirus situation.

YOUNG CHURCH

YMOSES (Youth Meeting On Sunday Evenings)

Jane Kent

In March we met and discussed relationships - thinking about the characteristics of a healthy relationship and looking at some Bible verses about relationships. We then divided into two groups to continue our discussions.

Because of the present situation we shall not be meeting until further notice.

Kids@Church

Jane Kent

We explored the story of Jesus being 'lost' in the temple in March. After searching for a lost item, listening to the story, singing a song and offering a prayer we all went through to the hall and had a lot of fun playing with the parachute!

Because of the present situation we shall not be meeting until further notice.

For more information please give me a ring on 01235 765421

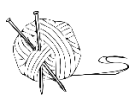
FELLOWSHIP

Wednesday Fellowship / Lunch dates

Because of the precautions being taken regarding the management of the Coronavirus pandemic, we must suspend Wednesday Fellowship and lunches until further notice.

Knit & Chat

Carolyn Roche (01235 764310)



Because of the precautions being taken regarding the management of the Coronavirus pandemic, it has been decided to stop meeting until further notice.

It is good that we can carry on with our knitting projects at home. I wonder how many angels will be completed before we meet again. The green blanket squares are now being made into blankets and the first one has been finished.

We can't knit together but we can chat – through the phone or by text or email.

PRAYER & PASTORAL

Prayer list

Eileen Rennie

Loving God, teach us to use our gifts generously for the building of the Church. We pray for our Church and all who lead in it. Lord Jesus may we love your Church and our fellow Christians even when they are very different to us. Bless us all with your presence, power and love. You care so much for the dispossessed and the desperate. Please help us to have that same spirit of humility and generosity. Lord help us to turn back to you as a nation and listen to and respond to your gracious word. You are a God of peace and justice. We pray for our leaders that you would help them make wise and compassionate decisions. Help us to make a habit of turning to you in prayer for everyone and everything. Unchanging God help us to thank, praise and trust you for whatever lies ahead. Amen.

Please pray for:

Jean M, Bethan Grant, Jane, Alan Bunn and family, Doug, Carl, Carol Mackinder, Anne, Pam Rose, Emma Wright and family, Alex and Brian, Gordon & Marina, Betty, Nick and Sarah Holt, Sheila Hall, Caroline, Alastair Wright, All at Bullingdon Prison, staff, prisoners and visitors, YMOSES, kids@church and Street Pastors. Those members of our church family who, through frailty or ill health, can no longer worship with us.

If you or the person/people you have put on the prayer list would still like to be in the May newsletter, please let Eileen know by **17th April** in order for her to meet the newsletter deadline. Telephone: 01235 224284, email: m.rennie50@ntlworld.com

Pastoral - *praying for each other*

Ann Barber

In April the following people on **Helen Carter's Pastoral List**, will be included in the prayer time at Eileen Rennie's house-group: Jo & Simon Aldworth, Valerie & John Broadbent, Diana Gawlas, Trevor & Sheila Johnson, Adrian Richens, and Jane & Harry Rudd, as well as our young people looked after by **Cath Worth and Jane Kent**: Jordan and Zack Smith, Charlotte Worth and Audrey and Maureen Osei Akowuah,

In addition to the names listed above, those in our church family, who through frailty or ill health can no longer worship with us on Sundays, will also be prayed for by name at Eileen's house-group.

We recognise the uncertainty surrounding the continuation of Sunday Worship, and weekday meetings like the Tuesday House-Group, in their current form, and the possibility of the imposition of self-isolation for many people within our church family. Should circumstances necessitate changes to our usual and much-loved practices, hopefully we will be able, individually, to pray for each other, and I will continue to produce the monthly lists for us to use at home.

Church Directory

Ann Barber

I am sorry that information relating to the directory seems to keep changing as advice about Data Protection is updated, as well as circumstances for us all continue to evolve. Should the situation arise in which Pastoral Visiting and attending church can no longer continue in the usual way, the request for returning the Permission Slip via your Pastoral Visitor when your April Newsletter is delivered will no longer be valid. If, as an alternative, it's possible for you to return your completed form to me by post, that would be very helpful. [7 Parsonage Close, Wantage, OX12 7HP] It may be that publication of the new directory is delayed, but hopefully we'll find a way of resolving any problems if they arise. Many thanks.

Keeping in Contact

We are looking at various ways of keeping in touch.

There is always our internet website, and our Facebook presence, but it is understood that many of us cannot access the internet easily, if at all.

We shall continue to publish a monthly newsletter and weekly notices and will post those on the website. We will also do our best to distribute copies to those who would wish to receive them.

If you wish to receive printed copies of weekly news sheets or the weekly service sheet, please contact June Grunwald at 01235 760488.

We are preparing to set up a WhatsApp Church Support Group. This a secure messaging service that is a development of the "text" message system for mobile phones.

As an alternative you could join an email group we could set up if WhatsApp is not something you can get access to.

If you are interested in being part of either of these, please contact Ann Barber on 07792 152943 or by email to annbarber7@gmail.com

We are also exploring options of streaming services through "Facebook" or "YouTube".

MISSION & SERVICE

Community Drop In Café

Eileen Rennie

Regretfully, due to the current Coronavirus situation, for the time being we are unable to open the Café. We know for many this will be quite a blow as they enjoyed their weekly visits. Let us look forward in faith to when we are able to meet again. Meanwhile be assured that you are being held in prayer.

Donations for the Methodist-affiliated charity, Fund for Human Need, to date have raised £1700 approx. When we are able to meet again the donations will be going to Clean Slate, a low-cost, long-term listening and support service for all victims of abuse and mental illness.

Our sincere thanks to our 22 willing volunteers who have served us so well. When normal service is resumed, we look forward to welcoming you back.

An offer from Julie Horton

As we are unable to continue serving our church lunches, I am willing to provide a meal on the basis of a Friday lunch at a cost of £3.50 for a dinner and £2.50 for a desert. I will deliver this to you on request, this will be on a Thursday or Friday to be arranged. I am happy to bake cakes and pastries, if you would like half or a quarter of a cake or individual mince pies, bakewell tarts, treacle tarts etc. If you are interested, please let me know by phone on 07812 370796 or contact Eileen on 01235 224284.

Toilet Twinning: Members and friends may wish to know that we have “twinned” our 14th toilet. This one is in Africa in North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Our first twinned toilet was achieved in November 2014. Thanks to all who have donated their small change.

FINANCE, PROPERTY & USERS' NEWS

The curtain tracks in the Hall have been replaced and the floor re-surfaced.

Church Financial Situation. A message from the Church Treasurer *Clive Phillips*

Like many small businesses, the church is not receiving its regular income because of the closures brought about by the coronavirus situation. In particular, we are not receiving our lettings income which is a significant contribution to our income. Fortunately, we have a reserves policy which has meant that we have accumulated funds to help us in such a situation. We still have to meet our regular outgoings, most of which cannot be reduced. We are currently assuming that it is unlikely we will be able to resume our “normal” activities before September, which means we will be dipping into our reserves.

Consequently, we are inviting those who can to consider ways in which they can contribute what would have been their normal weekly or monthly collection. This could be done in a number of ways. The options could include:

- At regular intervals sending a cheque made out to Wantage Methodist Church for me to bank. If you currently use the blue envelope scheme you could send me an envelope with your cheque so that I can reconcile it in our accounts. My address is 1 Mill Paddock, Letcombe Regis, Wantage, OX12 9JE.
- For those who have internet banking, either setting up a standing order to the church account or making periodic cash transfers. If those who are interested email me at candaphillips@gmail.com I can supply them with the bank details.

Continuing to receive contributions from those members who can Gift Aid them is especially important as we can then re-claim the gift aid money from the Government.

If anyone has a query, I am happy to have a phone call from them. My number is 01235 760335.

Wantage Chapel & Hall Bookings

All bookings are suspended for the duration of the coronavirus emergency.

Please contact Gordon at wntgmethodistbookings@gmail.com, tel: 07710 214601.

