

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

**GROVE  
&  
WANTAGE  
METHODIST  
NEWS**

February 2026



 **The Methodist Church**

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Contributions for the **next Newsletter** (March) should be sent to the editor by  
email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February**

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**Wantage Morning Worship is shared each week on Zoom at 10:30**  
(for access to this please contact Gordon Skidmore)

**Grove web site** is found from [www.wantab.org.uk](http://www.wantab.org.uk)

**Wantage web site** [www.wantagemethodist.org.uk](http://www.wantagemethodist.org.uk)

**Circuit web site** [www.wantab.org.uk](http://www.wantab.org.uk)

**Newsletter Contribution deadline dates – 2025/26**

March	Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> February
April	Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March
May	Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> April
June	Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> May
July/August	Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> June

The words 'vision' and 'seeing/sight' are very often considered the same and used interchangeably, even though they are distinct processes. Sight refers to the eyes' ability to detect light and transmit signals to the brain using rods and cones, which is what Optometrists check during appointments. Vision, on the other hand, involves the brain interpreting these signals, engaging various regions to assign meaning, value, and emotional response to what is seen. This complex process allows us to understand and interact with our environment, highlighting that vision is a comprehensive brain function, not just a sensory one.

My beloved father, who was passionate about reading and writing, lost his sight twenty years before he passed away. During his final visit to Moorfields Eye Hospital, he was told there was little that could be done to prevent him from going completely blind. True to this prognosis, a few years later he described himself as having been "shut out from the world". However, in those 'dark' years, he always insisted that God was his true vision. Remarkably, even after losing his physical sight, my father's spiritual vision seemed to grow stronger. Until his passing at the age of 93, he often sensed who was entering his room, and on numerous occasions, he shared with us dreams and messages from God, some of which have come to pass; reminding us often: "Be thou my vision."

'Seeing' in the Gospel of John is intricately linked to faith, belief and the divine revelation of Jesus, emphasising that true understanding comes from spiritual insight rather than mere physical sight. The experiences of Nathanael (John 1: 45-50) and Thomas (John 20: 24-29) involved various aspects of seeing and resulted in transformation. During the supper that followed the walk to Emmaus (Luke 24: 30-32), Cleopas and the other disciple experienced an epiphany when their eyes were opened and they recognised Jesus. This evolution resulted in them immediately returning to Jerusalem to share the truth of Jesus' resurrection with the other disciples.

One of the verses of StF 668, a hymn based on George Herbert's poem, 'The Elixir', has always stayed with me. It goes:

A man that looks on glass,  
On it may stay his eye;  
Or if he pleaseth, through it pass,  
And then the heav'n espy.

Herbert, in this verse, highlights the theme of seeing beyond and conjures a sense that there is more to be revealed in the ordinary and everyday things of life than meets the eye. Glass allows light to pass through, but it can also blur or hide what lies beyond it. We can look at glass, or we can look through it. I imagine Herbert was influenced by St Paul's words, "now we see as through a glass, darkly: but then face to face" (1 Cor. 13: 12). For Herbert, God was like the light shining behind the glass – the illumination that brings clarity to us and to the world.

As this new year unfolds, let us claim Paul's powerful prayer for the Ephesians as our own: "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you grasp the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe." (Ephesians 1: 18) Let

Christ be both our light and our vision - guiding, illuminating, revealing and transforming our journey each day.

“Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart...”

With every blessing for 2026, Georgina.

## Works in the Methodist Modern Art Collection : 5

Rev Bruce Thompson

### Storm over the Lake (Eularia Clarke)

Amongst my favourites in the collection has to be one of the two works owned by the Methodist Church by Eularia Clarke. *The Five Thousand* is hugely popular depicting the assembled crowd sitting on grass, eating fish and chips, bikes strewn amongst the people, a man boiling a kettle, with an altar and a partly visible priest in the top right-hand corner. This would be a worthy candidate for an article in this series; but it is Clarke's other painting in the collection that has been a source of fascination for many years.

*Storm over the Lake* is a deeply evocative work that captures a moment of great distress just as Jesus begins to calm the waves. The boat is submerged and sinking. With the bow and stern above the water line and sections of the starboard side only just visible beneath the surface. Those on board and overboard are in varying states of anguish: one is clinging to the mast, another holding on to them; some appear to have already succumbed; what looks like a family holding on to each other; someone's feet look as if they are about to kick another; a hand is reaching out; a hand is holding someone's head above the surface. Then Jesus, who we are told by the Gospel writers was asleep in the stern – and Clarke paints a blue checked rug to indicate this - is leaning out and reaching over the side, his left hand gripping the boat and right hand hovering over the surface in an act of blessing. The waters in the immediate vicinity of his hand are calming and light, mere ripples compared to the huge, dark, threatening waves elsewhere in the scene. The hand is reflected in the water and through co-incidence or intention appears to resemble a dove; is the artist inviting us to consider that the very same spirit that brooded over the waters of creation at work on the Sea of Galilee through the actions of Jesus?



Image ©Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

Eularia Clarke (1914-1970) came from a family of artists and clergy and expressed her wish to become a painter of religion early on. She was very much influenced by Stanley Spencer and preferred to depict biblical episodes in a setting of her own time and place, with ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> century people going about their lives, hence the fish and chip picnic for the feeding of the five thousand. She was deeply critical of her work and even though she created many paintings only valued a small number. She resisted selling works to private collectors and only sold to public institutions, the Methodist Church being one such body. Clarke had lent *Storm over the Lake* to a Catholic priest who used it as a devotional source, she had been reluctant to ask for its return on selling it to the Methodist Church.

I fully appreciate the Catholic priest's affection for the painting. The array of suffering depicted by Clarke reflects the various states of anxiety and fear present in our world: some look as if they cannot survive any longer; some cling to whatever they can; some to one another; some push against others; some lift others even in their own distress; and only Jesus can ease the situation.

## wantage parish

Rev Katherine Price was licensed as Area Dean by the Venerable David Tyler, Archdeacon of Dorchester, at St John's in Grove on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January, at a service attended by other members of the deanery clergy and Wantage Parish Choir and with the support of parishioners from Wantage and across the deanery.



## In Conversation 2026

**In Conversation Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February, 12 noon**

**Matthew Barber, Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner**

Matthew was first elected as your Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in 2021, and re-elected in 2024. As PCC covering Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes, and Oxfordshire it is Matthew's role to be the voice of the public, representing two and a half million people. He served as Deputy PCC from 2017 to 2021, during which time he took on the chairmanship of the Local Criminal Justice Board.



## Growth Action Plan – Churches and Circuit

## Circuit Leadership Team

The Circuit Leadership Team that has strategic oversight of the Wantage & Abingdon Circuit, which includes this church, has been prayerfully considering how we might move forward as a Circuit and as individual churches within it.

We remain fully committed to ensuring our Circuit's sustainable future, with a clear view of mission and ministry across the Circuit; and so, we need to begin planning for growth – Spiritual growth; Numerical growth and Missional growth.

Between now and the end of June, we will be asking each church to formulate a Growth Action Plan. This is crucial for our churches and for the Circuit. Having Growth Action Plans will help each church to be more focussed on the fundamental reason why we are a church; will help us gain more clarity and direction for the future and will also help with accountability in our financial spending.

The CLT will support churches by providing a set of documents, which will give clear guidance on how to formulate your Growth Action Plan. The key is for you to focus on what you believe God is calling your church to do in your community, and how you intend to use your resources for that purpose in the coming months and year.

We pray that our Lord, the God of growth, will himself enthuse, strengthen and guide us as we journey through formulating our Growth Action Plans together.

Another vital piece of information: The CLT is planning a 'Going for Growth Day' to be held on **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May**, 10 am – 3 pm, with lunch provided. We are informing you now, in the hope that each church will be well represented at the event. This exciting event will foster Circuit cohesion. We will have the chance to talk to each other, learn from each other, hear stories of mission and ministry from across the circuit and support each other. More information will be sent soon. Please keep Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May free for our Circuit Growth Day.

So, two key things to bear in mind: The Circuit Growth Day on 9<sup>th</sup> May and your church's Growth Action Plan.

Thank you for your faithfulness in serving God. We are deeply grateful for all you do.

# Growth Day

a day to explore how our churches may grow  
spiritually, numerically, in confidence and in faith



**WANTAGE & ABINGDON METHODIST CIRCUIT**

INVITES YOU TO JOIN WITH OTHERS FROM CHURCHES IN THE CIRCUIT

**SATURDAY 9 MAY**

KINGSTON BAGPUIZE WITH SOUTHMOOR VILLAGE HALL, OX13 5BY

10-3

FURTHER DETAILS FROM YOUR MINISTER

Zoe Richardson, Unsplash

## Flooding in Southern Africa

19<sup>th</sup> January 2026

In the last few days, devastating floods have swept through parts of Southern Africa.

***“Homes have been washed away, livelihoods destroyed, and entire communities displaced. Families are grieving the loss of loved ones, while others wait anxiously for news of those still unaccounted for. The scale of the destruction is heart-breaking. In many of the affected areas, Methodist Societies and Circuits are overwhelmed. Food, shelter, clean water, clothing, and medical supplies are urgently required. These floods are part of a growing pattern of extreme weather across our region with droughts that linger longer, storms that strike harder, and rainfall that becomes increasingly unpredictable. Climate change is no longer a distant theory; it is a lived reality for the poorest and most vulnerable among us. As a church committed to justice, compassion, and stewardship of God’s creation, we cannot ignore this moment. We are called to respond not only to the immediate crisis but also to the deeper environmental wounds that are shaping our future.”***

**The Revd Sva Waqu, Mission Director of the Methodist Church in Southern Africa**

### A prayer

Heavenly Father,  
We lift before you all affected by flooding across Southern Africa at this time.  
We pray for those who have lost loved ones, homes, crops and livestock;  
Enfold them with your comfort, love and grace at this time.

We lift before you all in the Methodist Church in Southern Africa who, along with others, are seeking to respond to the many challenges and urgent needs. And we pray for all efforts to address the ongoing consequences of climate change around the world.

May we act with wisdom to mitigate its' impact and bring hope and stability for all who are most affected.

This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**The Methodist Church in Britain is in touch with partners in the region and grants from the World Mission Fund for emergency support are in process.**

## **Moderator-Designate of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland announced**

### **The Revd Dr Adrian Burdon**

The Revd Dr Adrian Burdon has expressed his excitement at being appointed Moderator-Designate of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). A Methodist Presbyter for almost forty years, he currently serves as superintendent minister of the Telford circuit.

The CTBI is important to him because he says it reflects values deeply aligned with Methodist principles of service and community engagement, striving for the advancement of Christian mission and discipleship as well as being profoundly committed to equity and justice.

Promoting Christian unity is at the heart of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. It encompasses 38 Christian denominations and 38 affiliated bodies

## **Methodist Church congratulates Bishop Richard Moth on his appointment as new Archbishop of Westminster**

**The Methodist Church gives thanks for the ministry of His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols as Archbishop of Westminster, as he retires from this office, and congratulates Bishop Richard Moth on his appointment as the leader of Catholics in England and Wales.**

Cardinal Nichols has given distinguished leadership over a lifetime of ministry, including 34 years as a bishop, and as Cardinal has guided the Catholic Church in England and Wales through some of the most challenging moments of modern times. As a President of Churches Together in England, he has borne witness to the unity of the Christian Church, and the fellowship among Christians that Methodists so celebrate.

We wish Cardinal Vincent every blessing in his retirement, and we pray for Bishop Richard Moth as he prepares to take up the mantle as Archbishop of Westminster in February. We give thanks for the warm friendship that Methodists share with Catholics across the Connexion, and join with our Catholic siblings in celebration at today's news.

## **GROVE**

**Ecumenical “Prayer for Revival”** is held on the first Sunday of each month in our church. We meet next on **Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> February** from 6.30 pm till 8 pm. You are invited to come and pray with us. All are welcome.

**Coffee morning** is on **Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> February** from 10 am till 12 noon in the church. We will be supporting Wateraid. Kirsty Bailey is our host for the morning. We hope you will come along for a chat and tea/coffee and cake. We look forward to seeing you. *Offers of help with cakes or on the morning are always appreciated.*

**Film Club is on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> February** at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room. We will be showing **“Phantom of the Open”**.

*The heart-warming true story of Maurice Flitcroft, who entered the 1976 Open despite never playing a round of golf before. The extraordinary story of an ordinary man, THE PHANTOM OF THE OPEN is an uplifting and moving comedy drama about pursuing your dreams and shooting for the stars, no matter what hand you've been dealt. In June 2020, Mark Rylance joined the cast of the film. In October 2020 Sally Hawkins, Rhys Ifans, Jake Davies, Christian Lees, Jonah Lees, Mark Lewis Jones and Johann Myers also joined the cast of the film.*

All are welcome. Admission is free. A small donation helps to cover costs.

**Tuesday Fellowship in January** is on **Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January** at 2.15 pm. We are having a rather light-hearted start to the new year with a Beetle Drive at 14, Harlington Avenue, Grove, home of Jenny Marriott. You are invited to come along for a time of fellowship and fun together.

**Tuesday Fellowship in February** is on **Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> February** at 2.15 pm. Details will be given in the notices nearer the time. We will be pleased to see you.

**Thank you** to everyone who visited the December Cribfest. It was a lovely occasion. Donations for the Wantage & Grove Foodbank amounted to £212.88. Our thanks go to Linda and Mark for providing the refreshments. Thank you all very much for your support.

Peter and Noreen hosted a Coffee morning on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> January and everyone enjoyed the time to sit and catch up on news. It raised £207 in donations for Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders), who go to help wherever they are needed. Thank you all for your support.

The Coffee Morning list for 2026 has a few dates still available - the host to nominate the charity they wish to support: **Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> April (Easter Saturday)** and **Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> July**; also we are looking for an offer to host **Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> May**, for Christian Aid. Please contact Jenny Marriott (01235 767624) if you would like to book one of these dates.

**Craft Group** meets at the Cornerstone Coffee Shop on Monday afternoons from 2 to 4 pm. All are welcome. Bring your own craft to do and enjoy a chat and exchange of ideas with other crafters while you work. We each give a donation of £1 to Cornerstone and buy a drink of our choice.

Thank you to all those who generously continue to support the **Foodbank** by putting contributions in the box in the entrance hall week by week. Thank you.

All donations are very much appreciated. The need is still great.

There is a list above the box of the things that are most useful to them at the moment.

We continue to hold in our prayers all those who are in poor health or have other difficulties and problems. Thank you to everyone who helps in whatever way they are able to. Your prayers and support are very much appreciated.

#### **Date for your diary:**

**World Day of Prayer** is on **Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> March**. The service this year has been prepared by the women of Nigeria. Our local service is at 2.30 pm, 6<sup>th</sup> March, at Grove Methodist Church. We hope you will be able to join us.

### **Safeguarding**

The Methodist Church is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its life and ministry.

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture.

This means we will:

- promote the welfare of children, young people and adults
- work to prevent abuse from occurring
- seek to protect and respond well to those that have been abused

If you have, or become aware of any concern, you must contact your Church's Safeguarding Officer :-

Grove :

Lynda Culley 07759 085336 or your minister Revd Georgina on 01235 219070

Wantage :

Ken Smith 01235 767545 or Revd Bruce on 01235 813242

You must not speak to others about your concerns or investigate them yourself.

## **WANTAGE**

### **Financial Crisis**

At a special Church Council on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January, the Church Council received a report and recommendations from the working party appointed at the October Church Council to address the financial situation that was revealed in the Treasurer's report to the Council.

The following recommendations were confirmed:

- 1 The responsibility for a Benevolent Fund would be transferred to the Circuit, conditional on the Circuit Meeting approving the creation of such a fund and a means of funding it. On formation £100 would be transferred from Wantage Benevolent Fund to the Circuit Benevolent Fund and the remaining balance be divided between local charities.
- 2 December Circuit Assessment be paid with the shortfall in the Central Finance Board account being covered from the church Model Trust Fund.
- 3 Wantage will not make voluntary contributions to "Methodist causes" (eg the Methodist Property Fund) from the general fund until the church's finances are robust.
- 4 The contract for cleaning the premises will be limited to the Hall and will only happen once a week (Thursday). The Chapel will be cleaned by our own volunteers to whom we are extremely grateful.
- 5 Donations for refreshments after morning worship shall go to the General Fund.
- 6 Donations for refreshments at other events should be shared between the church General Fund and charities at the discretion of the organisers.
- 7 The church should organise a Gift Day and/or fundraising events during this year.
- 8 Church members should be encouraged to review their free-will giving annually in the light of price inflation.
- 9 Property & Finance Committee should remain responsible for assessing ways of reducing expenditure and then overseeing their implementation as a priority.

### **Welcome and Thanks**

At the special Church Council on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January, the Church Council appointed Jan Abrahall and Rodney Tillotson as Church Stewards. We thank them for accepting this important role in the life of the Church.

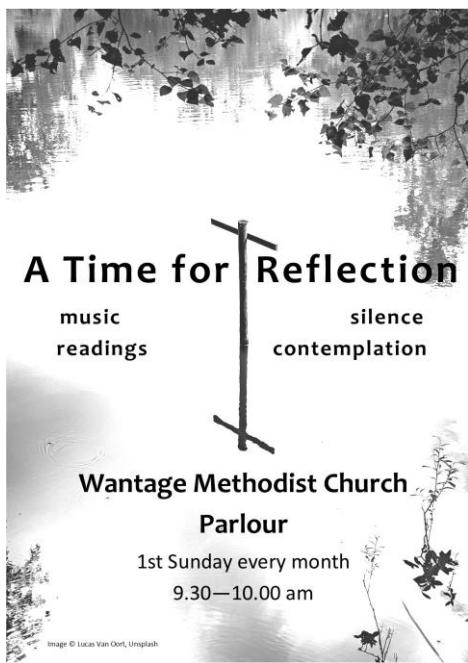
### **Recommendation from Helen**

### **A useful app...**

Having been told of the app **lectio365**, I have been using it for a while now and have found it really helpful in spending time with God. Just thought I would share that with the church.

## A Time for Reflection

*Jane Kent and Helen Carter*



On **February 1<sup>st</sup>**, the first Sunday of the month, we have a 'Time for Reflection' in the Parlour or Godfrey Room from 9:30 - 10 am.

There will be some music, a reading from the lectionary for that day, some questions to ponder individually and the opportunity to share any thoughts briefly if you wish before finishing with some music.

Everyone welcome!

## Tuesday Afternoon Prayer and Study Group

*Carolyn Roche*

This is an open and friendly group who meet for Bible Study and prayer each Tuesday at 2 pm in the Parlour. Please feel free to join us.

During February we will be continuing with our Life Builder Study on Ephesians – Wholeness for a broken World.

Dates for February:

3 <sup>rd</sup>	Week 3 – Amazing Grace	Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10
10 <sup>th</sup>	Week 4 – We Are One	Reading: Ephesians 2:11-22
17 <sup>th</sup>	Week 5 – Prisoner and Preacher	Reading: Ephesians 3
24 <sup>th</sup>	Week 6 – Unity & Uniqueness	Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16

If you have any queries or someone or a situation you would like us to pray for, you can contact Carolyn by telephone on 07906 518323 or email [ciroche48@hotmail.com](mailto:ciroche48@hotmail.com)

## Lent 2026 House Group

*Alison Phillips*

Once more we approach the season of Lent in order to prepare for Holy week and Easter, and you are warmly invited to our home to ponder on the events that led to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The meetings begin on **Thursday February 19<sup>th</sup>** at 10 am for coffee and run from 10.30 to 12.00 mid day at 1, Mill Paddock, Letcombe Regis.

Please contact Alison or Clive Phillips (01235 760335) if you would like to join us. The material for this year has not been chosen yet, but please let us know if you would be interested and I will put further information in the weekly notices.

## Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home

*June Grunwald*

In December we studied John the Baptist. This was a delightful session and made special as a newish resident had decided to join the group having just been given one of our knitted angels by a member of staff. In January we studied the Baptism of Jesus and a number of residents who hadn't come for a while joined the group.

Our next session will be held on **Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> February** and our bible passage will be Matthew 5:13-20 (Salt and Light). Elmbrook Bible Study is held at the care home on Grove Road, on the second Monday of the month at 2.30 pm, lasting between 30 and 45 minutes.

As my health has improved a little, I have managed to visit the care home between bible study sessions and it was good to see one resident back in the care home after a spell in hospital.

The group members have changed over the year and recently a couple of regular attendees from the care home have passed away. I am thankful for the folk at church who regularly come to the bible study. It makes a great deal of difference to have a few people from church to join in the discussion.

## Pastoral

*Ann Barber*

During our Carol Service, on the last Sunday of Advent and the shortest day of the year, Bruce read his own interpretation of the familiar words of 1 Corinthians 13. He changed Paul's focus on LOVE as the greatest gift, to his own emphasis on HOPE, substituting it throughout the verses with which we are so familiar. It was Bruce's expression of our longing for hope, particularly during difficult times. How infinite are the blessings we receive – we do not have to choose just one, as God's gifts of faith, hope and love are all freely and limitlessly offered to us.

One of our former ministers chose the poem "Sometimes" by Sheenagh Pugh, illustrating our longing for comfort, as the theme of their 2025 Christmas letter. Its final sentence complements Bruce's focus on hope in Corinthians – "The sun will sometimes melt a field of sorrow that seemed hard frozen.". Whatever anxieties we feel, the surety of God's concern for each one of us provides the hope to which we can cling at all times.

As we begin a new year, what stronger reassurance can we seek? The certainty of God's sustaining love for each one of us can fill our hearts with hope and comfort, and we can receive this freely through our trust and faith in his promises.

The news that Bruce and Karen had become grandparents came just too late for our previous newsletter. We offer our warmest good wishes, knowing that the birth of Zacchaeus has already brought them great joy. We give thanks to God for his safe arrival and pray for God's grace and blessings on his parents, David and Sarah, and all of the family in their task of nurturing this precious gift of a baby boy.

We have learned with sadness about the bereavements experienced by two members of our church family at the end of last year. Kay Goodwin, who worshipped with us for many decades until moving to be near her daughter, lost her son Moray in November.

A few weeks ago, Eileen Rennie's sole remaining brother, Bill, died at his home in Canada. We pray for Kay and Eileen as they mourn the loss of their loved ones, trusting that they feel the comfort of God's love surrounding and strengthening them both.

It is a difficult time at present for several of our church family members living at Richmond Village. John Checketts is currently in hospital which has necessitated Jo moving from their apartment to the Maple Care Unit. Similarly, at the moment, John and Val Broadbent are being cared for in the Sycamore Unit as their health problems can be better addressed there than in their own apartment. During the autumn, Mary Spalding made the same move on a permanent basis and is also now resident in the Sycamore Unit. She regrets no longer being able to worship with us but contributes greatly to the Richmond Village Bible Study Group which is led by Helen Carter.

We hold them all in our thoughts and pray that God's love will strengthen and support them through this difficult time, alongside each one in our fellowship facing illness, mobility problems and other health issues.

Anna Bourchier suffered a fall in December with serious consequences, including the possibility of having no movement in her right arm and hand. From hospital she had a stay in Charlton Lodge Care Home but is now back in Fleur de Lis awaiting more hospital appointments and potential operations. We pray for Anna's healing, with full assurance that God will protect and care for her throughout the treatments she faces.

We give thanks for Pam Johnson's improved health, enabling her to return home after a stay in the JR and then three weeks in the Sanctuary Care Home. Pam is also pleased to be well enough to worship with us again on Sundays.

Thanks to the skill and hard work of Jan Abrahall, the flowers in church from the Carol Service, throughout the Christmas period, until almost the end of January have looked wonderful. We now have lots of spaces on the flower rota. If you feel able to fill any of the blanks, please add your name to the list in the Link corridor.

..... and a post deadline PS. May I add a personal note to this month's report? Thank you so much for all of the cards and gifts I have received today, having just joined the ever growing group of WMC octogenarians. I feel very blessed by such lovely messages and all of the love and kindness they convey. Today follows yesterday's Covenant Service in which Bruce spoke of the opportunity at the beginning of this year to increase the kindness we can offer. I can certainly acknowledge the joy I have felt by all the kindness offered to me today, and I am very grateful.

### **Christmas flowers**

*Helen Carter*

I am sure we have all appreciated the wonderful Christmas flowers that have adorned the church for a good number of weeks. We owe Jan Abrahall our grateful thanks for those arrangements that have given us such pleasure. The church is going to feel really bare once those are no longer present.

## Prayer focus

### A prayer that we may walk in love

Lord God, may we walk in love.

May we walk slowly, step by step, so that we can be still in your presence.

May we walk sometimes in silence, so that we can know rest and peace.

May we walk with a spring in our step, and go forward with joy.

May we walk gazing outwards, seeing the beauty of the world around us.

May we walk looking more widely, conscious of other people and their needs.

May we walk in faith, knowing that you are beside us on every path that we take.

May we walk in love. Amen.

*Catherine James, local preacher, Derby Circuit*

### **Please pray for**

Adrian, Alison C & family, Alyson, Caroline, Carol Mackinder, Doug & Anne Hatto, Edwina, Eileen, Emma Wright & family, Findley, Mark, Angela & family, Geoff, Gloria Smith, Hannah Morton. Hunter, Jade, Jane Robinson, John & Jo, June G, John Broadbent, Jane & Emma Soffe & family, June Hartle, Ken & Grace Wright, Lucas & family, Marc Hewson's family, Mary Spalding, Meriel, Mick Glover, Norma, Peter, Richard, Richard in York, Sharon, Sue, Sonia, Tony G, Trudy, William Chadwick, Vicky, Robin & Becky Legge & all the Legge family.

The community of Wantage Methodist Church as we tackle our financial crisis.

All at Bullingdon Prison, staff, prisoners and visitors,

Our Ministers, Community Chaplains, Local Preachers & Worship Leaders, [kids@church](mailto:kids@church) and Street Pastors, Cornerstone and those members of our church family who, through frailty or ill health, can no longer worship with us.

If you have any queries or prayer requests you can contact me (Carolyn Roche) by telephone on 01235 764310 or email: [ciroche48@hotmail.com](mailto:ciroche48@hotmail.com)

### **WMC Prayer WhatsApp group**

We have set up a prayer WhatsApp group so that we can share requests for prayers that can't wait until they appear in the weekly notices or the monthly newsletter. It would be so good if we could add others to this group which currently has 7 of us in it. Please let Helen Carter know if you would like to be involved in responding to urgent prayer requests. Thank you.

### **Prayer tree**

Anyone can leave a prayer request on the tree. It is appreciated if a date is written on the tag somewhere. No tags are taken off the tree unless circumstances for the person or situation being prayed for change or the tree is full. Please take time to check the tree and choose someone or a situation to pray for or about. Also, if any of the prayer cards on the table feel relevant to you please do take one.

In December we met just before Christmas and had fun sharing in a scratch nativity (people come dressed as whatever character they like and act out the story with a narrator). Baby Eli made a beautiful baby Jesus! We shared a special Christmas breakfast together before finishing with a craft activity.

In January we met and explored the story of Jesus meeting Nathanael and reflected on God being with us at all times, knowing us and loving us. After sharing the Lord's Prayer and doing some craft we enjoyed breakfast together.

It was lovely to welcome Diana to the team yesterday - thank you! We look forward to meeting on **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February** at 9.30 in the church hall.

**Here are our dates for the next few months: February 15<sup>th</sup>, March 15<sup>th</sup>, April 19<sup>th</sup>, May 17<sup>th</sup>.**

Kids@Church is an informal, monthly get-together for children and their families, where we explore a Bible story, engage in an activity and finish with a shared breakfast. New friends always welcome!

(for more information please feel free to give Jane a call /text on 07443 420205)

## **Knit & Chat**

*Carolyn Roche*

We are now in our 10<sup>th</sup> year of knitting angels which means since Christmas 2017 well over 10,000 angels have brought pleasure and comfort to people in and around Wantage. The group continues to meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of each month which will be **2<sup>nd</sup> February** and **16<sup>th</sup> February**. Do come and join us in the hall at 2 pm for a relaxing time – it includes a break for tea and cake/biscuits. If you need wool, have any other queries or just fancy a chat do please call me. Carolyn Roche 07906 518323

## **Community Café**

*Carolyn Roche*

At last, we are in February when we can begin to look forward to Spring. Weather and winter germs have meant that the café has been a little quieter in January. Thankfully, we have managed to provide volunteers for kitchen and welcome duties. We continue to open each Monday from 9 am to 12 noon, providing a warm and welcoming space. Refreshments from the kitchen and conversations with the welcomers are appreciated by regulars and visitors. Please let me know if you feel you could occasionally take a turn on the rota or provide a cake for the refreshments. From September to November the cafe donations were for Macmillan Support and we raised a total of £600.01 – thank you! Donations this month are for the October Club. Do come and join us and bring a friend.

## Food Bank

*Helen Carter*

The statistics for 2025 are both wonderful and shocking at the same time. The number of parcels taken out to those in need was 1033 and the number of people that fed - individuals, couples and families, including children of course, was 3036. Additionally 100 Christmas hampers were given out.

So a huge thanks to all those donating both goods and money. Those donations helped to ensure that the parcels could be put together and taken out to those in need. Please continue donating. Thank you.

## Caritas Youth Choir

### Keep the date free – 14<sup>th</sup> March

*Gill Skidmore*

For ten years now Wantage Methodist Church has supported Caritas Youth Choir since it was set up by Sheenagh Dernie solely to support Christian Aid through its music with children and young people. Now it is Caritas's turn to support Wantage Methodist Church by holding a **teatime concert** on **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March**, all proceeds from which, as a one-off, will be donated to our church as our thank you. The concert will be at 4 pm, which means that by March it will still be light, and tea or coffee and home-made cakes will be served in the interval.

Caritas is a small choir – we currently only have 17 singers – but the members are very talented, and in popular demand. We had to turn down several requests to sing last term, but we still performed in six venues, including the Music for Youth Prom in the Royal Albert Hall and an Arvo Pärt 90<sup>th</sup> birthday concert in Oxford, where we sang in Estonian in front of the composer's son and the Estonian ambassador! Some of you, I know, heard one of our girls singing in the WSB performance of The Snowman at the Beacon in December.

Sadly, unless we find somebody to take over, the choir will be doing its final concert on **11<sup>th</sup> July** this year (watch this space) as Sheenagh has decided it is time to retire, so this concert at Wantage Methodist will be rather special. We have asked the children to tell us what their special favourites are and we are trying to make up the two concert programs to showcase these. We expect to have some of our former members joining us for part of the summer concert.

We warmly invite you to buy tickets for 14<sup>th</sup> March, which will be on sale shortly (watch the church notices) to support our own church's struggling finances, to listen to a concert which we can assure you that you will enjoy and eat delicious cake!

In relation to cake, please could we ask the help of our wonderful **volunteer bakers**? Alison Phillips, who is our invaluable extra pair of hands for all things Caritas, is going to organise our refreshments on the day. If you are able to provide some cakes, please let Alison or Gill know.

## What is happening on the Wantage premises at present?

Sunday	9:30 am	Kids@Church	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday
	10:30 am	Morning Worship In person and on Zoom	Weekly
Monday	Morning	Drop-in Café in the Hall	Weekly
	Afternoon	Knit & Chat in the Hall	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday
Tuesday	Afternoon	Prayer & Study Group in the Parlour	Weekly
Friday	Afternoon	Caritas Youth Choir	Weekly in term

### Users

Sunday	5:00 pm	WCC Prayer Fellowship	Chapel/Hall	Last Sunday
Monday	Evening	Slimming World CA Meeting	Hall Parlour	Weekly Weekly
Tuesday	Morning	MIND	Hall	Weekly
	Evening	Wantage Camera Club	Hall	Weekly
	Evening	My Life My Choice	Parlour	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday
Wednesday	Evening	Wantage Sings	Hall	Weekly
Thursday	Midday	KAWI	Hall	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday
Friday	Morning	Mothers & Toddlers	Hall & Parlour	Weekly in term
Saturday	Morning	Dads Out	Hall & Parlour	1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday
	Midday	NA Meeting	Parlour	Weekly

### Other Bookings

#### February

Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Music Makers	Evening
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Wantage Sings	Afternoon

#### March

Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup>	WCC Craft Matters Caritas Concert	Morning Afternoon
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# **SERVICES during FEBRUARY**

## **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February**

Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12

10:30 am Wantage

Peter Hemmings

10:30 am Grove

Local Arrangements

6:30 pm Prayer for Revival at Grove

## **Ordinary 4**

## **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February**

### **Racial Justice**

## **Ordinary 5**

Isaiah 58:1-9a; Psalm 112:1-9; 1 Corinthians 2:1-12; Matthew 5:13-20

10:30 am Wantage

Local Arrangements

10:30 am Grove

Carolyn Luscombe

## **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February      Church Action on Poverty      Sunday before Lent**

Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 or 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9

9:30 am Wantage      Kids@Church

10:30 am Wantage      Rev Bruce Thompson

This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion

10:30 am Grove      Rev Georgina Bondzi-Simpson

This service will include the sacraments of Baptism & Holy Communion

## **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February**

## **Lent 1**

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Psalm 32; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

10:30 am Wantage

Belinda Kaur

10:30 am Grove

Ian Sturt

## DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

### FEBRUARY

Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup>	6:30 pm	Prayer for Revival at Grove	p9
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Coffee Morning at Grove	p9
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup>	2:30 pm	Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home	p13
<b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup></b>	9:30 am	Kids@Church at Wantage	p16

### Deadline for March Newsletter

### Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> ASH WEDNESDAY

Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Lent House Group at 1 Paddock Close	
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 pm	Grove Film Club	p9
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	12 noon	In Conversation at Wallingford	p5
	2:15 pm	Grove Tuesday Fellowship	p9

### MARCH

Friday 6 <sup>th</sup>	2:30 pm	World Day of Prayer at Grove Methodist Church	p10
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup>	4:00 pm	Caritas Youth Choir Concert at Wantage	p17

**The Crown Singers present**

**MISERERE**

**Sacred music by female composers**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

**3PM, St John Vianney Church,**

**Charlton Road, Wantage**

Choral works by Imogen Holst, Amy Beach,  
Marianna Martines and Tobrinka Tabakova

Tickets £12 including refreshments under 16s free

Tickets available on the door