

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

**GROVE
&
WANTAGE
METHODIST
NEWS**


The Methodist Church

March 2026



Ministers

Grove - Rev Georgina Bondzi-Simpson – Tel: 01235 219070
g.bondzi-simpson@methodist.org.uk

Wantage - Rev Bruce Thompson – Tel: 01235 813242
revbrucet@yahoo.com

When a minister is not available, please talk to one of the Stewards listed below,
who will put you in touch:

Helen Carter : 01235 764810
Ian Sturt : 07426 772761

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 **next Newsletter** (April) should be sent to the editor by email,
phone or in writing by **Sunday 22nd March**

email : wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com

Tel : 07710 214601

Editors : Gill & Gordon Skidmore

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

Wantage web site www.wantagemethodist.org.uk

Circuit web site www.wantab.org.uk

Newsletter Contribution deadline dates – 2026

April	Sunday 22 nd March
May	Sunday 19 th April
June	Sunday 24 th May
July/August	Sunday 21 st June

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Methodist Worship Book Pg 146)

The season of Lent which prepares us for Easter begins with one word: **Remember.** “Remember,” says the minister, as a cross of ash and dust is traced on our brows, “that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” It is a sober beginning to the serious business of Lenten prayer and penitence. As we reflect on those things that have defined our lives for good or evil and made us who we are, we also remember that we share a common fate and end. The Gregorian chant, “Media vita in morte sumus” (the Latin for “In the midst of life we are in death”), acknowledges human mortality and fallibility and acknowledges that death, both spiritual and physical, is an ever-present possibility and reality.

In ‘The Notebook’ by Nicholas Sparks, memory plays a crucial role in shaping identity. Allie, suffering from dementia, is unable to recall her life or recognise her family. Living in a nursing home, Noah reads their love story to her each day from a notebook—a story Allie wrote when diagnosed, hoping not to forget. On the first page of the notebook were the instructions “read this to me and I will remember and come back to you”. Sometimes, this repetitive act activates remembering in Allie, and the person who has been lost deep within her dementia is resurrected. For Noah, by taking part in the very act of remembering, there is hope; hope that in some small way Allie will come back to him, even if only for a moment. Remembering for Noah and Allie is how together they can continue to embody their story.

Remembering what has come before is not a bad way to start anything important. We recall the milestones of our lives—the births, baptisms, weddings and graduations. They provide stability and strength and acts of communal remembrance such as services on Remembrance Day reinforce collective identity and purpose. Most of us also remember our own vulnerability and deficiencies and our failings at some of the things we have done and left undone. We recollect these things not because we can alter what has been but because in the act of remembering and repenting, we are transformed and made new. All that we do as the people of God is in some measure a recollection of what God has done for us. The Jews, our spiritual ancestors, still celebrate Passover. They commemorate events thousands of years ago when God led Moses and the people of Israel from burning bush and through scorching desert sands into the freedom of the Promised Land. To this day, the Jews begin the feast of Passover with a recitation of the great events of their history and redemption. They dare not forget who they are nor where they came from.

As Christians, remembering takes us back to our roots in the cross. That is where we come from. At our baptism, the minister signed us with the cross, and we were “marked as Christ’s own for ever;” and as you approach the altar table on Sunday morning to receive communion, the celebrant reminds you to “take the bread and wine in remembrance that Christ died for you.”

Our Lenten journey ends on Good Friday in the full meaning of the cross. We must remember and hold on to the knowledge that in the cross, the order of the universe

is transformed, and evil and pain are overcome. We remember that life and its meaning are not found in length of days, but in how we live our lives.

Even though the season of Lent provides the opportunity for reflection, self-examination, penitence, and self-denial, it is, in reality, a celebration of the kingdom so close at hand. Our spiritual sacrifices and acts of penitence are not ends in themselves but an assurance of God's love at work within us. In Matthew 6, one of the gospel readings for Ash Wednesday, Jesus tells us, "Put oil on your head, and wash your face." Put away your gloom. In that reading Jesus advises us not to "look dismal" or smug, as some might who practise their piety before others and seek only praise and a reward for their efforts. Let us therefore remember that our spiritual sacrifices and acts of penitence are not ends in themselves but an assurance of God's love at work within us.

Our Lenten journey has begun. During this journey of conversion, transformation, hope and new life,

Remember...

The journey takes us to Calvary, but it does not end in death.

Remember...

From the ashes of our sin God will raise us up to new life in the resurrection of his Son.

Remember...

Death and mortality do not hold any power over us!

"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor 15: 57)

Every blessing,

Georgina

**You are warmly invited to a
Retreat and Bible Study
led by Rev'd Richard Andrew
(President of the Methodist Conference 2025-26)
18th April 2026 10 am to 3 pm
taking place at
Thornborough Methodist Church .
The Green, Thornborough MK18 2DL
This will also be on Zoom**

**Please contact the District Office if you would like to attend:
office@northamptonmethodistdistrict.co.uk**

The Supper at Emmaus, 1958

Ceri Richards (1903-1971)

Visitors to the Chapel at St Edmund Hall, Oxford University will be struck by the painting over the altar. *The Supper at Emmaus* by Ceri Richards was commissioned by the college with six artists invited to submit pieces, half of them have works in the Methodist Collection: they're Lee-Elliott, Roy de Maistre and the winning artist Ceri Richards. The preparatory sketch for the altar piece work is the only work by Richards included in the Collection. The sketch is a faithful representation of the final work. It is vividly bright with rich yellows and blues, pregnant with the possibility of something momentous happening.



The Supper at Emmaus, with Jesus breaking bread for his two travelling companions, has been a favourite subject for many artists over the centuries. Caravaggio's masterpiece in the National Gallery enthralled many a viewer. He expertly captured the moment of realisation on the part of the companions that this is the resurrected Jesus. There is an element of surprise in Richards' work also with the companion whose back is to the viewer about to rise from the edge of his seat. Interestingly the second companion, in green, appears to remain in a state of prayer unaware of the significance of the moment. His feet seem

to be firmly placed on the floor. I cannot help but think this is Richards' attempt to highlight that some recognise Jesus as the Son of God, whilst others do not, even though the latter may be engaged in a religious act.

Because the work in the Methodist collection is not the finished product it adds something to the urgency, to the fleeting moment; there is movement and a transitory feeling to the painting. This is reinforced by the fact that Richards lightly sketched the torso of Jesus, it is not solid, but transparent-like, indicating that Jesus has now appeared not in earthly form but in a post resurrection state. Only the head, hands, and right foot appear flesh-like. Richards emphasises the post resurrection state of Jesus further by bathing him and the table in light – a bright yellow a cross no less. This cross is dispelling the darkness of the room and the mood of the companions. I find it interesting that though the companion on the right has not yet recognised Jesus in his post resurrection state the light emanating from Jesus is cast across his face and hands – there is hope for us all even when we are not aware of it.

Every blessing

Bruce

Places of Light and Dark
Readings & Reflections for Lent & Easter
Available at Wantage & Grove chapels

WANTAGE & ABINGDON METHODIST CIRCUIT

INVITES YOU TO JOIN WITH OTHERS FROM CHURCHES IN THE CIRCUIT

Going for Growth

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



SATURDAY 9 MAY

KINGSTON BAGPUIZE WITH SOUTHMOOR VILLAGE HALL, OX13 5BY

10– 3

ATTENDANCE IS FREE

LUNCH PROVIDED

FURTHER DETAILS FROM YOUR MINISTER

Zoe Richardson, Unsplash

The Revd Jesse Jackson

– remembered by those in the Methodist Church in Britain

The death has been announced of the American civil rights campaigner, the Reverend Jesse Jackson. Paying tribute, his family described his “unwavering commitment to justice, equality and human rights helped shape a global movement for freedom and dignity”.

In 1985, the Reverend Jackson visited the UK and preached at Wesley’s Chapel in London, as well as several other Methodist and Baptist churches.

Alex Sarsah is a member of the Chapel and was there for the visit– he reflects on the events of the day:

“I was then driving 'my girls' to and from the church. He was slightly late for his schedule, nevertheless he pulled a reasonable crowd and set alight the Revd John Wesley's pulpit. After his message, he came down and answered some 'political questions'. He continued and took his message to the foyer, then to the yard. The political press were in full attendance jostling for space with their questions. He no doubt marvelled the crowd and quickly filled the yard which made him to overstay his schedule. Visibly exhausted, he went to the office and had tea with the Clergy, where he 'autographed' my Bible.”

The Rev Dr Vincent Jambawo from the Belonging Together Ministers Group of the Methodist Church in Britain has written this memorial message for and on behalf of the group:

The BTMG of the Methodist Church in Britain joins a worldwide choir in mourning the passing of the Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson Sr., a towering yet loving minister of the Gospel, a courageous and yet compassionate human rights activist, and without doubt one of the most enduring moral icons of our age. We give thanks to God for a life poured out in the service of justice, dignity, and the beloved community. We thank God for a life lived with extraordinary courage, prophetic conviction, and unwavering commitment to the liberation of all God’s children. We pray for his family, loved ones, colleagues, and all whose lives were transformed by his ministry. May the God of consolation surround them with peace. And may we honour Reverend Jackson’s memory not only with our words, but through our ongoing commitment to equity, courage, and steadfast hope.

His ministry was never confined to the pulpit or the church pews. Formed and shaped in the crucible of the US Civil Rights Movement, he walked alongside the Reverend Dr Martin Luther King Jr., sharing in the struggle for racial equality and the dream of a world where all God’s children can flourish. His founding of Operation PUSH and the Rainbow Coalition expanded that vision into a global movement for economic justice, political empowerment, and human rights. His voice—bold, insistent, and grounded in the Gospel of a loving and caring God — resonated across continents, calling societies to confront racism, poverty, militarism, and any

system that diminished human worth. On his death, we pray that we be enabled to respond to that call with integrity, dignity and courage.

Across decades, the Revd Jackson stood shoulder to shoulder with leaders who shaped the moral imagination of the world: Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, the Frontline States leaders, and many others who laboured for liberation in contexts of deep and harrowing suffering. His ministry crossed borders, languages, and traditions, always insisting that justice is indivisible and that none of us is free until all of us are free. For those of us in the BTMG, Rev. Jackson's life resonates deeply and profoundly, tugging at the very heart and roots of our identity and our belonging. The BTMG seeks to nurture inclusion, justice, dignity, and belonging within the Methodist Church in Britain. Reverend Jackson's witness embodied all these values. His commitment to inclusion, his insistence that diversity is a gift rather than a threat, and his unwavering belief that faith must be lived publicly and courageously speak directly to our calling. His witness must surely strengthen our commitment to build communities where every culture, every story, and everybody is honoured as part of God's household. If we need a reminder and encouragement to sing our song and tell our story, then in the Reverend Jesse Jackson, we have an unparalleled paragon.

We grieve the loss of a venerated Black minister of religion whose footsteps traced the same pilgrim paths as King, Mandela, Tutu, and so many other giants of justice. Yet we also stand in profound pride and gratitude. Rev. Jackson's legacy is not merely historical—it is a living inheritance. His example continues to challenge and inspire us as we seek to embody a Methodist discipleship that is inclusive, justice-shaped, and globally connected. We remember too his gift of language—words that stirred the conscience of nations and strengthened the weary. Among his many enduring messages, one stands out as a beacon of hope: “Keep hope alive. Keep hope alive. Keep hope alive.”

For now, we commend the Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson Sr. to God's eternal embrace, trusting that the seeds he planted will continue to bear fruit in movements for justice across the world. May his memory be a blessing, a summons, and a source of courage for all who labour for a world where belonging, justice, dignity, and solidarity are not empty platitudes but the lived reality for all.

“Keep hope alive”—and may we do so in his honour.

Pray for clear thinking as headteachers manage tight budgets

- Pray for wisdom as they set the ethos of the school
- Also pray for school leadership to know how to deal with the great rise in numbers of children with special educational needs ("SEND"), and the extra strain that puts on funding and staffing.

Buildings

- Pray particularly for the major building work and expansion at Grove CE school that will start in the summer of this year: for safety, good management, and for the children and staff as they will have periods of time in temporary classrooms
- Continue to pray for St John's Academy Secondary: the building is not yet ready, so pray for the Year 7 children currently being taught in the Primary school building, and for the building work to be completed soon.

Christian witness in schools

- Give thanks for the Open the Book team in Grove and the good relationship they have with Grove CE school, and pray for the children to hear the message of the stories they present
- Pray for the Challow Open the Book team, who are struggling to find enough volunteers
- Give thanks for the BeSpace team running Prayer Spaces across Oxfordshire, and pray for their new team member, Vicky Roberts, who will be taking the lead on:
 - inspiring and equipping churches to run prayer and reflection spaces in schools
 - piloting school retreats with churches
- Pray for the Grove CE school prayer space taking place in the week of 9th February, and for the time the children will spend in the parish church
- Give thanks for the links Libby Hawkness-Smith has with local schools, including King Alfred's Academy, as a Methodist Church Community Chaplain, and continue to pray for the growth of Christian chaplaincy in our local schools.

Other concerns

- Please pray about the breakdown of families, and the impact this has on children
 - for those parents dealing with marriage breakdown, and for them to be ready to put their children first
 - for the children caught up in difficult or sometimes chaotic family situations, and for the school staff supporting them
 - for us and for our churches: to know God's strength, and how to be able to help
 - for a better vision of marriage and family life to spread in our area and our society
- Please also pray about the pressure on children coming from the internet, smart phones, and social media
 - please pray for these things to be used wisely, and against the negative influence they can have on children's psychology and emotional well-being
 - for schools and parents to know how to govern and oversee how children use the internet.

Schools in the local area

- **Grove:** Grove CE, Millbrook School, St John's Academy
- **Wantage:** King Alfred's Academy (West Site, and Centre Site), Wantage CE, Stockham Primary, Fitzwaryn, Charlton Primary, Wantage Primary Academy

- **Villages:** Ridgeway CE (Childrey), St Nicholas (E. Challow), St James (E. Hanney), St Blaise (Milton Heights)

Next Meeting

4pm–5pm, Wednesday, 22nd April 2026, St John's Rooms, Grove Parish Church
Feel free to share this summary of prayer points with your churches and fellowships.
We welcome anyone who feels moved to pray for our schools.

John Wilson: johnmwilson2012@gmail.com

Helen Harwood: andrewandhelenharwood@yahoo.co.uk

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
A service for everyone!
Friday 6 March
I will give you rest, come

Nigeria 2026 Grove Methodist Church
2.30 p.m.
followed by refreshments
All are
Welcome



INFORMED PRAYER PRAYERFUL ACTION
24-7 365 Days a year Prayer movement Ecumenical International Women-led
wwdp.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 233242

Wantage & Grove Street Pastors

Quarterly News January 2026



A Happy New year to everyone reading this! No doubt Christmas and New year may seem a long time ago for some of you. As I look back on 2025 and Christmas I have some fond memories of the Street Pastor events that we did. In the summer on the longest day we spent the evening giving out pasties and on the shortest day in winter we went around the pubs singing carols. They were real highlights for me as people were so pleased to see us and receive from us whether it was a pasty or to sing along with our carols. I think however, one moment really stood out to me at Christmas as someone came up to me and, even though they were a student, they wanted to give to our cause. They didn't have a lot but they still wanted to give. As volunteers, sometimes we can feel like that, "I don't have a lot but I still want to give to help people" or, "I want to pray or give up my time to be on the streets to help people". Jesus, when feeding the 5000, took what had been given and gave thanks - and God multiplied it. As we give to the Street Pastors (it might seem small) but, I hope and pray that God will multiply it and therefore, I look forward to 2026 and all that God has in store for Wantage and Grove Street Pastors.

How we helped in the Streets

Winter weather hasn't stopped us nor the people we seek to help from going out in Wantage and Grove. We helped a lady who had lost her friend and her phone by letting her use her social media on our phone. Early November, in Grove, our team cleared up lots of litter at the Skate Park following the fireworks event. In Wantage our team helped a lady get her drunk friend home. We walked with them and made sure they made it home safely. We attempted to bring peace to a situation where a man had got into an altercation with a group of lads. Despite our presence and the assistance of two other ladies, a scuffle broke out but the police arrived within minutes. Our New Year's Eve patrol was busy but peaceful. We helped several people who were unwell from too much alcohol. Our afternoon teams continue to build connections with the town's young people.

Street Pastor Sunday

Street Pastor Sundays are times when we visit our partner churches to share all the good things we've been doing and how we've been caring, listening and helping in Wantage and Grove.

We want to thank those who support our work and we want to inspire others to get involved with us caring for people in Wantage and Grove month by month.

Join us on **Sunday 12th April** at **Wantage Baptist Church** from 10.30 am.

Spotted in Lanzarote - 1,700 miles from home



Spotted in Lanzarote our very own Wantage & Grove Street Pastors flip-flops catching some winter sun down at the beach! Where will your flip-flops take you? Send us your flip-flop holiday snaps on email to... wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk

Fundraising Fun

We had lots of fun at the end of 2025 and raised some funds at the same time! Our infamous (bigger, not necessarily better) Curry & Quiz Night was a huge success and raised £1,275 on the night.

With a larger venue we were able to cater for 15 teams, which made it a much bigger event than previous years!

Our thanks go to everyone who helped us in so many different ways: planning, cooking, serving, quizzing, helping, arranging, clearing, stacking, cleaning! We are also very grateful to Grove Parish Council who gifted us the Old Mill Hall for the occasion.

BIGGER not necessarily BETTER

Curry & Quiz Night 2026 Saturday 7th November!

Carol Singing

On a cold, dark December night, a small group of Wantage & Grove Street Pastors and friends joined together to help keep Christ in Christmas and to bring joy and hope to several local pubs through carol singing. Armed with sing-a-long carol sheets our band of carol singers made a huge impact getting everyone singing along to their favourite carols! They even raised £175 too. Our thanks go to Howard Hill on guitar, our singers and to King Alfred's Head, The Swan, The Bear Hotel and The Shoulder.

Thank you for your tuneful support!

Website: www.wantageandgrove.streetpastors.org.uk

Email: wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk

Mobile: 07554 655 594

Facebook: facebook.com/wantageandgrovestreetpastors

Instagram: [wantage_grove_pastors](https://instagram.com/wantage_grove_pastors)

TikTok: [wantage_grove_pastors](https://tiktok.com/@wantage_grove_pastors)

Registered Charity: 1205598

Supported by grants from Oxfordshire County Council:

TVP PCC Community Fund: Grove Parish Council: Oxford City Council

Thank you to all our supporters!

GROVE

Ecumenical “Prayer for Revival” is held on the first Sunday of each month in our church. We meet next on **Sunday, 1st March** from 6.30 pm till 8 pm.

You are invited to come and pray with us. All are welcome.

World Day of Prayer is on **Friday, 6th March**. This service, prepared by the women of Nigeria, takes place all round the world on this day, from sunrise to sunset.

Our local service is at **2.30 pm** in **Grove Methodist Church**. We hope you will come and join in this ecumenical service with folk from Wantage, Grove and surrounding villages. To be followed by refreshments.

Coffee morning is on **Saturday, 7th March** from 10.00 am till 12 noon in the church. Handmade cards will be on sale. Proceeds are for Freyja’s Fund.

This charity, set up by Freyja’s family, makes funds available to staff at the J.R. Hospital to help children suffering with cancer and their families.

Judith and her family are our hosts 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, 20th March** at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room.

We will be showing **“Bugsy Malone”**.

This is a gangster musical comedy film written and directed by Alan Parker. A co-production of the US and UK, it features an ensemble cast, comprising child actors playing adult roles. The film tells the story of the rise of “Bugsy Malone” and the battle for power between “Fat Sam” and “Dandy Dan”.

Cast includes: Jodie Foster, Scott Baio and John Cassisi.

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

Tuesday Fellowship in February is on **Tuesday, 24th February** at 2.15 pm at 29, St John’s Road, Grove, home of Lesley and Richard Hummerston. Our speaker for the afternoon is Elizabeth Wood. You are invited to come along for a time of fellowship together. We look forward to seeing you.

Tuesday Fellowship in March will be on **Tuesday, 31st March** 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 supported the Coffee Morning on Saturday, 7th February. A total of £240 was raised for Water Aid, to which has been added £106.98 from previous Gift Aid, making a total of £346.98. Thank you all for your support.

Date for your diary: Please note: because of the timing of Easter weekend this year, the **April Coffee Morning** will be held on the **second Saturday, 11th April**.

Grove Methodist Church Lent Course 2026

Meetings will be on **Wednesday afternoons**, starting at 2.30 pm. Most will be at the home of Noreen & Peter Hemmings, 8 Vicarage Close, Grove - telephone 01235 762504. Hopefully any change of venue will appear in the weekly notices.

We shall be following Bible passages as per the Methodist Church website. Each study is self-contained so please come whenever you can.

A space to grow together this Lent

Lent is a season of invitation. It begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for 40 days (not counting Sundays) before Easter. As the days lengthen and the earth begins to stir, we're invited to loosen our grip on what holds us back – habits, assumptions, fears – and open ourselves to the renewing presence of God. This journey isn't always easy, but it's rich with possibility. And it's better shared with travelling companions.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| 18 th February | Let go of idols, make room for God | Read Matthew 4:1-11
Jesus is led into the wilderness, where he faces three temptations. |
| 25 th February | Let go of form, embrace the spirit | Read John 3:1-17
Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night. |
| 4 th March | Let go of scarcity, embrace abundance | Read John 4:5-42
Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at a well. |
| 11 th March | Let go of appearances, and embrace what's inside. | Read John 9:1-41 Jesus heals a man born blind. |
| 18 th March | Let go of despair, embrace 'repair' | Read John 11:1-45
Jesus hears that his friend Lazarus has died. |
| 25 th March | Let go of violence, embrace gentleness | Read Matthew 21:1-11 Jesus enters Jerusalem riding a donkey. |
| 1 st April | Let go of fear, embrace joy | Read Matthew 26:17-30
Jesus shares a final meal with his disciples |

Craft Group meets at the Cornerstone Coffee Shop on **Monday afternoons** from 2 pm 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.

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 Choral Society

Vivaldi Gloria

Haydn Te Deum

Mozart Vespers K339

Soprano – Catherine Hooper

Alto – Mia Serracino-Inglott

Tenor – Toshi Ogita

Bass – Jack Redman

Organ – Gabriele Damiani with Orchestra

Conductor – Hannah Zaki

Saturday 21st March 2026 at 7:30 pm

Wantage Parish Church

All Tickets £18 (Under 16s – free)

Available from:

wantagechoralsociety.co.uk

Members of WCS

On the door

Registered charity No 265227

WANTAGE

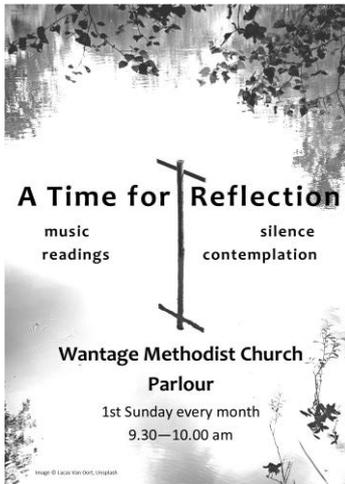
Recommendation from Helen

A useful app... Correction.

Helen wishes to apologise for her error in the February newsletter. The app she referred to is Lectio 365 (not lectio365 as she incorrectly typed in her piece). She thoroughly recommends it for use at any of the times of day it caters for - morning, midday and evening.

A Time for Reflection

Jane Kent and Helen Carter



On **March 1st**, 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 March we will continue with our Life Builder Study on Ephesians – Wholeness for a broken World as well as visiting the Convent for prayer and reflections using the Stations of the Cross during Holy Week.

Date for February:

24th Week 6 – Unity & Uniqueness Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16

Dates for March:

3rd Week 7 – Something Old, Something New Reading: Ephesians 4:17-32

10th Week 8 – Live in Love, Live in Light Reading: Ephesians 5:1-20

17th Week 9 – Love and Respect Reading: Ephesians 5:21-33

24th Week 10 – Honour and Obey Reading: Ephesians 6:1-9

31st Stations of the Cross – prayer and meditations

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

Stations Of The Cross

Carolyn Roche

The Tuesday Prayer and Bible Study group will once again be meeting at St Mary's Convent for prayer and meditations using the Stations of the Cross in the St. Mary Magdalene Chapel. This will take place in Holy Week on **Tuesday 31st March** at 2pm. The beautiful and detailed teak carvings were made by Mother Maribel. It took her 27 years due to her many responsibilities within the convent. The time of reflection is followed by tea/coffee and cake. If anyone would like to join us please can you let me know by **Sunday 22nd March**.

Carolyn Roche: 07906 515323 or ciroche48@hotmail.com

Lent 2026 House Group

Alison Phillips

This year we shall be following another course for Lent from the Cover to Cover series. The title ' A Passion for Christ ' is based on St. Paul's teaching to the church in Corinth where his passion for knowing Christ, for the gospel of Christ, for following and serving Christ was his top priority. As we know, Paul suffered some sort of affliction which turned some people against his teaching, but Paul was not put off by their attitude and it only increased his passion for Christ.

As Paul turned his suffering around to stir up fresh passion in himself for Christ, we will see how a passion for Christ transforms our perspective in any situation.

Our sessions **began on February 19th** from 10:00 am at 1, Mill Paddock. All are welcome. We shall meet **every Thursday in Lent**. The books are now available and cost £6.99 so please let me, Alison Phillips, know if you would like one. You can also buy the book at the Cornerstone bookshop if you prefer. It is helpful if you have read the material the week before as the discussion is based on what we have read.

Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home

June Grunwald

Our next session will be held on **Monday, 9th March**. 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.

Kids@church

Jane, Dave, Cath

In February we heard the story of the greedy farmer and Jesus explaining how the birds do not worry about storing up food in barns... God provides all they need. The children made paper plate birds to remind them that God cares for us all. We enjoyed a delicious Valentine's themed breakfast which was kindly provided by one of the K@c families.

We look forward to meeting on **Sunday 15th March** at 9.30 in the church hall.

Dates for the next few months: **March 15th, April 19th, May 17th**.

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)

Prayer focus

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 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

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. 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. 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.

Caritas Youth Choir

Gill Skidmore

A reminder that Caritas, founded to raise funds for Christian Aid, will be holding a **teatime concert** on **Saturday 14th March**, all proceeds from which, as a one-off, will be donated to our church as a thank you for WMC's support over our ten years of music making. 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.

Buy your **tickets** now from Gill Skidmore.

Alison Phillips, our invaluable support staff member, will be in charge of refreshments. We would be extremely grateful for **offers of cake** for this special occasion.

The words in verse 4 of Psalm 98 form a text with which we are very familiar: “*Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the Earth.*” How well we responded to that invocation during our recent Local Arrangement Service! The verse continues: “*Break forth into joyous song, and sing praises*”. We were invited to do just that as the conclusion of our focus on Kids@Church. It was a very inclusive and uplifting part of our worship as we all joined in the words and actions of “Our God is a great big God”, a song which the children who come to Kids@Church enjoy singing. It may well have revived memories from two or three generations earlier when a chorus with similar actions echoed a similar promise, as we sang “*Wide, wide as the ocean. High as the heavens above. Deep, deep as the deepest sea is my Saviour’s love*”

A further reference to times gone by relates to the convention for celebrating milestone birthdays. In the days when the average age of our congregation was more than a decade below today’s, 80th birthdays and Golden Wedding Anniversaries were considered noteworthy, and merited acknowledgement in the Newsletter. [That was the guideline received on taking over as Pastoral Secretary from Jennie Whymark]. Now, almost a generation later, it is more likely to be 90th birthdays and Diamond Anniversaries. This makes it even more regrettable that I inadvertently failed to mention Glenys Deval’s accession to nonagenarian status last year. Hopefully, alongside the apology, very belated congratulations are acceptable, and we are all delighted that, at age 90, Glenys is still fit and well, and able to worship with us regularly.

This month we are pleased to acknowledge a 95th birthday for Hilary Rewcastle. Until a few years ago, Hilary was part of our congregation every Sunday, always walking to and from church from her home on Charlton Heights. We miss her now that she is no longer able to do that, but we know that Mary Trotter offers Hilary wonderful support as her Pastoral Link, and we send her our love and warmest good wishes on this special birthday.

The list of church family members who are currently going through a difficult time health wise is, regrettably, growing ever longer. It includes our Richmond Village friends, Val and John Broadbent and John Checketts. We continue to hold them all in our thoughts and prayers, and it is good that John B is still able to be with us in church most weeks, with thanks to Libby who brings him when he feels well enough.

From mid-March that will be temporarily impossible, because Libby herself will be out of action as a chauffeuse. The wait for her hip replacement operation is over. We will support her with our prayers and hope that, after 13th March, Libby will be free of pain and able to walk more easily. Similarly we pray that Sue Haithwaite will also be able to experience greater mobility as well as an absence of pain after the completion of her knee replacement operation, having waited patiently for so long. Sue is hoping this will be a day surgery procedure on 16th February. Kelvin Rose is still cheerfully waiting to receive a date for his hip replacement operation, but it is good that, however long the wait, Kelvin still manages to join us in church for Sunday services, as well as attending the Tuesday Bible Study group where his contributions to the discussions are valued and enjoyed.

We were sorry to learn that Jane Robinson has suffered another fall which necessitated a short period in hospital. She is now back at home with the support of carers - as well as much additional help which Gill and Gordon and Alison B. have given to Jane throughout each of her accidents and episodes in hospital. We send Jane our love and our prayers, and look forward to seeing her back in church when she is well enough to re-join us.

The 'Who's Who' display of photos in the Link Corridor has been updated to include our two new Church Stewards, Jan Abraham and Rodney Tillotson. Hopefully the key which identifies the responsibilities held by each person whose photo is on the board, is helpful for knowing who to contact about any aspect of church life. Unfortunately the natural lighting in the corridor is very poor, but there's a light switch close to the door.

Knit & Chat

Carolyn Roche



It was lovely to reflect at the Local Arrangement service in February on how this group has managed to share God's love with the people of Wantage through our knitted angels. Also, the many charities that we have supported with our work. The group continues to meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month which will be **2nd March** and **16th March**. 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

Despite the rain, we have continued to provide a warm, welcoming space for our regulars and for the occasional visitors. Thank you to all the volunteers who have splashed through the puddles and driven through the potholes to help in the café. Also thank you to the cake and scone makers – these are much appreciated by all. Please let me know if you feel you could occasionally take a turn on the rota or provide a cake for the refreshments. As usual we shall be open each Monday throughout March from 9 am to 12 noon. Do come and join us and bring a friend. This month the donations will be for Treloar's – a charity that provides outstanding education, therapy and care to physically disabled young people, and empowers them to live more independent and fulfilling lives. This charity was regularly supported in the past by the Wednesday Fellowship Group.

Food Bank

Helen Carter

Once again, many thanks to all those who have donated goods or money to the Food Bank. All those donations are much appreciated and much needed. If you look back at the statistics for 2025 (in the February newsletter) you will get an idea of the need. Nothing has changed, in fact for some their situation is worse. So please continue to donate. Thank you.

Sustainable Wantage

Do you have tools that need sharpening - garden tools, knives, secateurs, and other hand tools? If you have, then go to

<https://book.plinth.org.uk/e/Y4kp0JQpiDpa71ENPSbg> and book a slot for **28th March**. There are only a few slots available so you will need to be quick!

An opportunity to get repairs carried out for a donation comes on **Saturday 4th April**. Again you will need to book a slot. The Mix has volunteer fixers ready to help you repair all kinds of household and electrical items; from toasters and toys, to hairdryers and hoovers. (For sewing repairs or tool sharpening please contact wantagemix@gmail.com.) They offer to look at your item for free. If you are able to leave a **donation**, this supports the time their volunteers generously give, and allows them to run more free events. They are happy to help investigate most items, but ask that you only book in items that are easily transportable by 1 person.

Please note: They cannot look at microwaves. For this service use the link <https://book.plinth.org.uk/e/j7UFB2UTFzlqwA84wq5v>

A prayer that we might be instruments of God's praise

Ow, Fadda! Eternal Creator, the story of our relationship as revealed in Scripture with you begins with a hymn; a hymn of creation. Thank you for the reminder that chaos and darkness give way to order and beauty.

Thank you, God, that the rhythms of music are written deep in our spirits. Yet because “guilty feet have got no rhythm” we too often feel like we might never dance again the way we danced with you. We come to you now in the language of one prison programme, Changing Tunes, asking you to change, to shift the narrative of hopelessness often running around in our head.

Make us once again instruments of praise; instruments of worship! Retune us, glue our cracked pots with gold like in Kintsugi master craft; make us more valuable than we recognise. Although we may feel fit for the rubbish pile, you see us. You greet us – sawbona! You see... our past, our heritage, our people and you smile. Sit with us as we learn to sing again, show us how to sing in harmony with you. Nature’s harmony. Yes, Fadda. Amen.

Leon Dundas, Managing Chaplain at HMP Exeter

A prayer for purity of heart and strength of purpose

Grant us, O Lord, purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no passion may hinder us from knowing your will and no weakness from doing it. In your light we may see light clearly, and in your service find perfect freedom; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

What is happening on the Wantage premises at present?

Sunday	9:30 am	Time for reflection		1 st Sunday
	9:30 am	Kids@Church		3 rd 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 st & 3 rd 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	CA Meeting	Parlour	Weekly
Tuesday	Morning	MIND	Hall	Weekly
	Evening	Wantage Camera Club	Hall	Weekly
	Evening	My Life My Choice	Parlour	3 rd Tuesday
Wednesday	Evening	Wantage Sings	Hall	Weekly
Thursday	Midday	KAWI	Hall	3 rd Thursday
Friday	Morning	Mothers & Toddlers	Hall & Parlour	Weekly in term
Saturday	Morning	Dads Out	Hall & Parlour	1 st Saturday
	Midday	NA Meeting	Parlour	Weekly

Other Bookings

March

Saturday 14 th	WCC Craft Matters	Morning
	Caritas Concert	Afternoon
Thursday 19 th	Music Makers	Evening
Thursday 26 th	Jog Wantage (Parlour)	Evening
Saturday 28 th	Wantage in Harmony	Daytime

SERVICES during MARCH

Sunday 1st March

Lent 2

Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5,13-17; John 3:1-17

10:30 am Wantage

Daphne Savage

10:30 am Grove

Elizabeth Wood

6:30 pm Prayer for Revival at Grove

Sunday 8th March

Lent 3

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

10:30 am Wantage

Carolyn Luscombe

10:30 am Grove

Graham Luscombe

Sunday 15th March

Mothering Sunday

Lent 4

1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

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 22nd March

Passion Sunday

Lent 5

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

10:30 am Wantage

Belinda Kaur

10:30 am Grove

Daphne Savage

Sunday 29th March

Palm Sunday

Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14-27,66

10:30 am Wantage

Robert Thompson

10:30 am Grove

Stephen Atkinson

DIARY FOR MARCH

MARCH

Sunday 1st	9:30 am	Time for reflection at Wantage	p12
	6:30 pm	Prayer for Revival at Grove	p9
Thursday 5 th	10:00 am	Lent House Group at 1 Paddock Close	
Friday 6 th	2:30 pm	World Day of Prayer at Grove Methodist Church	p10
Saturday 7 th	10:00 am	Coffee Morning at Grove	p9
Monday 9 th	2:30 pm	Bible Study at Elmbrook Care Home	p13
Thursday 12 th	10:00 am	Lent House Group at 1 Paddock Close	
Saturday 14 th	4:00 pm	Caritas Youth Choir Concert at Wantage	p17
Sunday 15th	9:30 am	Kids@Church at Wantage	p16
Thursday 19 th	10:00 am	Lent House Group at 1 Paddock Close	
Friday 20 th	7:30 pm	Grove Film Club	p9
Sunday 22nd		Deadline for March Newsletter	
Tuesday 24 th	2:15 pm	Grove Tuesday Fellowship	p9
Thursday 26 th	10:00 am	Lent House Group at 1 Paddock Close	

APRIL