

Wantage & Abingdon Circuit

CHILDREY

GROVE

WANTAGE

SECTOR

NEWS



May 2020

Minister : Rev Keith Underhill – Tel: 01235 763321
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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:

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Contributions for the **June Newsletter** should be sent to the editor by email, phone or in writing by **Sunday 25th May 2020** to
wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com
Tel : 01235 766655 / 07710 214601
Editors : Gill & Gordon Skidmore

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.

Texts for Services for each Sunday are posted on the websites.

There is a Circuit Zoom Service at 10:30 each week:

(for access to these please contact Rev Keith Underhill)

Keith is posting regular reflections which are on the websites.

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

Wantage web site www.wantagemethodist.org.uk

Circuit web site www.wantab.org.uk

Circuit YouTube channel

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBpMj71hDzpMhVj6t_ZQt0w

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:

<https://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/>

The Methodist Conference will meet in an alternative form this year

The Methodist Council has agreed that the Conference cannot meet as planned in Telford in June and will look at ways for the Conference to meet in an alternative form. The officers of the Conference will bring proposals for the functioning of this alternative meeting to an additional meeting of the Council.

The restriction on groups meeting has meant that some Synods have not been able to meet and give full consideration to *God in Love Unites Us*, and the Council therefore also agreed that the debate and voting on the provisional resolutions will be deferred until the 2021 Conference. This also means that any other business (eg memorials) relating to those resolutions will not be considered this year.

We understand that for many people the decision about the Conference may cause uncertainty and worry, but please be assured that we will issue further updates as soon as decisions are made. We will communicate directly with those most affected (eg: ordinands, district reps, and volunteers) as soon as we are able to do so and we shall keep the website updated.

Greenbelt Festival will not take place this year.

The arts, faith, and justice festival, [Greenbelt](#), will not take place this year, the latest in a range of events to be called off because of the [coronavirus](#) pandemic.

The festival had been scheduled to take place, as usual, over the August Bank Holiday weekend at Boughton House, in Northamptonshire.

The festival's organisers announced on Tuesday, however, that they had taken the "crushing decision" to call it off. It will be the first time in the festival's 46-year history that it has not taken place.

A [message to supporters](#) said: "We're going to have to wait another year until we can celebrate the 47th Greenbelt. That's because we've had to take the crushing decision to cancel this year's festival. It probably won't come as a surprise, but it doesn't make it feel any better. Obviously we would never have gone ahead if there had ever been the slightest risk to anyone's health and safety."

It continued: "It's a postponement in some ways, because we hope to bring along as many of the artists, thinkers and activists to next year's festival as we can, and by acting now we can safeguard Greenbelt in 2021. . .

"For lots of us, the festival is part of the annual fabric of our lives, and it will feel very strange not to meet again this August at Boughton.

"But we've always said Greenbelt is about more than four days in a field. It's about making spaces where all the things we cherish can co-exist, and we're still going to be doing that this year. We're still going to be somewhere to believe in during the long days of lockdown and beyond."

Greenbelt will contact ticket-holders, who can opt either to receive a full refund, to have their tickets roll over until next year, or to donate the cost of this year's ticket to the festival.

Other Christian events that have been cancelled because of Covid-19 include the annual Passion play on Good Friday in Trafalgar Square, the Walsingham Youth Pilgrimage, and Spring Harvest ([News, 9 April](#)). New Wine, the Keswick Convention, and the Big Church Day Out have also been called off

(Church Times)

An open letter from Sam Monaghan the Chief Executive of MHA to Methodists

Dear Methodist Friends

Help us get vital personal protective equipment (PPE) for our care workers, residents and their relatives

I am writing to ask for your support for Methodist Homes (MHA) staff, residents and their families, during what is an unparalleled time of challenge in our care homes.

Our church has a proud tradition of social justice and concern, out of which MHA itself was born 76 years ago. So I am asking you to stand alongside us at this vital time to ensure that those most vulnerable and those working on the frontline to care for them, have access to the correct and necessary PPE and testing.

You can support us by signing our petition to ask the Government to ensure adequate and consistent supplies of PPE and timely and ample testing for residents and staff. (www.mha.org.uk/ppe-petition)

You can donate to help us purchase the vital PPE we need – face masks, gloves, goggles, aprons and gowns, vital to limit spread and protect staff, residents and their relatives. (bit.ly/2wLej68)

You can volunteer in our homes and Live at Home Schemes, crucial to countering the increased loneliness and isolation of so many vulnerable elderly people during the lockdown (www.mha.org.uk/careers/current-vacancies/mha-needs-you/)

Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, our committed workforce has been working tirelessly to support the residents we care for. We, and our suppliers, have been working around the clock to source and move PPE to where it is needed, to ensure the safety of our residents and colleagues, but it is proving increasingly difficult to do so.

Nurses, carers, cleaners, maintenance workers, chefs, volunteers and many more are going into our services, half of which have coronavirus outbreaks. They do so to care for and protect some of the most vulnerable in society.

That's why we need your help. We have been petitioning Government since the outset of the pandemic to address these shortfalls and to recognise the vulnerability of those in care homes alongside those in the NHS. Only now is it starting to be recognised that we are the second front line, and we need to be properly equipped with all the tools to safely do that job.

Additionally, we need PPE so families are able to say farewell to their loved ones as they approach the end of their lives, as they are not currently allowed in our homes for the protection of residents, staff and themselves. We are therefore asking the

Government to provide our homes with adequate and reliable PPE not just for our residents and colleagues, but also to offer to families.

We are now hearing that the Government are going to make more provision for PPE and testing in care homes, but these plans are light on detail and timescales. So we will continue to need to source PPE from commercial organisations, costing sometimes five times the price of Government supplies, because those supplies have proved inconsistent and inadequate. And we will continue to need to transport PPE across the country between our homes, to meet need when homes experience a Covid 19 outbreak. And we will continue to cast a light on how vulnerable those in our homes are, residents and staff, to this pandemic. We have already lost over 200 residents where they have been confirmed or suspected as having Covid 19; and we have lost two of our colleagues.

Thank you Yours sincerely Sam Monaghan Chief Executive, MHA

The President and Vice-President are praying for the work of MHA and for the safety of the staff and clients. The President recently wrote a prayer which you may like to use:

A prayer for MHA

God of mercy

At this time of anxiety and fear

We thank you for the dedicated work of MHA.

We pray your blessing on all who wash feet,

Who bring healing,

Who sit with the dying

Who bring comfort in confusion

Who bring peace to the afraid

In this we see the love of Jesus

Who is our strength and hope,

In whose name we pray

Amen

The Revd Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference

President and Vice-President call for a global ceasefire

A statement from the Revd Dr Barbara Glasson and Prof Clive Marsh, President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference:

"The Covid19 pandemic brings home to us our common humanity. While in the UK we have struggled with being locked down, we are thankful that we have an excellent health service with tremendous staff. Our thoughts also go out to those living in war zones where health systems are unreliable and intensive treatments are often unavailable. Those whose lives have been disrupted by war now have to protect themselves from this new deadly threat. That is why we are supporting the UN Secretary General's call for a global ceasefire.

"A global ceasefire will enable medics and nurses to access conflict areas and concentrate on the battle against Coronavirus. We urge that all parties to conflict give immediate priority to life and health and respond to the Secretary General's call for a ceasefire. We ask our own government to work urgently, including within the UN Security Council, to make this call a reality."

Methodist Church grants £65,000 to help overseas Churches meet coronavirus challenge

The Methodist Church of Britain has released almost £65,000 in grant aid to support partner Churches and overseas projects that have been affected by the coronavirus crisis. The money has been made available from the World Mission Fund, donated by the Methodist people to support mutual partnership with Churches overseas. The emergency, 'solidarity' grants are given in response to an urgent crisis and to provide immediate aid for humanitarian or missional purposes overseas.

Church of South India

A solidarity grant of £10,000 is to be given to the Church of South India to assist their response to the crisis. In south India, where severe poverty makes the situation especially dangerous, many are struggling, particularly those with disabilities, casual labourers, the aged, women and children. Packed slums, with a lack of sanitation, means that the virus could quickly take hold in communities. Church of South India schools are being used to house the homeless and the Church hospitals are working with the district government authorities to prepare for a pandemic. Church community kitchens are distributing food and essentials and youth groups are preparing hand sanitizers and masks, and spreading awareness among public on safety and sanitization.

Maua Methodist Hospital, Kenya

A grant of £10,000 from the World Mission Fund has been sent to Maua Methodist Hospital in Kenya to purchase personal protective equipment to be used in the hospital and by a newly formed rapid response team to treat coronavirus patients in the community. Methodist Mission Partner Dr Claire Smithson is with the Methodist Church in Kenya, and says that, "All non-elective surgeries and non-essential services in the hospital have been closed down and many staff have been sent home. However,

medical staff are very vulnerable to infection spread due to lack of essential resources.”

Methodist Church (Upper Myanmar) Conference

The Methodist Church of Upper Myanmar is to receive a solidarity grant of £10,000. In Myanmar the virus has meant many people are out of work and the price of basic food such as rice has increased significantly. The money will be used to help around 200 families who are being supported by the Church.

Pacific Theological College, Fiji

A grant of £5,200 has been given to the Pacific Theological College in Fiji for corona virus protection measures and to enable learning to continue online. The college is based in Suva, the capital city of Fiji, where many people are ‘in lockdown’. Pacific Theological College a regional, ecumenical theological college offering academic programmes and serving the churches of the Pacific Islands.

Latin America and the Caribbean, CIEMAL

The Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean has been granted £9,225. CIEMAL is an organisation that works on behalf of regional Methodist church partners in Latin America and the Caribbean to encourage unity, solidarity, regional working and collaboration. The Council’s work is threatened as Methodist Churches across the region, whose giving supports CIEMAL, are unable to meet due to coronavirus.

Methodist Christian Community of Venezuela

Venezuela is one of the least prepared nations in the world to deal with coronavirus. A grant of £10,000 has been made available to buy food, hygiene products, medicine and facemasks for the 30 families the church supports who are vulnerable and in desperate need.

Italy - The Methodist Retreat Centre ‘Ecumene’

Many people have died from the coronavirus in Italy, where the Methodist Church has been hit especially hard. The on-going crisis has meant that the Methodist Retreat Centre ‘Ecumene’, just outside Rome, is threatened with closure. A grant of £10,000 has been made to help the centre survive.

Andy Dye, Programme Team Leader in Global Relationships, commented, “Grants from the World Mission Fund are a response from the Methodist Church in Britain to a partner who is facing particularly difficult circumstances or an emergency situation. Although the grants may seem quite small in the global scale of things, they are a rapid response that express solidarity in partnership and can often open the door for our partners to receive other funding from around the world. For us and our partners these grants are an important part of our shared work in God’s mission.”

“As the crisis develops and the infection spreads to some of the world’s poorest communities, we are going to be working with our sister organisation All We Can, the international development and emergency relief organisation of the Methodist Church, to provide further response to the unfolding situation.”

WANTAGE & GROVE FOOD BANK

The demand on the food bank for deliveries has, understandably, been high. The organisers thank everyone who has supported the food bank in any way.

The only places now available for food donations to be made are the supermarkets and there are lists of wanted items on the bins in the supermarkets.

Not everyone is going out shopping and so donations of money are being hugely welcomed. It is possible to give cash and cheques via Helen Carter (764810) or through a BACS transfer. Again, Helen Carter can supply details for that, or the website (<https://www.wantageandgrovefoodbank.org.uk/>) has details of how to obtain the necessary information.

If you know of anyone who is struggling to afford enough food for themselves and their family, then there are details of how to obtain food parcels on the website.

Thank you for the continuing support.



Christian Aid Week – 10-16 MAY

This is the week when Christian Aid would normally raise a great deal of the money that they use to help some of the world's poorest people. Their help will be needed even more this year as these communities are not only dealing with the effects of climate change but also dealing with the spread of the coronavirus.

Here in Wantage and Grove we would normally have the house-to-house collection as well as the Big Brekkie and coffee mornings. Last year we raised over £5000 but obviously these events are not able to take place because of the current situation. Hopefully we will be able to do some fund raising for Christian Aid later in the year.

If you feel that you are able to donate to them during Christian Aid week then please go to their website www.christinaid.org.uk.

Church Financial Situation. A message from the Church Treasurers

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 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 Grove or Wantage Methodist Church (as appropriate) for Eric or Clive to bank. If you currently use the blue envelope scheme at Wantage you could send Clive an envelope with your cheque so that he can reconcile it in the accounts.

- For Grove, Eric Thomas' address is
7 Miles Drive, Grove, Wantage, OX12 7JA
- For Wantage Clive Phillip's 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 Eric at eric.thomas@virgin.net or Clive at candaphillips@gmail.com and they can supply 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, please contact Eric on 01235 762723 or Clive on 01235 760335.

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.

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

Our Church Annual Report 2019/20.

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

Wantage

Keeping in Contact

With the current situation with regard to the Coronavirus we have to cancel future events including the lunches. Up to date information will be posted on the web site.

<https://wantagemethodist.org.uk>

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, the weekly services, or the monthly newsletter, please contact June Grunwald at 01235 760488.

Prayer list

Eileen Rennie

Loving God, at this time of great uncertainty for many, we thank you for your presence in our lives. We thank you for your love and support which we know will never fail us. Our praise for your beautiful world is so real for us all and we appreciate that we have had more time in the stillness of each day to enjoy and give thanks for your wonderful creation. We continue to pray for our leaders that you would help them make wise and compassionate decisions. We especially pray for all those who are finding life a real struggle at the moment. We give thanks for our NHS doctors, nurses, paramedics, those who prepare meals, cleaners and all ancillary staff who are providing such a wonderful caring service for all their patients. Help us to learn in the current situation what is really important in life and we pray that we will bring many positives with us into the future. Help us always to have our eyes fixed on the Living Lord Jesus. Lord 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, Carl, Anne, Carol Mackinder, Emma Wright and family, Alex and Brian, Gordon and Marina, Betty, Caroline, Alastair Wright, Sheila Hall, Sonia, Danielle and Dylan, Gill, Dave and Ben, Grace and Ken Wright, John, Adrian, Mick, Edwina and Simon.

Give thanks for Nick Holt's life

and remember Sarah, Christian, Lisa and Ben as they grieve,

Give thanks for Doug White's life

and remember Marjorie and Colin as they mourn his passing,

Give thanks for Pam Rose's life, for her wonderful service to our Church over many years and pray for Kelvin, James, Betty and all the family and friends.

All at Bullingdon Prison, staff, prisoners and visitors, YMOSES, kids@church and Street Pastors and 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 **23rd May** in order for her to meet the newsletter deadline. Telephone: 01235 224284, email: m.rennie50@ntlworld.com

Doug White Sadly we have to record that Doug died on Good Friday, 10th April. in the Sanctuary Nursing Home. He had been resident there for almost two years, and each day Marjorie had walked from their home in Challow to be with him, as did their son Colin when he wasn't at work in Abingdon. They took him jigsaw puzzles, and painting and colouring materials so that they could enjoy activities together when Doug's inability to talk easily restricted their conversation. They had been planning a celebration of Doug's 80th birthday this July, as last year the family had held a party in one of the meeting rooms at The Sanctuary. Since Doug had very recently been moved to a downstairs room, on the day that he died, without entering the building, Marjorie and Colin were able to see and speak loving words to Doug through the window of his room, to which he responded with a smile during his final moments, and this has given them great comfort. It isn't possible for a funeral to take place in the usual way, but Doug will be buried in Challow on 20th May, and a Thanksgiving Service will take place at a later date once restrictions on meeting together are lifted. We hold Marjorie and Colin, and Julia, their daughter who lives in Jersey, in our thoughts and in our prayers, and we assure them of our love

Pam Rose We record with deep sadness that Pam died on 23rd April in the Sanctuary Nursing Home. She became resident there nearly a year and a half ago when it was no longer possible for Kelvin to continue caring for her at home. Until that point Kelvin had devotedly looked after Pam and enabled her to continue worshipping with us as she had done for very many years. When more specialised nursing care was needed, Kelvin still assisted the staff with Pam's care by visiting her each morning and afternoon, helping with her meals, playing the music which she loved, and showing his devotion to her by being at her side every day.

Pam was an active and well loved member of our church, serving loyally for many years, including a term as a steward. She was Senior steward when Brenda, our first female Minister, began her ministry at Wantage. Pam will be missed by us all, but will be remembered with much affection, and with gratitude for all that she gave to our church over many decades. We think of and pray for Kelvin, for Pam's sister Betty, brother John, and all of Pam's wider family, knowing that she is now resting in peace in God's eternal care.

Tuesday Afternoon House Group

Eileen Rennie

April was certainly a month with a difference.

We are missing meeting together but we have been keeping in touch by email and telephone.

I email the group each week details for our prayertime and each Tuesday although apart we have united in prayer at 3:00 pm. It has also been good to see some of the group on the Zoom services we have already had. People have really appreciated the services as well as all the material on the Church website and on
youtubewantageandabingdonmethodistcircuit.

We do all look forward to the time when we can all meet together again.

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

Community Drop In Café

Eileen Rennie

Regretfully due to the current Coronavirus situation we are still unable to open the Cafe. We know from messages and phone calls we have had that many people are missing the joy of their Monday morning weekly visits. We continue to look forward in faith to when we are able to meet again. Meanwhile be assured that you are being held in prayer. 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. For further information contact either Eileen Rennie or June Grunwald.

Knit & Chat

Carolyn Roche 764310

Knit & Chat continues remotely in our own homes. We now have a Facebook page and there are photographs on there of some of the different projects that people are doing at this time – angels, blankets, rainbows and rug making. If anyone is short of anything then please let me know. I am sure that one of us will be able to help. Don't forget that even though we can't knit together we can chat – through the phone or by text or email.

Wantage Chapel & Hall Bookings

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

Wantage Methodist Church Annual Report for the 2020 Annual Church Meeting

This has been published and was available to be distributed to the Wantage people with the April 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.