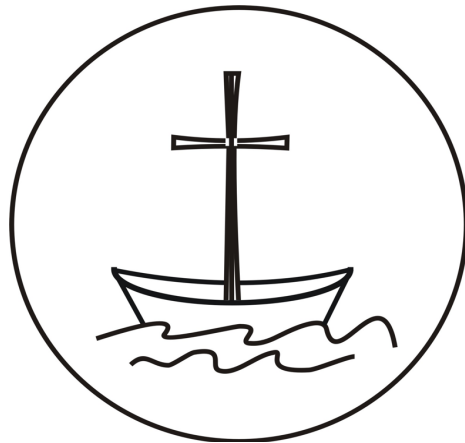


March 2021
Vol XX No 1

The
Quarterly



*From the Summertown, Wolvercote, and Wytham
Church Partnership*

All Saints', Wytham
St Michael and All Angels, Summertown
St Peter's, Wolvercote
Summertown United Reformed Church
Wolvercote Baptist Church

Contributions for the next issue of *The Quarterly*, preferably not exceeding 600 words, should be sent to one of the editors not later than Sunday 17 May 2021.

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Pastoral letter

Dear Friends

Life is full of hello's and goodbye's ...!

We all know the familiar 'hello's' of welcome and new things and inevitably we also know the 'goodbye's' of leaving, along with the memories that stay behind. During this pandemic, we have experienced the 'goodbye' of normality and freedom and the 'hello' of restrictions and most especially the physical separation of friends and loved one's. In some cases we have known the agony of a final goodbye as we've lost a loved one or friend to death due to coronavirus or other sickness. Such 'hello's' and 'goodbye's' have assailed us in the 'yo-yoing' of the past year. It has been disorientating and unsettling, exhausting and depleting. Many have hated the 'hello' of covid-19, yet some have known peace and quiet in contrast to the usual madness of 'too busy' a life! They have welcomed the 'goodbye' of being pressured and rushed and stressed.

It seems hard to believe I made my own 'hello' over two years ago as I joined the clergy team in North Oxford assisting Charles in January 2019. Now, as I prepare to say goodbye to my parishes of Wolvercote and Wytham along with our valued partner churches, I find it pertinent to recall the heart of the gospel message. Wherever we are and whoever we are ministering alongside, it is this same message which holds us together. At the heart of the gospel is the great 'hello' of welcome and reconciliation; the greatest message of hope. The welcome of Christ enables us to embrace this hope. Consider the words of the familiar communion liturgy 'you welcomed us to sit and eat with you ...' and 'When we were still far off you met us in your son and brought us home'. We capture again that wonderful picture of the prodigal son whose father runs out to welcome him home. Welcome and reconciliation provide us with an extraordinary message. We can offer this 'hello' of God to those who at this time are feeling desperately alone, fearful and even in despair. But the gospel offers not just the 'hello' of new life, it also makes possible the 'goodbye' of pain and bitterness, of regret

and un-forgiveness. As I bid you a fond farewell, I would offer a simple reminder of the hope of the gospel. It is ours to share in the most natural way, as we live our lives in a way that demonstrates through word and action how our own lives have been transformed by Jesus's great 'hello' by way of invitation. His arms outstretched upon the cross ensured the 'goodbye' for all time of the power of sin, death and hell.

So in these perplexing and rather depleting days, let's embrace the daily 'hello' of hope which does not disappoint us.

With my love and prayers and immense thanks for your friendship and fellowship these past two years,

Your fellow partner in the gospel

Sarah

Revd Sarah Flashman

We are indeed One World

As I write this, we are all facing two great challenges. One of course is that of Climate Change which has been developing over a number of years but it is the second, the Covid 19 pandemic, which is my immediate concern. We have now reached the stage where vaccines are available and hopefully they will prove effective. Their fair supply and distribution has now become the big issue. A recent disagreement between the UK and the EU seems to have been resolved but it did lead to an amazing statement by the UK vaccine deployment minister, Nadhim Zahawi. He said "*No-one is safe until the whole world is safe*". This is true of many things our governments are involved in and is very rarely admitted but it is particularly true where Covid 19 is concerned. If the virus were to remain rife in even a very small region it could easily spread back again as it did from China just about a year ago. We could completely close our borders, as many countries have done, to limit the transmission of the virus, but this can only be a very temporary measure.

Climate change is a different type of problem. For most people it is not an immediate issue and it is difficult to get it treated with the urgency it needs. But as the Climate Justice campaign has made clear for some people in some parts of the world it has a catastrophic effect on their way of life. It is, however, a One World problem and if we cannot stop it in time we shall all share the catastrophic effects. Closing our borders will not be of any use to us. Perhaps we should reiterate Nadhim Zahawi's statement, this time with regard to climate change:

"No-one is safe until the whole world is safe".

John Harding

'Oxford Welcomes Refugees', Community Sponsorship Group

"Being involved in a Community Sponsorship group has been one of the best experiences of my life." *Jo, member of a Community Sponsorship group*

"The support of my Community Sponsors has been life-changing for me and my family. Just two years into our new lives here, we're speaking English, working, and now supporting other vulnerable people in our area." *Abdullah, a sponsored refugee in Oxford*

Following the example of the Blackfriars group that sponsored Abdullah and his family, a second Oxford Community Sponsorship group was formed last November by people from north Oxford (including five from St Michael's Summertown) and beyond. We have called it 'Oxford Welcomes Refugees' because we want to counter the cruel 'hostile environment' being encouraged by some politicians and media.

What is Community Sponsorship?

Community Sponsorship is a refugee resettlement programme with local people at its heart. It enables us to welcome a vulnerable refugee family into our local area and support them as they rebuild their lives.

In 2016 the Community Sponsorship scheme was launched in the UK by the Home Office in partnership with the Archbishop of Canterbury, to enable some of the most vulnerable, injured and/or traumatised Syrian families to come to the UK with refugee status and be assured of welcome and support from a local community.

The war in Syria has created over 5.5 million refugees who continue to face bleak living conditions in neighbouring countries. "There's no hope" was how one Syrian woman described her home at a refugee camp on the Syria-Turkey border. But through Community Sponsorship over 300 such families have now been sponsored by local communities in the UK and very many more world-wide.

What does a Community Sponsorship group do?

It is a big commitment, but hugely rewarding. Our group is currently preparing a detailed application to the Home Office, as well as seeking approval from the City and County Councils. To be ready to receive a family we need to:

- Find and furnish an affordable home for a refugee family for a period of 2 years.
- Raise £12,000-14,000 to cover various costs like translation, furnishing the house, and English classes
- Welcome the family at the airport and settle them in their new community (helping them register for benefits, access health services and enroll children in schools)
- Provide support and encouragement to the family for at least one year so that they can live securely and independently

Is this needed when we have lots of migrant support organisations in Oxford?

Yes, it is. We have excellent work being done here by Asylum Welcome, Refugee Resource, Sanctuary Hosting and so on – all helping migrants who have found their way to Oxford (several of us already volunteer with them). What's different about Community Sponsorship is that it enables some of the most vulnerable families to come safely to the UK and receive a warm welcome and tailored support.

Is there anything specifically Christian about Community Sponsorship?

The current lack of safe passage to the UK for those fleeing conflict is deeply unchristian, so churches are often very supportive of Community Sponsorship. But any local community, village or faith group such as a mosque can become Community Sponsors. When we have resettled a family ourselves we look forward to advising and supporting others in Oxford to have a go themselves.

How could you help?

In many ways. Please pray for the family who will come here and for each step we still must take for this to be possible. Please consider making a donation or fundraising. Beryl Knotts is celebrating her 90th year knitting a 90 square blanket to give to the family and asking her own family and friends to sponsor her on behalf of Oxford Welcomes Refugees. I did a 73 mile walk. What might you do?

If you are, or know of, a private landlord who might be willing to let a house from this autumn at the Oxford City Housing Allowance rate I would love to hear about this. Finding this is likely to be the most difficult part of our project.

Alyson Peberdy, Chair of Oxford Welcomes Refugees and an associate priest at St Michaels, can be contacted on aspeberdy@aol.com

For more information about Community Sponsorship go to www.resetuk.org

Joy cometh in the morning

For the first time in four years, Candlemas brings the promise of spring to the land across the ocean where I was born. But that promise, despite clear election results and the law, was not a foregone conclusion.

I came to the UK in 1996; yet even as I rooted myself here, becoming more Anglicised, I looked back across the ocean. I voted in every American election; felt every result – but nothing like the devastation in 2016, after which I spent 4 years holding the fear of family and friends who had been and felt American since they'd immigrated a half century before or since they'd been born – until that moment.

Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.

Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. Job 3: 4-5

I watched. I prayed. One day at a time ... weeks, months passed, finally years. Then came 2020 and Election Day, my ballot long since posted. American friends and I figuratively held each other's hands over the next four days as the result unfolded. When it was called, relief and joy rang across the Internet. "We did it!" "MADAM. VICE-PRESIDENT!"

But that joy was soon touched by apprehension, then overwhelmed by it, as a refusal to concede whipped grievance into a frenzy, and finally into the violence we watched, horrified, on Epiphany.

I shook as the events unfolded, unable to do anything but hold those virtual hands and pray. This was my home. I'd walked past the cherry blossoms in full bloom on so many spring days; taken visiting friends to the Mall and Smithsonian; cursed traffic and tourists; navigated by the Capitol that was being overrun by those bent on insurrection. My jaw clenched as the story darkened with tales of weapons and complicity. But I was fine, I thought. Then, a week later,

photo after photo of soldiers sleeping on the Capitol floor, as if we were at war, crossed my timeline – and I finally wept. For my people, for my city, for the nation that formed me. Even as I wept, I couldn't shake the awareness that the insurrection happened on Epiphany, that day when what is hidden is brought to light, bringing hope. Hope, because, at long last, we had to face the ugliness that had long sat beneath a veneer of power and well-being. Finally, America has to confess that she is profoundly unwell, and in that admission, the work of facing the truth, repentance, and healing can begin, slow and hard as it will be.

No more lies that keep us comfortable as they slowly kill us. The truth may wound and enrage us (and the US, no doubt), but it will always set us free.

On 20 January, I watched a president with a deep, living faith take office. As I listened, I thought this is what it looks like when faith is an endoskeleton, the framework on which we are built, one that grows with us, instead of a brittle exoskeleton, closed and claustrophobic, holding together shapeless insides of fear and loathing. After four long years, I could finally breathe and believe the promise he reminded us of:

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.
(Psalm 30: 5)

'We are all in this together,' he continued, echoing the American motto, *E pluribus unum* – out of the many, one. And so may it be, for America, the Church, and the world.

Irim Sarwar

A successful church

I used this phrase during an on-line Iona meeting in January when attempting to describe an Oxford church and was asked how I would define 'a successful church'. Quite rightly too as it was a poorly thought-out phrase. My immediate answer wasn't brilliant – I said something on the lines that they had good numbers attending their services, which used to be plentiful pre-covid, and they paid a lot of money to the diocese by way of their parish share and judged by such criteria might be thought of as successful, or at least pleasing to the diocese.

But it got me thinking what should we really value and evaluate as a "successful" church, and I think I would not include any of the above at the top of my list. A range of church services yes, that's good and attractive, and a reasonable flow of incoming money helps, obviously; as a starting point however a loving and tolerant welcome to any and every body without pre-assessment or pre-judgement would be a good and solid bedrock, and concern and energy in working for justice and peace, and looking after God's wonderfully created world. It can very quickly become a very long list of worthy (and important) qualities. Yes, I would be happy as my bedrock and starting point with love and support and respect to and for all. Even better perhaps would be not to think in terms of success or failure. Like Jesus did many times throughout his ministry, many of us need to flip upside down our views on what counts as "success".

That may be all well and good and relatively straightforward but does not take into account the position or health of a particular church at a particular time. Obvious examples of how the dynamics of a church can change is when a congregation becomes divided, or there is a lengthy or unexpected interregnum, or when several key members of a congregation have died or moved away, and at such times the well-being and care of parishioners need to take precedence.

Gavin reminded me of this when he was in such a situation in his previous parish in Fulham and his awareness as a new vicar there of the need “to stand still and care for, to allow God’s grace simply to do its work” rather than to set about to make his mark, to move things forward with new initiatives and generate visible signs of that community’s growth. There are also the tensions and dynamics of how other local churches and congregations view one’s own church as being successful or not, the complexities of developing partnerships with churches of different theological integrities and the stance of diocesan house and how one’s church does or does not seem to fit in with its objectives and targets. For clergy that can be real tension and a lonely place to be.

Grace Davie and Robin Gill developed the three Bs, that is Belonging, Believing, and Behaving: Belonging as in our need to feel that we belong and are valued and welcoming newcomers to feel the same; Believing as in exploring our faith; and Behaving as in spreading God’s word and getting on and putting his Word into practice.

And the bottom line in all this:- that throughout everything the church is not its buildings but its gathered community.

*Ann Stedman
with help & input from Mary Gurr and Gavin & Jo Knight*

Note from the editors: We would like to continue the concept of a “successful” church and will be seeking comments from each of our 5 partnership churches for the next edition of The Quarterly. If you as an individual would like to comment *please do so* – the wider the spectrum of ideas and views the more interesting it will be.

My new fan

She came across the road one afternoon
and now she follows room by room
bright and beaming like the sun
exhaling warmth where there is none
which if switched off would soon be gone

I wish for heated words to come
but she can do no more than hum
I'd like a warm embrace
but she is short and has no arms
and though on heat she has no charms
and even if let off the lead
I doubt that she would feel the need

I dream of all her wide connections
deep in earth and fire and water
combining all the elements into one
transformed by stations into currents
and once supplied to circulate hot breath
on hands and toes still going numb

Chilled to the bone
I am in love with her
but she remains impassive
murmuring only to herself

We are a bit alike each other
our power provided by some other
and we are not alike
for hers comes for a fee
whilst mine is largely free

Michael Taylor
January 2021
written when the boiler bust

[*Ed. Note:* boiler is now working]

Lockdown blues or opportunity?

So here we still are, in lockdown – but surely this is a misnomer, speaking of a place of punishment? We are not here for punishment, but for protection. Of others and ourselves. Punishment is negative. Protection should be viewed quite differently.

Today I've spent an hour and a half with a group of women I'd not seen, or talked with, since we left school, until last summer: class of '67 Reunion came together shortly before Covid struck, but involved travelling to Central London, dressed stylishly, for lunch and spending the day. One benefit of 'these strange times' is extending the invitation, via Zoom, to those living overseas – today, friends in Greece, Australia, and Canada. Another, that it only takes a few minutes to settle in a quiet space at home and click on the link. Zoom links have also brought together our extended family from all over the world – members in Australia, the USA, South Africa, Israel, Egypt, and the UK have gathered more than once: the only planning problem is time zones – but at least no expensive long haul flights.

On-line exercise is another – Zoom into my class, never be late. And there's daily 'outdoor exercise': an excuse to spend time every day in the Trap Grounds, photographing the turning of the seasons. Even though now curtailed to avoid runners without masks!

What about church?

Those of us St Michael's 'Blue Cluster' people were reminded in a note that Psalm 137 tells us how the people of ancient Israel felt when exiled to an alien land. 'By the waters of Babylon, we sat down. We cannot sing the Lord's song in a strange land.' *

* Hopefully 'learning' in Babylon took effect on the vengeful desires in verse three ...

The Exile story has a feel of 'punishment': taken into captivity by a powerful neighbouring regime, they felt 'lost'. Whether they were right or not, seeing this punishment, disasters have a tendency to 'teach'. Perhaps because we human beings try to keep going, and find something to encourage us, progress and change can develop. Medical advances have come from wars. And, from the question, 'How do we worship our God in a strange land?' they developed a worship which didn't involve sacrificing animals, or going to a specific place. They realised that God was with them wherever they went. The Synagogue, centred in each town or village, became the place of regular worship, the new Temple only for festivals and some rites of passage. Such as Mary and Joseph's trip to give thanks for a firstborn son, and Simeon and Anna added their thanks and prophecies.

So how can we 'sing the Lord's song'? Are we 'in a sleepy spiritual state...(our) life furloughed along with (our) jobs'? Has our faith been messed with by the present situation? Or can we use the space to learn more about its foundations and practice, to commit or re-commit ourselves? Candlemas, marking the end of the Christmas and Epiphany seasons, is almost upon us (2nd February) and soon Lent will begin.

- The Diocesan Lent course, named 'Come and See' after Philip's invitation to Nathaniel to come and see Jesus, is one place we could go.
- At St Michael's some of us already meet in the CAT(echesis) group on Tuesday evenings (by Zoom), where we've investigated various topics from the Sunday Gospel readings.
- Morning /evening 'offices' can be read daily if you prefer to worship alone (see Notices on the website)

What do you like about church? Why do you come?
This could be the time to investigate.

Clare Weiner

OXFORD HOSPITALS TRUST STAFF APPEAL

<https://www.hospitalcharity.co.uk/Appeal/staffsupport>

Donations and [fundraising pages](#)

Helping our hospitals at this challenging time

Support during the COVID-19 crisis can help make a real difference to the NHS staff working across our hospitals and the patients they are caring for at this difficult time.

Donations go towards a range of items including specialist medical equipment, care boxes and hampers for staff who are most affected, care packs for patients, virtual music concerts and phone chargers to help those on wards who feel isolated or bored, especially with visiting restricted. As we begin 2021 it is clear that COVID-19 is still having a huge impact upon our hospitals and that help today will make a difference.

Oxford Hospitals Charity works closely alongside our NHS Trust to do everything it can to provide additional support for the teams working so hard at the John Radcliffe, Horton, Churchill, NOC and Oxford Children's Hospital.

Thanks to donations we can provide welfare items, the boost of a meal or snack and respite spaces to give extra psychological support for staff working on the frontline during these most difficult of times.

We are also able to fund specialist equipment and provide practical and emotional support that helps patients, young and old, who are in our hospitals right now.

Donations continue to be vital to support our local hospitals and the messages left alongside donations provide a real boost as well.

The Oxford Hospitals Charity team

A year to remember

Television programmes, videos on the web, real-life wildlife: the time spent watching them is being amply rewarded. The former two sometimes provide unexpected inspiration for the *Christmastide Quiz* questions, and ten lively jackdaws visiting our garden this January were added to the RSPB's 2021 *Big Garden Birdwatch* list.

For over twenty years, I've compiled an e-noticeboard, *OxChurch-Info*, for churches across Oxford, *passing* on news of their community's events. Recent notices for it have included *Holocaust Memorial Day*, meetings of *Oxford Council of Faiths*, and an online retreat, *How the Light Gets in*. These days people also send me links so that I can watch the services which their church streams. But, despite their kind invitations, watching their Sunday Eucharist is the very last thing I want to do!

It's not that some churches are unfamiliar or others' music or liturgical practice might seem uninviting. It's not even the very thought of all that scary, new-fangled technology (life has changed since I was a computer programmer in the 1970s). On the contrary, I'm thankful that modern communication means that I can now just as easily worship with those in far-away places - Cape Town, Moscow or Santiago - as with people in Oxford.

But that's just it. I don't want to go to any of the churches and *watch* what they do. I want to join in their *worship*. 'Watch' or 'worship'? The words we use matter so much. Each Sunday Bede and I go to church online together, to worship with the people there. Covid regulations might mean we are joining an unusually small, socially-distanced congregation, perhaps only the priest and a reader. Sometimes we're at a cathedral's Sunday morning service, always conscious that we have become a part of their much larger online worshipping community. In the corner of our computer screen a small number shows us how many of the 'out there' congregation are worshipping with us.

Many people are deeply saddened and disturbed by not being able to be physically present at a service, and I'm well aware of that. But I'm still at a loss to fully understand some of their feelings, and I ask myself, 'Have they no idea how the other half live?'

Gathering to worship and receive Communion each week? In your dreams! Vast areas of other countries only *ever* have a priest coming to celebrate a Eucharist with them every few months or even annually. For a relatively short time, Covid-19 is letting us have some small experience of their deprivation of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

Even in Britain insufficient clergy in their diocese can lead to closed church buildings and others being shared. With a complex schedule of Sunday service times, overstretched clergy can end up rushing from one church to another, with no time to spend time with their parishioners. Through radio, television, the internet, or listening by phone to e.g. Oxford diocese' *Church at Home*, people can 'virtually' join in church services. Southwell Minister suggests a prayer for people at home to use while those in its church are receiving Communion:

Come, O Christ our Light, and illumine our darkness.
Come, our Physician, and heal our wounds. Come, Flame
of divine love, and with it kindle our hearts, for you are
our King and our Lord. Amen.

Dimitri of Rostov (1651-1709)

Those who are housebound or bedbound, along with shift-workers and those who must be at home caring for people in their family, are among those who can benefit from the various kinds of broadcasted services; those at fixed times do not necessarily satisfy everyone's needs. For some, never being able to celebrate the Lord's Supper together with their friends and family is a constant reality; for many of them, receiving Communion each week is an unlooked-for and unrealised expectation. Such people might pose a question: Do we unconsciously persuade ourselves that others'

hunger to be fed with Communion is any less than our own?

When what are now termed *ordinary* times eventually return, church buildings will for a time almost certainly be less full on Sundays. I don't see this only as cause for pessimism but a call to enlarge our vision. Internet services have opened up previously untried avenues for churches to serve both their own parish community and those beyond its bounds, providing searchers with ways to explore something of what Christianity is all about, what happens in a church. May our churches not rush to shut down their new communication ventures! Services in church and available over the web are both needed. It's not a question of 'either / or' but of 'both / and'.

Have our Covid-19 deprivations been a wake-up call for us, an unexpected God-given gift? During this *Year to Remember* the doors to our churches have often been closed to us. For the sake of others' need for pastoral care, and for our own, we have been unable to come together with the Lord and celebrate Communion, to gather together for worship. And there it is again, that word *worship*. A closed entrance to a building never requires us to close our own doors to our Emmanuel, the God who is **always** present with us. Perhaps, just perhaps, Covid-19 is presenting us with an opportunity to better learn to be in communion with God and with our neighbour. Let us welcome our invitation. And be thankful.

Jenny Gerrard

John Brown 1936-2021

Based on words spoken by Tony Lemon at John Brown's funeral on 2 February 2021

John was born in Edinburgh on the 1st of June 1936 and grew up there. He was educated at George Heriot's School, Edinburgh, and the University of Edinburgh, where he read for his MA in Spanish & French. Following National Service in the Army Education Corps, John began a career in university administration which soon took him, on secondment, to the University of East Africa (Makerere College, Uganda), and thereafter to the University of Hull. Finally, he moved in the late 1960s to the University of Oxford. At Oxford John's duties ranged over the usual wide spectrum of the generalist administrator: for him this included long-term secretaryships of the Curators of the Sheldonian, the Curators of the University Archives, the Counselling Service and others, before retiring as an Assistant registrar in 2003. Central to his work though, and John's forte, became day-to-day responsibility for the efficient functioning of the personnel and equipment infrastructure supporting the work of the University Offices. In this capacity in particular he earned the esteem and affection of colleagues for his unostentatious efficiency and kindness. These qualities would doubtless have been recognised by the poet Philip Larkin when he chaired the Hull University Staff Car-parking Committee – a contentious matter if ever there was one – of which John was secretary. When John was leaving Hull for Oxford, Larkin presented him with a volume of his poetry inscribed with the following sentiment: 'Parking is such sweet sorrow.'

Outside his work John loved classical music and regularly attended the St John the Evangelist concerts in Oxford. At St Peter's Wolvercote he always maintained a cheerful and friendly manner, even when beset by misfortune and ill-health. He was, as one of our congregation put it, a congenial presence amongst us. John was a consistent presence on the St Peter's church sitting rota and many visitors will have

benefited from his welcome and interest. He also regularly helped with the collation and stapling of *The Quarterly*, helping repetitive work pass quickly with his quiet humour.

John's gentle and self-effacing qualities were very much apparent to all who knew him at St Peter's and it is a testimony to the affection in which he was held that, even in the midst of the pandemic, a good number of our congregation wanted to be here today. For many years John gave lifts to those who could not otherwise have come to church. More than that, on several occasions he befriended people outside the church who were, in one way or another, finding life a struggle – these were acts of real kindness known only to one or two close friends. This reflects the man who was: a true Christian, who tried to live life according to his faith in a quiet, unostentatious way. May he rest in peace.

Valerie Barnish 1930-2021

Valerie, who died in January, was a regular contributor to *The Quarterly*. She wrote about her travels such as a visit to the church in Syria where she saw the ruined base of the pillar on which St Simeon Stylites had sat for thirty years. She contributed poetry, and she wrote about books, most notably an enthusiastic review of Bishop John Pritchard's book *How to pray* (2002). One article was about the Mission to Seafarers, a passion for which Valerie will be remembered warmly by the congregation at St Peter's, where she also looked after the small library.

Valerie was born in 1930. Her mother was Australian and her father was a Master Mariner and a Commander in the Royal Naval Reserve. She went to the University of Hong Kong and then to Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford where she graduated in 1954. That year she married the Revd John Barnish, who worked in the Worcester diocese and became a Canon of Worcester Cathedral. Valerie taught English at the Alice

Ottley School in Worcester and wrote a number of books to help literature students.

After the death of John in 1985 Valerie moved to Wolvercote where she became involved in the life of the parish, and helped with children in services at St Peter's. She never ceased to grieve for her husband and also fought a battle against rheumatoid arthritis. As her son Sam wrote, "... out of both these trials she shaped a life of value to others and enjoyment for herself. Her watchword came from the Bible: 'Be strong and of a good courage'."

Our thoughts go out to Valerie's sons Tom and Sam, and to her friends.

The Editors of The Quarterly

Revd Gordon Murray 1933-2021

Gordon Murray, who died on the 14th January aged 87, was vicar of Wolvercote from 1984 to 1990. He followed on from Michael Ottaway who had been here for 34 years. Gordon was the first incumbent not to have been a Merton scholar. It was not easy taking over from someone who had been the vicar for so long and he guided us through this period. One of his gifts was being very caring and supportive, on a one to one basis, of people in difficulties or who had lost loved ones. He involved himself in local activities and on one occasion played the Dame in the annual village pantomime! On leaving St Peter's he moved to St Peter's, Walworth Road, London. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Barbara and the children.

Peter Bridges

Prayer for the Nation

From the Oxford Diocesan website:

Psalm 23 has been a source of strength for thousands of years. Let's pause and say it every day at 6 pm through this crisis we now face.

When we are isolated and alone, we remember God is with us; we place our hands in his hands ...

- The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

When we are tired and confused ...

- He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;

When we are worn out with worry ...

- He restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

When we are sick and afraid and if we lose those we love ...

- Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and staff – they comfort me.

When we face difficulties today and we hope for a better tomorrow

...

- You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

In the face of trouble & difficulty of all kinds, we remember Jesus' promise of life beyond death ...

- Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long

Partnership News

There was a regular meeting of the Partnership Enabling Group on 16 February 2021. A brief outline of issues discussed is given below.

- (1) The Rev'd Sarah Flashman was thanked for her year as chairperson in 2020 and the Rev'd Clare Leal was welcomed as chairperson for 2021.
- (2) It was agreed that the name of the Partnership should now be 'Summertown, Wolvercote and Wytham Church Partnership' in recognition of All Saint's, Wytham, joining the Partnership. It is still hoped to hold a celebratory service once 'lockdown' restrictions permit.
- (3) Beryl Knotts, who has been king-pin of the Coffee Café arrangements for some 30 years now wishes to step down. The churches are to be asked to find someone to take over from her and names of those who would be prepared to assist on particular Saturdays. The URC are prepared to offer their site if the organiser wishes to continue holding it there. Normally planning would begin now for a start in May. However it is not yet clear when Covid restrictions will relax enough to permit Coffee Café to run so these are all preliminary ideas.
- (4) Val Tate and Stephen Drew have been working on an update of the Partnership website and Val presented some possible designs. She recommended that a WordPress platform be used and that the site should be hosted by Steve Allen's company, OX365, at a cost of £72/year. She also asked that we accept a quotation from OX365 of £240 to implement her designs in WordPress. The meeting were happy with this, the cost to be divided between the churches in the usual way.
- (5) The visit from Taung, originally planned for 2020 was now hoped to go ahead in 2022.
- (6) Under 'outreach' there were reports that more people had taken up residence at the Mill Site and a welcoming leaflet had been prepared from St Peter's and Wolvercote Baptists. Meanwhile the Bishop's Mission Order for

Cuttleslowe and the area of potential new housing has been agreed and a lot of shared work is going ahead.

(7) Date of next meeting – Tuesday 1 June 2021 on Zoom

Additional note: since the meeting it has been pointed out that the 7-year renewal of the Covenant is due in the not too distant future. This could be the occasion when the revised Covenant to include All Saints' can be approved and the new vicar for the joint benefice will be able to sign it on behalf of St Peter's and All Saints'. Arrangements for this could be discussed at the June meeting.

A new Vicar for the joint benefice of Wolvercote and Wytham

The vacancy has now been advertised and it is hoped that interviews will take place in April. Readers may be interested to see the Parish Profile that is available for all applicants:

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Parish-Profile-Wolvercote-Wytham.pdf>

The Summertown, Wolvercote, and Wytham Church Partnership

unites in covenanted relationship:

All Saints', Wytham

St Michael and All Angels, Summertown;

St Peter's, Wolvercote;

Summertown United Reformed Church;

and Wolvercote Baptist Church

Clergy: Revd Gavin Knight *St Michael's*

Tel 07833 251939

Revd Sarah Flashman *St Peter's and All Saints*

Tel 01296 655237

Revd Pauline Main *URC*

Tel 513581

Revd Vivien Edwards *Wolvercote Baptist Church*

Tel 790755

All Saints Churchwardens:

Kathy Day-Dawson

Lorna Logan

St Michael's Churchwardens:

Irim Sarwar

Keith Lewis

St Peter's Churchwardens:

Wendy Sobey

Edward Wates

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