

# United Alive

## Wotton United Church

Methodist & United Reformed  
Bradley Street, Wotton-under-Edge

Sunday Worship at 10.15 am



**May 2019**

### OUR PURPOSE

To worship God  
and to serve Jesus Christ  
in our community and the wider world  
by communicating Christ's message  
in word and action;  
growing in faith; welcoming all ages;  
showing care, friendship and love;  
working with other churches  
To accomplish all this through prayer  
and the power of the  
Holy Spirit

# May 2019

## The Holy Habit for May is **Serving**

Wed	1	12.30pm	Monthly Lunch Club
		0.7.30pm	Wednesday Fellowship at 113A Parklands p4
Sat	4	10am on	Christian Aid shop donations accepted at Synwell Chapel p8
Sun	5	10.15am	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion :Rev Phil Summers
Mon	6	10am	United Ramblers meet at Church piv
Wed	8	7.30pm	Ladies' Group
Sat	11	10am on	Christian Aid shop donations accepted at Synwell Chapel p8
			Pingpongathon for Christian Aid at Nailsworth p4
		2.30pm	Saturday Club at Drylease p7
Sun	12	10.15am	Sunday Worship: Brian Oosthuysen
		6pm	Christian Aid Service at the Oliver Memorial Chapel p8
Mon - Thur	13 - 16		Christian Aid shop, coffee and lunches in the Baptist Church Hall pi
Wed	15	9.30am	Midweek Communion at the United Church
		2.30pm	Unity meeting
		7.30pm	Wednesday Fellowship at 113A Parklands
Sat	18	10 - 3.30pm	MWiB Quiet Day at Churchdown p9
Sun	19	10.15am	Sunday Worship - Neil Grecian
		4 - 5.45pm	Our Stories
Wed	22	2 - 4pm	Baby Café
		7.30pm	Ladies' Group
Sun	26	10.15am	Sunday Worship (Café-style): Alison Jackson
Wed	29	7.30pm	Wednesday Fellowship at 113A Parklands p4
Every Thursday at 7pm - Table tennis in the Hall			



### Mid-week Communion

Third Wednesday of the month, 9.30am at the Church.  
Just drop in



## Serving

When I was going through the 'interview' process to become a Methodist Minister I was working in a toy shop. One of the questions asked was about the similarities between working in a shop and being a minister. I got the impression that the questioner saw in the retail industry a need to promote a product, to catch the buyers' attention and he recognised a similar need in the church. My answer focused more on the differences. We cannot be in the business of selling the Gospel.

If at any point we think of our calling to serve as a way of communicating the good news and thereby getting more people to follow Jesus then we are no better than the shop keeper who sells you a three for two offer simply to get you to spend more. We are called to serve. Full stop. Service to others, friends and strangers alike, is an enactment of love. We love because God first loved us (1 John 4:19). It's not that evangelism is not an important calling placed upon us, we all have a part to play in the building up of the church; but to use service as a tool to get people to think about their faith seems to me to undermine the very nature of what service should be.

If I give something as a gift, then as they receive it I grasp their hand and won't let go until I've at least tried to convince them of their need to 'join me', then the gift is no more than a baited hook. Our calling to serve is pure and is simple. There are those all around us who are in need and because of love we respond to that need as best we can.

Now, the needs are manifold. There are so many that we could while away our time with weeping as we contemplate the world's need. In various ways and at various times the church responds to need internationally, nationally, locally and personally. There are charities, campaign groups, action groups, systems, rotas and requests that so many of us are involved in at various levels. I don't have space to discuss them all here. We cannot meet the needs of our own town, let alone the needs of the entire world. But history shows that things can change when individuals such as you and me, each in our own small way become aware. We can join the campaigns, highlight the need, give financial support, do our little bit and by our commitment to serve, the world changes.

Commitment is the key. Commitment to serve. It is an attitude of mind and a practical application of that attitude in all our relationships. How do we serve the person next to us? Our family, the stranger in the street, the waitress in a café, even the person cold calling us about an accident we never had. Everyone is our neighbour and in our dealings with them the attitude of service should be paramount. It's not about being ordered around by anyone and everyone, it's not about being blind to con men and the dangers of the world. As Jesus reminds us 'I am sending you out as sheep amongst wolves, so be

wise as serpents and innocent as doves' (Matt. 10:16). Our attitude should be one of love and love enacted is service. Without the need for thanks or reward but in the knowledge that Jesus calls us to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

'Brother, Sister, let me serve you,  
Let me be as Christ to you' (Richard A. M. Gillard)

Love,

*Phil.*



### Pingpongathon

Once again members of Team United are playing sponsored table tennis for an hour at Christ Church, Nailsworth on Saturday 11 May. This is raising money for Christian Aid. If you would like to support the team with a bit of sponsorship please give to Alun Davies, Graham Jackson or Sue & Godfrey Marsland.

**TABLE TENNIS**

### Church Lunch / Church Meeting

An advance notice for your diaries: **Sunday 16 June** for lunch at church.

Our Holy Habit for June will be 'Eating Together' so prior to the Church Meeting which will be about 1 – 1.30 that day everyone is invited for lunch. It will be a catered event so please sign up if you wish to attend. It will be a busy day because we also have a christening that morning.



### Wednesday Fellowship

7.30pm, 113A Parklands  
1 May - Prayer  
15 May & 29 May - Serving  
All welcome

## Who Are You? - Ros Wakefield

*Ros, one half of our Organist Team, apologises for the length of this - but how can we expect someone who has crammed so much into their long life to then cram an account of it into a page of writing. There's still a lot omitted.*



With the Oriana Singers (greatly enlarged, hence the fuzziness).

I'm not sure where to start – who I am comes from at least two generations back. Mother's grandfather ran away from Ireland, married a Yorkshire lass and had 12 children, of whom several died in infancy, grandfather becoming the only one who acquired an education first through evening classes, and then becoming a Primitive Methodist minister, marrying a Welsh lass in his first posting in Saundersfoot. He was remarkable in managing to build churches in his circuits and acquired a large property in London. His family of 4 girls and one boy were always close, and I have many happy memories of family parties at Christmas,

with good food, party games and entertainment and carol singing ...

Father's family was different – his father being a Londoner, and fundamentalist of the most rigid in theology, with a word-for-word knowledge of the Bible which he quoted to defend his views – though in life he wasn't nearly so narrow-minded. My father grew up to think for himself, and his beliefs were much more inclusive, and very much influenced by Donald Soper who preached pacifism from his soap box on Hyde Park Corner.

My parents met at Harrow Road Methodist Church in Paddington where my grandfather had his last church. My mother, being 6 years older than my father, took a while to have the courage to say 'yes', and to believe that my father, being clever but lacking ambition, would be able to support her. My birth was such a trauma for her that she didn't have more children and probably spoilt me thoroughly.

War interrupted my early life, so I had my first 3 years in Hayes, a few months in Ickenham (Middlesex), nearly a year in Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire, where my education started, aged 4, since my older 5-year-old cousin was with us. Our teacher forecast that I would be a mathematician! (According to the apochryphal story, my first words, instead of "Mama" and "Dada" were "One, two".) Back to Ickenham with my maternal grandmother, a year or so in Edgware, more time in Ickenham ....

I took after my father whose passion for music made him teach himself, with a bit of help from his older sister. He became the best hymn player I've met, and could transpose to any key. But he never had lessons, had no technique, and played only hymns. When older he spent all his money ensuring that I had the

chances he didn't. Similarly my mother, following her father's passionate interest in education, made sure I gained a "Middlesex" free place at Wycombe Abbey girls' public school. From there, having had the advantage of small classes, excellent music and piano lessons, I gained a place at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford to read mathematics.

At both school and university I enjoyed music, sang in the school choir and played lacrosse and cricket, eventually in the Oxford ladies' teams, though never in the first school teams – it not being fashionable for women to behave like that. So I enjoyed it – and gained a blue in both – without being particularly good.

Having been brought up a Methodist, but, in the wanderings, Congregationalist in Ickenham, where there was no nearby Methodist church, and an Anglican at boarding school, I was then an Ecumenical Methodist, and a keen member of the John Wesley society, as well as SCM (Student Christian Movement). I remember attending a Quaker meeting, and taking part in a weekend work camp. One of my most vivid memories is of attending a service in the university church, St Mary's, where Trevor Huddleston was preaching. I came out firmly committed to doing something in my life for "underdeveloped" countries, though I have now no memory at all of what he said. I didn't think I had the ability to do a further degree, and as a last resort stayed on to do a Dip Ed – though I'd always said that I *didn't* want to teach.

One of my college friends discovered that UNA ran 'work camps' in the long vacation and we went to one in Austria for refugees from the war who had settled there, but were homeless. They were offered grants to help them get houses built if they would dig out their own cellars, and UNA organised international summer camps to help them. I don't remember digging cellars, but it was manual work with people who were varied and different from anyone I'd met before. I continued going to these summer camps for several years, and finally after I'd been teaching in Northampton for 4 years, decided to spend a whole year at a work camp in Epirus, northern Greece. There I met people whom I've kept up with for the rest of my life.

Prior to fulfilling my original idea of serving underdeveloped countries, I took a job in London where I shared a flat with a colleague who introduced me to the delight of hill climbing. The thought of being somewhere flat was not what I would have enjoyed, so I ended-up in the Solomon Islands which, although small, had mountains of nearly 8000 feet. It was an unforgettable experience. I did two two-year tours which, with an extension and leave, came to 5 years. I did as much inter-island travelling as I could, and managed to get to the top of what was thought to be the highest mountain. In those days girls in the Solomons had poor deals, and I tried to push for better opportunities. One small triumph was that one of the girls I taught to drive got a job driving an official around! My homeward journey included the Trans-Siberian railway – another unforgettable experience.

Following that period I took advantage of an offer to get back into British teaching by doing an MSc at Nottingham in statistics and computer science, both subjects that had come into prominence since my degree, the next teaching post I took was at Winterbourne, and then Westonbirt, living in Wotton. Neither were particularly happy, and I nearly decided to do something different, but eventually took a job at St Leonard's School in St Andrews. That turned out worse, mainly because I wanted to make pupils think and the school wanted me to spoon-feed them. So I enjoyed a few unemployed months of catching up with technology, and got a job editing a database with a firm called Best. I could see that my humble position was going, and quite by chance mentioned it to some friends and was then offered a part-time position assisting my friend who had become the editor of the Journal of Applied Ecology. His was an unpaid job, but he could have a part-time paid assistant and this took me until my retirement.

When I moved to Scotland my parents followed me up there. Not long after my exit from teaching my mother had a stroke and dementia and needed full-time nursing care. She was nearly 90, and my father, 84, could not cope, so she went into a nursing home and he came to live with me, visiting her every day. My mother died aged 91, and my father 5 years later just after his 90th birthday, but very much in his right mind.

I then decided to come back to Wotton, nearer, though not on top of, my cousins, the closest being in Taunton and Exeter ... And here I am, 19 years later.

*Ros says there is so much more she could say. She has written this several times and comes up with different facts and memories each time. She also says she hasn't mentioned – and should – the very many good friends she has made at every stage in her life.*



## How does your Garden Grow?

Saturday Club, 11 May, Dryleaze

The meeting will have a garden theme. Bring a picture, a poem, a photo of your garden or tell us about a garden you have visited.

Or you could bring a flower or a plant.



**Christian Aid Week**  
**12 - 18 May 2019**

Dear friends.

Just a reminder that this year we have taken up Synwell Chapel's offer of storing Christian Aid donations (excluding plants etc) at

the Chapel prior to Christian Aid Week so that the committee can go through and sort. Full details are below but the dates we will be at Synwell to receive donations is **Saturday, 4 May and Saturday, 11 May at 10 am**. I am aware that the 4th is a Bank Holiday weekend and that Synwell Chapel may not be convenient for everyone so you can also bring your donations to church and we will transport them. We don't have many Sundays left.

There are unlikely to be as many house to house collections this year so we are trying to make a big effort with the shop to make up. We always have an excellent cake stall each day and soup lunches so please come along and support in this way, even if you are unable to donate goods.

The Christian Aid Service is on **Sunday, 12 May, 6pm at Synwell Chapel**. It will be led by Rev Iain Marchant and the Christian Aid speaker will be Ann Pearce who is well known to us as a local Methodist preacher.

Best wishes ..... *Alison*

And a reminder about things you can donate and ways you can help: -

**Shop.** At the Baptist Church, Monday to Thursday as before, but please could I ask you all to have a good look round at home to see if there is anything we could sell for this worthwhile charity. As always, we take virtually *anything* as long as it is in a saleable condition – even working electrical goods as we can get them PAT tested. Clothes, bric-a-brac, toys, unwanted gifts, books – to name but a few!

**Plants.** A plea to all gardeners. Most gardeners plant more seeds than they need - please let us have your leftovers!

**Street collection.** We are having an extra street collection on Friday as well as Saturday so if you could spare an hour to collect that would be so helpful. We will be organising a rota so the more people who volunteer the better.

**Cakes.** Could you make a cake or biscuits? Perhaps you could make something now and put it in the freezer if you know that May is going to be busy. Our day is Thursday - we will also need someone to sell all those lovely cakes! Important – Please make sure that anything you make is nut free.

**Soup.** Our day is Monday and I need four people to make soup for lunch.

**Thank you for reading this. ANY HELP WOULD BE MOST WELCOME!**



# Unity



**The new Christian Social Group**

**2.30pm, Wednesday 15 May**

**United Church Hall**

**All welcome**

**Cost £2 to include refreshments.**

## **Baptist Church Summer Holiday Club**

**Monday 22 - Friday 26 July, 10 - 12.30pm daily**

Do you know a child aged from end of Reception to Year 6 who would like to attend? Registration forms will soon be available to download at [www.wottonbaptist.org.uk](http://www.wottonbaptist.org.uk), although registration in person will still be necessary from 9.45am on Monday 22 July. Any queries, speak to Karen Dover 01454 844726 or [karend@wottonbaptist.org.uk](mailto:karend@wottonbaptist.org.uk)

### **Found Property:**

Found at the side of the church on Easter Sunday: a green plastic thingummy for cable storage. If it is yours, please contact Philip Revill.



### **District MWiB Quiet Day**

Saturday 18 May, 10am – 3.30pm

Churchdown Methodist Church

Boots, Bible, Bread – experiencing Emmaus. Led by Anne Browse, former MWiB President, the day is 'gender-friendly' and everyone is welcome! There

is no charge for the day, but donations would be welcomed. Please email [mj.winterbourne@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mj.winterbourne@hotmail.co.uk) if you would like to attend.

### **I thought I'd already read that?**

You may have done. Because the centre, Roman-numeral-numbered pages are circulated to all the churches in Wotton, it's necessary to sometimes put things in twice; once for us (usually in more detail - but not always) and once for everyone else. Don't stop reading!

## On Chains:

A beautiful spring morning, the birds singing, the may in flower – and I am being forced to think about chains.

Some days, everything you see, everything you do points in one direction and today it's chains.

I'm not quite sure where it started; probably while sitting at the computer, my 'fingers wandering idly over the noisy keys'. As usual, I checked the BBC news and found an article about modern slavery and car washing. Having made a note in case I needed this later (I did! See article) I was distracted by a post on Facebook which led, indirectly, to my dear university friend Pauline, chained to a wheelchair, disabled by MS. And as yet I hadn't made a connection.

The walk to church, the pre-service busy-ness then a few moments of quiet before the worship began, and there they were again; the cross of chains. The three crosses made of chains on the altar table.

I read the weekly news-sheet and with it the Collect for the week: Almighty God, your Son came into the world to FREE us all from sin and death.

When we sang 'Jesus shall reign ...' I decided it was time to take notes before all of this slipped away from me. 'Blessings abound where'er He reigns; the prisoner leaps to lose his chains' and it still didn't stop. 'As water to the thirsty ... as freedom after bondage ... so is my God to me'.

Chains can be real or symbolic. Even imaginary. We may feel chained to the kitchen sink, or chained in a relationship. Chained in a prison cell. In any situation from which we can see no way out.

As suicide rates soar there are clearly many people who do see just one way to escape their chains. Even as Christians, in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection we may think it will all be better once we are dead. But it can't be right to selfishly opt out when we can help to release others from their own chains. Even if the only – only? - help we can give them is to tell them that thanks to Jesus death and resurrection it will all be better in the next world.

The simple message: don't chain other people. Identify those who are chained. We can't release everyone from the chains of poverty, but we can help (see Phil's letter on p3) Do what you can to free them. Help them hear the birdsong.

The Big Message. We make our own chains, by the way we act, the way we live. But Jesus came to release us from those chains, to free us all from sin and death. To give us life, that the truth may set us free. And Pauline in her wheelchair can be free, because she knows she is loved and that Jesus died for her. But we still have to do all we can to free her and those like her, because God does not want us to be chained.

*Judy Mills*

<b>Rotas for MAY</b>						
	5 May	12 May	19 May	26 May	2 June	
WORSHIP STEWARD	Ann Revill	Roger Gunning	Alan Jackson	Alison Jackson	Philip Revill	
WELCOME	Joy Robinson	Anne & John Rees-Simkins	Sandra & Trevor Owen	Janet & Alun Davies	Pat & Richard Bayliss	
COFFEE	Brenda Cary & Jackie Ling	Janet & Alun Davies	Sandra & Trevor Owen	Hilary & Alan McDermott	Pauline Jones & Anne Rees-Simkins	
FLOWERS	Judy Mills	Kath Wilkes	Ann Revill	?	?	
SOUND SYSTEM	Godfrey Marsland	Martin Summers	Trevor Owen	Brian Reeks	Graham Jackson	
SCREENS	Martin Summers	Philip Revill	Alan Jackson	Alison Jackson	Godfrey Marsland	
ORGAN	Ros Wakefield	Sue Marsland	Sue Marsland	Ros Wakefield (am & pm)	Ros Wakefield	
GRASS	Peter Sutton	Alun Davies	John Rees-Simkins	Richard Bayliss	Brian Reeks	

## *From the Remembrance Book in May*



4	Michael Boynes	2001	19	Pamela Brown	2013
4	Bryan Thorne	1999	21	Norman Clewes	2016
5	Joan Baldwin	2007	25	Lewis Reynolds	2018
11	Gwendoline Benson	1990	26	Dorothy Emery	2016
15	Lilian Wakefield	1981	27	Edna Dawkins	2015

*We give thanks for all who have lived and died in the faith of Christ*

<b>MINISTER</b>	Rev Phil Summers, 21 Kingshill Road, Dursley GL12 4DQ. Tel: 01453 542565. email: <a href="mailto:philsum41@gmail.com">philsum41@gmail.com</a>
<b>LEADERSHIP TEAM</b>	Rev Phil Summers, Martin Summers (01454 294920) Sue Marsland (844110), Graham Jackson (842449), Alison Jackson (843072) ) Roger Gunning (845232),
<b>TREASURER</b>	Reg Clarke, Lucerne, 5a Ellerncroft Rd, W-u-E GL12 7AX Tel. 842480. email: <a href="mailto:treasurer@wottonunitedchurch.org.uk">treasurer@wottonunitedchurch.org.uk</a>
<b>BOOKING</b>	Pauline Jones, 55A Parklands, W-u-E GL12 7NR. Tel. 843708. email: <a href="mailto:pj55a@hotmail.co.uk">pj55a@hotmail.co.uk</a>
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Items for the **June** United Alive by **20 May** please to Judy Mills  
or Ann & Philip Revill