

Our walk with God



Enjoy your journey!

Welcome to the Churches of St Mary le More and St Leonard in the Parish of Wallingford. This booklet has been brought together to summarise the process of spiritual renewal, described here as “Our Walk with God”. This is a journey which, as Christians, we are all called to experience.

As you will read in the next few pages, Our walk with God is a multifaceted journey, involving a range of methods for ensuring that, as a community, our spiritual life is kept alive and renewed. These methods have been summarised under the five “disciplines” of worship, prayer, study, fellowship and being open to calling.

You will also find towards the end of this booklet a summary of all the local activities and resources (including recommended reading and websites) to help you in your own walk with God.

Sing as travellers sing along the road, but keep on walking. Sing but keep on walking. What do I mean by walking? I mean press on, from good to better. So sing alleluia, and keep on walking.

(From the Bishop of Oxford’s Easter Sermon 2008)

Why walk With God?



The Christian belief is that learning to “walk with God” is what we have been made for, and it is how we are likely to find the most fulfillment in our daily living.

The great theologian St Augustine wrote “Lord you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest with thee”. The Bible also tells us that Jesus said that he came that we “might have life, and life in all its fullness” (John 10 v 10). St Paul wrote about our relationship with Christ; “in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17 v 28).

All these quotations express the idea that we are not completely whole and enriched unless we live a life which is in relationship with God. Maintaining this vital relationship with God is a continual process, and also one which we best follow with the support of other people.

In the Wallingford Parish we use the phrase “Our Walk with God” to describe all that enables us, as part of a church community, to continue to develop our connection with God. This ongoing process is one of renewal of all aspects of our lives so that they more closely follow the example and teachings of Jesus.

The characteristics of a walk with God



As we continue on a walk with God we might expect to develop the five **characteristics** described below.

In this booklet we will also go on to consider five Christian **disciplines** (indicated by the images depicted in the list below) which, if practised, can help us develop these characteristics.

Joy and thankfulness, as we learn to live in the knowledge that the love of God is at the heart of the universe. Increased joy is one of the hallmarks of continuing on a walk with God

We express our joy and thankfulness through **worship**



Prayerfulness, as we learn to develop a means of communication with God through the practice of prayer. As we continue on our walk we may learn that this communication is more about listening than speaking.

We learn how to pray only through the practice of **prayer**



Trust, as we learn to live in faith that, despite setbacks and the suffering we might experience and see in the world around us, all this is in the hands of a loving God

Study of the Bible and of the lives and writings of great Christians can encourage us to learn to live in trust



Respect and love for each other and all creation, as we learn that each one of us, and every part of the world around us, is of immense and equal value in the eyes of God. We gradually learn to let that truth infuse through and transform all our relationships.

Fellowship is the practical aspect of developing respectful and loving relationships



A willingness to be guided, as we learn to rely more and more on the example of Jesus Christ, the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and also the wisdom of those around us to help us make creative choices from day to day.

Being open to a calling from God is how we start to be willing to be guided



being open to calling

What can help us on our walk with God?



There are a number of methods or **disciplines** through which we can enrich our walk with God. Some of these, such as worship and seeking spiritual guidance, involve relationships with other people, and others, such as prayer and study, may be more solitary pursuits. The Bible indicates that spiritual life involves a “varied diet” of the five disciplines listed below. As individuals we may be drawn to practise some of these disciplines in more depth than others. The descriptions of the five aspects which follow on the next few pages may be helpful to remind us not to miss out on some of the essential ingredients of a walk with God.

The five disciplines which support a walk with God are as follows:

Worship,
Prayer
Study,
Fellowship
Being open to a calling

Towards the end of this booklet you will find lists of resources and local contacts also under these five headings. These are intended to help you to learn more about enriching your own walk with God.

Worship



Worship is a natural expression of a relationship with God, but it is also a discipline which will enable us to continue to deepen that relationship. In worship we open ourselves to the presence of God and acknowledge our thankfulness for all that we have been given. The psalms in the Bible contain many examples of encouragement to worship, and it is clear from these that worship can be both private, between ourselves and God, and also corporate, as we join with others to praise and thank God.

Worship in church services. Corporate worship is considered so important that it is a fundamental aspect of what all churches have to offer. Worship involves any activity in which we open ourselves to God, and so activities such as singing and listening to music, corporate reading of prayers, periods of silence and participation in the act of holy communion can all be acts of worship.

Worship binds us together as Christians and reminds us that each one of us is dependent on God. Just as glowing embers lose their heat when divided from each other, so as

Christians we may lose our inspiration and sense of direction if we do not manage to meet with others to worship on a regular basis.

Music: When we sing hymns and psalms we immerse ourselves in the words and ideas of the scriptures in a way which can touch us more deeply than by using solely our analytical minds. There is a strong church music tradition in Wallingford, with the opportunity to attend services such as Evensong in which the words are set to traditional church music. For those who find contemporary music more helpful for worship, modern hymns are sung in the Family and All Age services.

Holy Communion (also known as the Eucharist) is the act of remembrance which Jesus first shared with his disciples on the night before he was crucified. When we share the breaking of the bread and the pouring of the wine in the communion service, we are reminded of the centrality of the crucifixion and resurrection, and how this gives us hope in the promise which Jesus gives of new life after death. Moreover the sharing of this profound mystery firmly roots us in the truth that we are all part of the body of Christ.

For more information about local resources and books relating to worship please turn to page 18

Prayer



Prayer is at the heart of our relationship with God. When Jesus taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer he said that it was to be used "when you pray" (Matt 6 v5-15). There were no ifs; to Jesus, prayer was an essential part of his relationship with God.

Corporate prayer: Prayers can be made with other people (corporate prayer) and, as an illustration of the importance of this aspect of prayer, in all our church services there is a part of the service set aside for corporate prayer. There are also opportunities in most churches to meet at other times in small groups solely to pray.

Solitary prayer is also very important for developing a relationship with God. Solitary prayer does not necessarily come naturally to some people, and for most requires practice and encouragement, particularly when we are not used to praying. We are told in the Bible that despite a busy and taxing ministry, Jesus set aside time for solitary prayer by leaving the crowds at a quiet time of day and finding a "deserted place" (Mark 1 v 35). We can do likewise, and find

the refreshment, inspiration and encouragement we need by setting aside regular times for prayer. Some people find it helpful to follow a simple written order of service so that their private prayer can emerge out of the foundation of a familiar structure.

Confession: Confession is the aspect of prayer in which we acknowledge the ways in which we have moved away from our walk with God. It is a practice which is extremely helpful to prompt us to recommit our lives to God and to learn from our mistakes. Christians accept that through sincere confession we receive absolute forgiveness for all that we have done wrong.

Confession may be made in a time of private prayer or as part of the general confession which forms part of most church services. Some people receive great benefit in confessing their mistakes to another person, and this practice is encouraged in the Bible (James 5 v 16). It is important that we choose someone who is a person of prayer and who can be trusted to keep what we say totally confidential. In the Wallingford Parish, the ordained ministers are always prepared to arrange a time to listen to a confession, after which there would be said a special prayer of forgiveness (absolution).

Spiritual guidance: Much help and guidance can be found by reading about the prayer lives of famous Christians such as Samuel Wesley or Mother Teresa, or from books written specifically about prayer or meditation.

We will also naturally gain guidance through fellowship with other Christians, and maybe particularly if the setting is one in which spiritual issues are openly discussed, for example in a home group or a prayer partnership.

Some people get great support from meeting with a spiritual guide or mentor who is a person who is experienced in the practice of prayer.

Times of retreat: Going to a quiet place for a retreat, in other words, a time away from the busy routines of every day life, can be enormously encouraging for the practice of prayer and stillness. There are many establishments, some of which are convents or monasteries, which offer hospitality to people who wish to make retreats from as little as a few hours to up to a few days at a time. Some retreat houses will also be able to provide someone who can act as a spiritual mentor for the duration of the retreat.

For more information about local resources and books relating to prayer please turn to page 21

Study



Reading the scriptures: The Bible is of course the primary source for learning about the life of Jesus and the early Christians, as well about the history of the Jewish people's walk with God leading up to the birth of Jesus.

Many people find that Bible reading notes help them to find their way around the Bible as they offer small sections of scripture passages together with accompanying passages of interpretation or guidance. These are particularly useful for those unfamiliar with the layout of the Bible, and are produced in a range of styles to suit different sorts of readers.

Bible commentaries are books which provide a more in depth analysis of larger sections of biblical text, such as a single book of the Bible. They will often give historical and theological background which will help put the words into a cultural context, and can throw light on passages which otherwise would not make obvious sense.

St Paul considered that the words of scripture were "living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb 4 v 12). Many Christians share the experience that reading scripture can have this living quality in that the words often seem to speak directly into the reader's personal situation.

Reading about the experiences of other Christians: Whether it is the life of great Christian saints like Teresa of Avila or John of the Cross, or the story of the spiritual life of a contemporary housewife, reading about other people's walk with God can be very inspiring.

Reading about specific aspects of the spiritual life. There are many books available on specific aspects of the spiritual life, on topics such as prayer, giving, living in trust and developing respectful and caring relationships. These offer encouragement as we continue to develop our connection to God.

Study groups: Study may be made easier for some people if it happens in the context of a discipleship group. In Wallingford the Emmaus groups provide this opportunity for shared study and discussion in an informal but respectful setting.

For more information about local resources and books relating to study please turn to page 24

Fellowship



Jesus promised when “two or three are gathered together in his name” that he would be there in the midst of them
(Matt 18 v 19).

We are not intended to continue on our walk with God alone. St Paul likens us as individuals to various parts of the body (Romans 12 v 4–5); in that it is only together we become a functional whole. This is very much in contradiction to the individualistic pressures we may experience in modern society.

Fellowship is a term used to describe what happens when people meet together and encourage each other in their walk with God simply by being together. Fellowship can happen informally and need not involve “God talk”. Instead just sharing relaxed time with other people who are also committed to a walk with God is vitally supportive and encouraging.

Fellowship groups. Fellowship can be found in a more structured setting, and of course is an essential aspect of church services

and the more informal gatherings which often occur after them.

Also, many people find the less formal but regular gathering of a Christian group particularly helpful.

Groups can have different aims: some meet for study, some for prayer, and others, like the church choir, for worship. The children’s groups provide fun for the children and support and friendship for their carers. Some groups, like the Ecumenical Art Group, meet because of a shared interest rather than for an overtly Christian reason.

Enquirers groups are intended to support people who feel new in their faith and discipleship groups to encourage people as they continue to walk with God. In Wallingford the Emmaus groups are examples of these sorts of groups. In all types of groups such as these we get an opportunity to talk about our faith and the challenges which faces us as we continue to walk with God, and also to worship and pray together. Even the most committed church attender may not otherwise have the opportunity to talk frankly about spiritual issues and receive the encouragement and inspiration which these groups can offer.

Service and giving: A crucial aspect of fellowship is how we support and help our fellow human beings. Whilst the willingness to help other people is a natural result of following a walk with God, actually deciding to engage in dedicating our time and

resources for the benefit of others is a discipline which can deeply enrich our relationship with God.

St Paul said when he was talking about helping the sick that it was “happier to give than to receive”

(Acts 20 v 35).

Being able to give of ourselves relies on a deep trust that God will continue to meet our own needs. The practice of serving others and giving will help to build both trust and deeper relationship with others, and will also result in the increased joy that goes with both these things.

In the Wallingford parish our service to others is extended further than our own community by means of a continuing commitment to support missions and charities through giving, and acting with awareness of issues of global significance such as participation in fair trading schemes.

For more information about local resources and books relating to fellowship please turn to page 29

Being open to calling



...whether you turn to the right or the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying "this is the way; walk in it".
(Isaiah 30 v 21)

Finally, it is always good to reflect that God brought creation into existence by speaking into the void (Genesis 1 and John 1:1-4), and continues to call us to ways of being which are the most fruitful and rewarding for us and those around us.

The word vocation literally means calling, and may sometimes be used to describe the very specific calling which some people may experience towards authorized ministry within the church. This use of the word might make some of us feel that we do not have a vocation, but in fact all of us are called to a richer life, and we need to learn to discern the voice of God so that at every point in our lives we can be open to the way of life to which we are being called.

For some people a calling may mean being drawn to a way of life which is very obviously dedicated to the service of others, be it within the church or in a broader context. However a true calling from God will be to the place in which we can be most fully ourselves, and so may draw some to more introverted activities such as contemplation, study, or gardening. In this sense Jesus' words, quoted earlier in this booklet, have particular relevance:

"I have come that they might have life, and life in all its fullness"
(John 10 v 10).

But now this is what the Lord says..."Do not be afraid; I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name; you are mine"
(Isaiah 43 v 1)

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive at the place where we started and know
the place for the first time
(from Four Quartets by T.S. Eliot)

For more information about local resources and books relating to being open to calling please turn to page 34.

Our walk with God in the Wallingford Parish



Here follows some information about the various activities and resources which may be of support to you as you continue in your walk with God. The lists are ordered under the now familiar headings of the five disciplines.

Worship



Regular services in Wallingford Parish

Times of services may be subject to variation so please confirm them with those found on the weekly pew sheet (available from the St Mary's church porchway)

Morning prayer: every weekday morning 8.30–9.00am

A quiet said service in St Mary's church following the Common Worship order of Morning Prayer

BCP Holy Communion: every Sunday morning in St Leonard's church at 8.00am

A quiet said service following the order of Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer

Family service– 2nd Sunday of the month at 10.00am in St Mary's Church

A lively service particularly aimed at families with young children, but all are welcome!

Parish Communion: 1st and 3rd (and 5th) Sundays of the month at 10.00am in St Mary's Church

A service following the Common Worship order of Holy Communion. There is a children's group and crèche running at the same time. The choir sings at this service.

All age communion 4th Sundays of the month at 10.00am in St Mary's Church

A service following the Common Worship order of Holy Communion which includes aspects which are focussed at children and young people. The crèche is available in this service. The choir sings at this service.

Holy Communion on 2nd Sunday of month at 11.15am

A quiet said service of Holy Communion following the Common Worship pattern.

Evensong every Sunday evening at 6.30pm at St Leonard's Church

The order of evening prayer from the Book of Common Prayer with traditional church music settings. The choir sings at this service.

Midweek services

On Thursdays at 11.00am there is a quiet said service of Holy Communion following the Common Worship pattern in the All Hallows chapel of St Mary's Church.

Opportunities for taking part in services

If you would like to take an active part in the running of the services of worship please contact the following people:

For taking the prayers, doing readings and acting as a sidesperson: contact the Rector, Revd David Rice, on 01491 202188 (david.rice5@ntlworld.com)

For joining the choir: contact the Director of Music, Dr Sue Ledger, on 01491 835207 (sue@drsue.org.uk)

For joining the family service music group: contact Jane Ely on 01491 836574 (janeely@googlemail.com)

For helping with the Children's Groups: contact Jacquie Hughes (j.hughes@doctors.org.uk)

Recommended reading

Common Worship: Church House Publishing (2000)

This summary of the Church of England Orders of Service is very useful for learning about the church year, and the choice of different prayers and readings for different church seasons.

A passionate balance: the Anglican tradition. Alan Bartlett (2007) DLT

A good overview of the characteristics of Anglican approaches to worship.

Celebration of discipline: Richard Foster (1998) Hodder and Stoughton

This Christian classic deals with diverse aspects of the spiritual life and has a chapter dedicated to the discipline of worship.

Recommended websites

www.freshexpressions.org.uk Fresh Expressions is an initiative of the Church of England through which new forms of worship and church are recognized and supported.

www.greenbelt.org.uk Greenbelt is an annual Christian music and arts festival, which at the last (33rd Festival) in 2007 attracted over 19000 festival goers.

www.new-wine.org The mission statement of New Wine is "Our vision is to see the nation changed through Christians and churches being filled with the Spirit, alive with the joy of knowing and worshipping Jesus Christ, living out his word, and doing the works of the Kingdom of God".

Prayer



Prayer meetings

See schedule of services for details about weekday morning prayer services and evening prayer (Evensong) on Sundays. Also, a group meets to pray specifically for the church community and its renewal on Tuesday evenings from 7.00–7.30pm. For more information contact Ralph Shephard on 01491 832024 (ralph@ralphandhelen.co.uk)

Spiritual direction

For more information about how to find a spiritual director visit the website of the Spiritual Direction Network at www.oxford.anglican.org/spi-dir.

Making a retreat

The following places have been found by church members to be helpful for the purposes of making a retreat: Convent of the Incarnation, Fairacres, Oxford OX4 1TB. Contact the guest sister on guests@slq.org.uk.

The Centre for Reflection and Quiet Garden, Aston Tirrold United Reformed Church, Aston Tirrold. For more information visit www.reflect.freeuk.com

Lee Abbey; a home to a Christian community which hosts a conference, Retreat and holiday centre. It is set in 280 acres of farm and woodland in coastal Devon. www.leeabbey.org.uk

For more general information about Christian retreats in the UK visit the website of the Retreat Association (www.retreats.org.uk)

Personal confession

If you would like to make a personal confession please contact the Rector, Revd David Rice (01491 202199), or the honorary assistant priest, Revd Jim Spence (01491 826814)

Prayer requests

Prayer requests can be made either via the ordained ministers or the church wardens, or can be posted on the prayer request board in the corner dedicated to prayer in the North East corner of St Mary's church.

Recommended reading

How to pray: John Pritchard (2002) SPCK

Bishop John (Oxford) discusses various approaches to prayer in very accessible language.

Praying through life: Stephen Cottrell (2003) Church House Publishing.

Another book on prayer by a highly regarded local Bishop (Reading), and also in accessible language.

Time for prayer: Church House Publishing (2006) DLT

Contains brief orders of services, prayers and psalms intended to help give structure to private prayer for busy people.

Celebration of discipline: Richard Foster (1998) Hodder and Stoughton

There are chapters in this classic guide to the spiritual life dedicated to the disciplines of both meditation and prayer.

Recommended websites

www.contemplativefire.org a growing spiritual movement which offers retreats and workshops on the process of spiritual growth and prayer.

www.jesuit.ie a website which offers an interactive daily order of prayer. The prayers are based around the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius and focus on the creative use of the imagination.

www.henrinouwen.org website of a society dedicated to principles of spirituality, solitude, community and compassion which characterised the life of Henri Nouwen. You can ask for a daily prayer prompt to be sent to you by email from this site.

Study



Recommended biblical translations

In the Wallingford Parish services we use readings from the **New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** of the Bible. This version dating from 1989 is based on up to date scholarly understanding of the source texts, and uses contemporary and gender neutral language. It is widely accepted by many protestant churches worldwide.

For those who want to explore a different presentation of the Bible texts in very accessible language, then it can be very stimulating to read **The Message, the Bible in contemporary language** by Eugene Peterson (2002) NavPress. Rather than a strict translation, this is a paraphrase of the original text in contemporary “street” language, and may appeal particularly to young people.

For those who like the Message, there is a “parallel version” with a more conventional translation of the bible, in this case the New International Version. This version presents, for ease of comparison and increased richness of interpretation, the corresponding Message version of the text alongside the conventional translation.

The Message/NIV parallel bible (2007) Zondervan

Recommended Bible reading notes and commentaries

The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) produces a wide range of Bible reading notes. All of these present small passages from the Bible, often with a daily schedule, together with passages of interpretation to help with understanding, reflection and prayer.

For more information, visit www.biblereadingnotes.org.uk.

On the same website you can find information about the **People’s Bible Commentary** Series, which is a series of texts, each written by respected contemporary theologians, with one edition for each of the books of the Bible. Each book will take you carefully through the biblical text and offer background information and interpretation of the crucial

messages verse by verse. The PBC on the gospel of John has been recommended by the Archbishop of Canterbury to all the Bishops for prayerful daily reading leading up to the 2008 Lambeth Conference.

Recommended books on great Christians

There are literally hundreds of titles on the lives and writings of great Christians, each of which can be of value in offering inspiration and deepening understanding of the Christian faith and how it can be lived out in a unique way. Here are just a few of them:

In the shadow of the Galilean: Gurd Theissen (2001) SCM Classics

This novel draws on New Testament study and adds the terseness of thriller writing. The gospel story and the life of Jesus are conveyed as a story told by a fictitious contemporary of Jesus.

Paul: a novel: Walter Wangerin (2001) Lion Press

Another novel, this time woven around the life and letters of St Paul. This very readable book enables the Epistles and the Acts of the apostles to be interpreted as a unified whole, and gives a memorable flavour of what it might have been like in the Mediterranean early church communities in the decades following Christ’s ministry.

The impact of God: soundings from St John of the Cross: Iain Matthew (1995) Hodder and Stoughton

This book summarises the life and teaching of the 16th century Spanish mystic John of the Cross. Drawing from a deep profound experience of suffering, John of the Cross speaks powerfully of the love of a God who longs to meet us in our deepest need.

Teresa of Avila: Ecstasy and Common Sense Tessa Bielecki (1996) Shambala

An accessible collection of writings of this very down to earth contemporary of John of the Cross. Teresa of Avila combines deep practicality with a profound spirituality.

Surprised by Joy: CS Lewis (1998) Fount

A Grief observed: CS Lewis (1966) Faber

Both these autobiographical books capture important periods in the life of this prolific and widely loved writer on Christianity. In *Surprised by Joy* Lewis describes how he arrived at a point where he could no longer resist a belief in a loving God. In *A Grief Observed* he describes how his very deep and enduring faith was challenged through the experience of bereavement.

Befriending the stranger: Jean Vanier (2005) DLT

Jean Vanier is the founder of the L'Arche communities for people with complex developmental disabilities. In this reflection on Christian communities he emphasizes his discovery that in embracing the marginalized and helpless we learn from them a profound truth about giving and receiving the love of Christ.

Difficult Gospel; The theology of Rowan Williams: Mike Highton (2004) SCM

In this summary of the themes on which Archbishop Rowan has written, we get a feel for the breadth and depth of the often difficult to penetrate writings of this prayerful man. The book covers topics as wide ranging as peace, popular culture, sexuality and evangelism.

The enduring melody: Michael Mayne (2006) DLT

An autobiography of terminal illness written by the former Dean Emeritus of Westminster Abbey. It is an account of dealing with personal loss and suffering and how this led the author in an ever deepening celebration of life's mystery

Recommended books on the spiritual life

Likewise there are hundreds of titles on living a full spiritual life. So here are just a few recommendations:

The Imitation of Christ: Thomas a Kempis (1973) Penguin Classics

This is the collection of the inspired writings of a 15th century monk on all aspects of the spiritual life. Although written to meet the needs of people in a totally different cultural setting to our own, the teaching still remains challenging, inspiring and relevant.

The practice of the presence of God: Brother Lawrence (1993) Oneworld publications

A classic first published in 1692. The letters and conversations reveal the life of a man who held to a

joyful focus on God throughout all his mundane activities as a simple monk.

New seeds of contemplation; Thomas Merton (1999) Burns and Oates

Merton was called to live a solitary life in a monastic community in the USA. Before his untimely death in 1968 he wrote prolifically on the spiritual life, social action and on interfaith dialogue. This book offers some of his insights on prayer and contemplation.

The road to daybreak, a spiritual journey: Henri Nouwen (1989) DLT

This posthumously published journal of the later years of the theologian and writer on the spiritual life recounts how he is humbled to find himself called to live alongside people with physical and mental disabilities in the Community of L'Arche in France.

Messy spirituality: Christianity for the rest of us; Mike Yaconelli (2001) Hodder and Stoughton

A book written to encourage those who feel that a deep spirituality is beyond their reach because of their complex and busy lives.

Life you've always wanted; spiritual disciplines for ordinary people John Ortberg (2004) Zondervan

The title says it all. An encouraging and challenging approach to a Christian life that's worth living.

Fellowship



Emmaus Groups

Emmaus is the place to which some of the disciples were traveling when they first experienced the risen Christ. The Emmaus course is used in a small group context to nurture new Christians and to inspire people to deeper levels of discipleship. In the Wallingford Parish Emmaus groups provide a setting for following the Emmaus course which allow for enquiry about the Christian faith, and a structure through which all the central aspects of Christian living can be discussed. The feedback from participants suggests that the Emmaus experience has not only deepened faith but also helped increase a sense of belonging to the church community.

For more information contact Val and Bob Woodings on 01491 834519.

Or visit www.e-mmaus.org.uk

Lent Groups

In the few weeks leading up to Easter the Lent groups meet to follow a study course designed to help participants focus on the Easter message. The groups incorporate people drawn from the diverse church communities in the Wallingford area and this fosters links between Christians within our wider community.

For more information contact the Rector, David Rice, on 01491 202188 (email david.rice5@ntlworld.co.uk)

Youth groups

Junior choir: for those young people (age 6 onwards) who have an interest in singing, then the junior choir offers a lively and friendly setting for singing together and taking part in services. The junior choir is a part of the church choir, and so joins them for part of their rehearsal on Friday evenings.

For more information contact Dr Sue Ledger on 01491 835207 (email sue@drsue.org.uk)

Youth Emmaus: Youth Emmaus groups form from time to time and so far have concentrated on preparing young people for confirmation.

For more information contact the Rector, David Rice, on 01491 202188 (email david.rice5@ntlworld.co.uk)

Rock Solid and other Youth Work at Wallingford Baptist Church

Rock Solid is a youth group for children aged between 11 and 14 which meets on alternate Fridays at Wallingford Baptist church. On the other Fridays the Youth Group for young people of 14 and over meets. Young people of all denominations or none are welcome. Christian youth work at the church and in the wider community is now coordinated by the newly appointed outreach community youth worker, George Elerick

(email youthwork@wallingford.org.uk).

Toddlers

A toddler group with lots of toys, music and singing. The group meets on Wednesday mornings from 10.00–11.00am at St Mary's Church. Contact Kate Wilson on 01491 212221.

Bumps and Babies

A group for young babies and their mums which meets on Wednesdays from 10.00–11.00am at St Mary's Church. Contact Jenny Bispham on 01491 826223.

Ecumenical Art Group

Meets to paint and draw together at St Mary's church on Tuesday mornings. Contact Brian Sanders on 01491 837698

Churches Together in Wallingford Area (CTWA)

CTWA promotes communication and unity between the diverse churches of the Wallingford Area, including holding joint church services and discussion evenings from time to time. For more information on the participating churches and forthcoming events, go to www.ctwa.org.uk.

Service

Pastoral team; The pastoral care team are a group of church members who are trained to visit and support people in need of prayer and encouragement, offer bereavement counselling or take communion to the housebound. Visits can be made to people at their homes or in hospital. If you would like to arrange a visit or to discuss

joining the team please contact the Rector, David Rice, on 01491 202188 (email david.rice5@ntlworld.com)

Giving

Support of charities and mission outreach

For more information on the charities and missions which the church support and how donations are distributed please contact Judith Pengilly on 01491 651004.

If you would like to join our stewardship Scheme through which we offer financial support to the life of our church then contact Jenny Harden on 01491 837688.

Church building fund

If you would like to learn more about the St Mary's Renewal Fund and how to offer support please contact Val Wolsey on 01491 836820 (val@wolsey3.wanadoo.co.uk)

Recommended reading

The Church in the Market Place; George Carey (1991) Morehouse Group

This book written by the former Archbishop of Canterbury tells of the story of a growth of fellowship, commitment and discipleship within a church community in the centre of Durham. This would make inspiring reading for all those committed to the St Mary's renewal campaign.

Being open to calling



Spiritual direction

A spiritual director is prepared to help you explore a calling in the broadest sense of the word. For more information about how to find a spiritual director, visit the website of the Spiritual Direction Network at www.oxford.anglican.org/spi-dir.

Enquiries about vocation to authorized church ministry

If you are wondering whether God might be calling you to authorized church ministry you can talk in confidence to the Rector, David Rice, on 01491 202188 (email david.rice5@ntlworld.com).

Recommended reading

Do nothing to change your life: Discovering what happens when you stop. Stephen Cottrell (2007) Church House Publishing.

A beginner's guide to sitting still! In this book Bishop Stephen offers guidance on the first stages of what you will require to be able to discern a calling from God, achieving a state of receptive stillness.

If you want to walk on the water you'd better get out of the boat! John Ortman (2003) Zondervan Books

In this readable and encouraging book Ortberg uses the analogy of Peter daring to walk out on the water towards Jesus to describe the leap of faith which we will all need to make if we are to fully follow a calling from God.

Called or collared: an alternative approach to vocation. Francis Dewar (2000) SPCK

In this very clear book the author carefully helps the reader to make a distinction between a vocation to Christian ministry in its very general sense, and a very specific call to authorized ministry.

The life and work of a priest: John Pritchard (2007) SPCK

A humane and readable overview of all the aspects of the role of the priest in the Anglican church. A good introduction for anyone who might be experiencing a calling to the authorized ministry in the church.

All books mentioned in this guide are in print at the time of writing. The **Fountain Bookshop** in Wallingford will have many of these titles in stock, and if not, can order them for you to arrive within a few days.

For more information call 01491 839511 or visit www.ridgeway-church.org.uk/fountain_bookshop.htm

Our walk with God



This booklet has been written by the Wallingford Parish Spiritual Renewal Subcommittee. It will be subject to repeated revisions and updates of details, so if you have any comments about the content, or suggestions for additions and amendments please contact Clare Stephenson on clarestephenson@doctors.org.uk

May 2008

Enjoy the journey!

