

Weoley Hill Church News



November 2018

From the Minister

Dear Friends,

Who doesn't like a story? A good story! We love telling stories or being told stories. Hopefully we heard as children, and have told our children, many "Once upon a time..." stories. And we may share with our children and grandchildren "When I was your age..." stories. With friends we may share personal stories and with fellow members in church we may reminisce with "Do you remember when..." stories. We love stories and while some of us are just brilliant storytellers, others among us are very keen listeners!

Story telling is an important activity in our lives. When we speak of our joys, our pains, our memories, we tell stories. We grow up with stories that make us understand who we are and what communities we belong to. Stories give us an identity in our family and community. In Church we listen to and tell the stories of the Bible that shape who we are. We are part of the stories in the Bible; we belong to the stories of Jesus as we belong to him who tells and lives them! The stories of the Bible are our family of faith stories. And by telling these stories to which we belong and by which we live, we share friendship and kinship.

In the church we not only share stories of the Bible but stories of faith and faithfulness, of ministry and mission, of care and companionships and we do so on Sundays, during the week, at special occasions, around tables of food and fellowship or around the Lord's table where we enact the story of God's love for all people. Yes, we are storytelling and story making communities and people come and go to share in the telling and shaping of the story of a church community, sometimes for a very long period of time, sometimes for a shorter time. But everyone adds to and

enriches the story one way or another, when they bring along their own story as well as their gifts and talents, their dreams and visions.

As I write I very much look forward to soon become part of the story of your faithful community, a story that goes back many, many years and hopefully will continue for many years to come. I hope that together we may faithfully “live” the story of Weoley Hill URC in the present, building on the story of the past and open to God’s spirit to discern where the story may lead us to in the future. And let us remember, God is the author of **The Story** and we are only called to play our faithful part in it!

Last but not least, at the time that you read this I would like to say a big “thank you” to all who have been actively involved in preparing for my coming and induction as your new minister, who have extended a warm welcome and have helped Michael and me to settle back in Birmingham and in a very nicely redecorated Manse. It is very much appreciated!

Best wishes,
Leonora



And a farewell from Dan

I went for my six-monthly pacemaker check recently. Everything was fine. However it set me thinking. Many of us have regular health check-ups and the doctor or consultant might tweak our medication, change our tablets or make suggestions regarding diet, exercise or lifestyle in order to give us a better quality of life or to prolong our life. So what about our spiritual health, as individuals and as a church. How often do we have a spiritual healthcheck? If we believe that the spiritual dimension of our life is as important as the physical dimension then the benefits of a spiritual check up are as obvious as a medical check up.

Just as we don't ask anyone to review our medication or perform medical procedures so it is with a spiritual health check up. We seek help from an expert and there are many helpful resources available for a spiritual healthcheck. However just as regular exercise and a balanced diet help our physical well-being so there are certain things that help our spiritual well-being. These things include regular attendance at worship, regular reading of the Bible and regular prayer and making use of opportunities to build up our faith.

None of us know what the future will hold but we can make preparations to help us in the future. This includes looking after our health, our finances, our resources, etc and is true both individually as a church. I have enjoyed being your Interim Moderator. It has helped me and I hope it has helped you. Now you have the exciting prospect of a new minister to work with as you discover the future that God has prepared for you. Now is not the time to sit back and relax, now is the time for going forward. In a recent sermon Alan referred to Bartimaeus and the question Jesus asked him 'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus still asks the question today and we need to answer it. However when answering it we need to remember that Jesus may ask us to be part of the answer to our own prayers as well as to other people's prayers.

Thank you for allowing me to be your Interim Moderator and every blessing for the future.

Ian

Personalia

We are sad to announce the death of Anita Pickerden on 14 October. Her funeral is at Lodge Hill Crematorium at 1.30 PM, Monday 12 November, with refreshments at the church afterwards.

Please remember both the Jagessars as they settle into the Manse and into Weoley Hill. And prayers, please, for Leonora as she takes up the Pastorate ministry.

Jim Brackley has been in hospital.



RETIRING COLLECTIONS

I am compiling our list of collections for next year. As usual we have 5 monthly commitments—the Leprosy Fund, the church's own Benevolent fund, Corrymeela, Jubilee Debt, Youth and family Worker—and we also collect annually for Christian Aid and Commitment for Life, and monthly for the food collection at the Birmingham City Mission. This leaves seven months not designated so if you would like to suggest a charity please contact me sometime this month when I would be happy to add it to the list if there is still space. We must not have collected for them for two years at least and the Christmas collection for 2019 should be for an international cause as this year we are collecting for a national one, 'Shelter'. I already have several written requests from individual charities so there is no shortage of ideas.

Lorraine DaCosta

Neighbourhood News

News and events from other local churches:

Selly Oak Methodist: *fund-raising organ recital AM
Saturday 10 November, no further details.*

*Evening of Festive Entertainment for St Mary's Hospice on 1
December at 7 PM. Adults £8, children £2.50.*



A 2nd Chance for Youths in Guatemala

Guatemala is ranked as one of the most dangerous countries in the world. Over half the population is under 19 years old and youth gangs are thought to be the biggest contributors to violence in the cities.

The Bible Society in Guatemala has a programme named *My Second Chance* under which chaplains visit juvenile detention centres and share God's love to 13-18 year old boys. In the crowded, violent and sordid conditions of the detention centres, songs of praise can be heard in services and youngsters giving incredible testimonies. The lives of boys are being changed and the cycle of violence is being broken. Thank God for the work being done amongst disaffected youth in Central America.

Sue Beeby

Goodbye Traidcraft!

I have been organising Traidcraft sales at Weoley Hill for more than 12 years, and before me Sue Cope was the organiser for many years, so it sad to have to report that Traidcraft plc (the 'business' as distinct from Traidcraft Exchange the 'charity') is almost certainly going to cease trading at the end of the year. A consultation process is under way at present but the most likely outcome is that the company will close, as they want to finish trading before they are forced into bankruptcy.

The outcome of this closure is that the charity will lose a significant proportion of its income, so they are exploring new activities to help them bridge the gap. There is considerable concern about the small businesses who rely on their sales to Traidcraft and ways are being explored of trying to continue supporting them, hopefully by finding new buyers for their products.

The picture is still unclear at the moment, but we are urged to continue supporting the charity as much as we can in the meantime, and, although I no longer sell food items, I am selling Christmas cards as usual. I have sample packs for you to view and will take orders for delivery during November and early December.

I think what we can say is that the company is the victim of its own success and has actually achieved many of its aims, in helping to promote Fairtrade so that we can now buy lots of Fairtrade products in supermarkets (and at a much lower price!) The plight of small producers and the need for fairer trade practices has been highlighted so that we are all much more aware of the difficulties of vulnerable people trying to supply huge international organisations. We have given poor people support, pride in their work and a voice in the first world!

In the meantime we need to support Traidcraft as much as we can in the next 2 or 3 months so that they can help to tide the producers over a difficult interim period. If you feel you can do more than just buy Christmas cards I will make a collection alongside Christmas card sales and have gift aid envelopes for you to use if you are a taxpayer.

Christine

Looking ahead

Now that we're choosing our Traidcraft Christmas cards, it isn't too early for a reminder of some dates for Advent and Christmas.



Sunday 2	Advent 1. Communion led by the minister.
Wednesday 5 1.00 PM	Lunch Club Christmas dinner, £5.
Sunday 9	Advent 2. Worship led by the Revd Ian Ring. Toy gift service—toys to the Crisis Centre
Wednesday 12 2.30 PM	Friendship Group Festive tea.
Saturday 15 5.00 PM	Candlelight Carol Service
Sunday 16	Advent 3. Worship led by the minister
Friday 21 9.00 AM	Northfield Manor Christmas assembly
Sunday 23	Advent 4. Worship led by the Revd Donald Sampson.
Christmas Eve	
4 PM	Christmas Crib led by Alan Cotgreave
11.15 PM	Christmas Eve communion led by the minister
Christmas Day	
11.00 AM	Family worship led by the minister.

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Seven 'puzzlers' spent a chatty hour in October doing a Harvest Word search and playing a slimmed down version of Scattergories. Thanks to those who came and apologies to all those who had planned to hear the talk on 'Postcard Collecting and More' which will now take place in January next.

This month, on Wednesday the 14th at 2.15 PM, we will be lucky enough to have David and Chris Marlow tell us about a fascinating visit to the far side of the world in 'An Antipodean Journey' so do come along to support them and also have a drink and cake whilst you listen and look.

We are also taking numbers for the traditional **Christmas Lunch** on Wednesday 5th December and the **Ritzy High Tea** on Wednesday 12th December. Please tell us anytime up to the Sundays before so we can cater accurately. Both are open to **all** church members and their friends and anyone else looking for a good meal at a reasonable price!

Lorraine DaCosta

Good news from Algeria



A few months ago we were asked to pray for the Church in Algeria. Since then, 2 of the churches that had been shut down have been able to re-open. Continue to pray for the other churches that were closed and that the Bible Society might get a licence to import Bibles.

Sue

SYNOD MEETING

Saturday 13 October 2018 at Rugby URC

Walking the Way/Stepwise: Revd Stuart Scott, Synod Training and Development Officer, reported that Stepwise had been launched and a range of courses arranged under five broad categories for individuals and groups to explore: Faith-filled life – personal calling and purpose; Faith-fuelled leadership - we all have a part to play; Faith-filled confidence – being confident in our own faith and building friendships across faiths; Faith-filled community – being a church shaped by God’s mission acting for justice in God’s name; Faith-filled worship – worship for change. The courses, lasting 2-3 months, are available now. For details regarding participation click the **Count me in** button on the United Reformed Church website://urc.org.uk/stepwise/ and follow the instructions to register your interest OR email: stepwise.assistant@urc.org.uk

West Midlands Synod – Review of Structures: The Moderator tabled a report on the proposed review of synod committee structures. The existing large number of committee places are difficult to fill and the number of committees and meetings is a growing burden for a declining organisation. Synod Mission Council had thus appointed a task group to review the structures and bring the proposals to Synod. Following detailed consultation with all committee convenors and Synod officers, the Task Group made proposals whereby there will be three standing committees of the Synod plus Synod Mission Council. The three standing committees will replace the eight current committees and will report to the Synod Mission Council in the first instance, and can bring business to the Synod Meeting in their name. Operational and functional details for the Synod Standing Committees and Synod Mission Council were given.

Following detailed discussion and a minor addition Synod passed by consensus decision a resolution tabled on the subject, with thanks to the Task Group and all those who had served on the various committees under the old structure.

Policy on Authorised Elders for Lay Presidency at the Sacraments:

The Moderator introduced and led a discussion on this topic. Following the decision taken at General Assembly 2016 on Authorised Elders (Resolutions 14-19) and the amendments to the guidance on Presidency at the Sacraments (Section F of the Manual), the West Midlands Synod notes that the normal pattern within the United Reformed Church is for those who have been prepared and ordained as Ministers of Word and Sacraments to preside at the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism. However, both General Assembly and the West Midlands Synod recognise that at times it will not be possible for a Minister to preside at the Sacraments. Such occasions fall into two categories: 1) Short-notice unavailability and 2) Unavailability recognised ahead of time.

The General Assembly resolutions set out procedures to be followed in each of the various situations. Synod noted these.

Guidelines on the Conduct and Behaviour for Authorised Elders: The 2016 General Assembly also agreed that the pattern of presidency at the sacraments if the minister in pastoral charge is not available should follow a set procedure and code of conduct. Synod noted these as had been approved by Mission Council in March 2018.

Youth and Children Matters: 1) A presentation was made by Hannah Jones, URC Youth Assembly Moderator, on work being done to empower young people through psychological, community, organisational, social, cultural and economic development activities, and the assistance her office can give to churches in this regard. 2) Revd Chris Burgham, Synod Children's and Youth Development Officer, presented a Child Friendly Church Award to a qualifying church. The Award Scheme of the Assembly Youth and Children's Work Committee wants to see as many churches as possible achieve this award. A special plaque is placed in a conspicuous position at the church to advertise to the community that they are taking provision for the young seriously.

**The next Synod Meeting will be held on Saturday 16 March 2019
at Sutton Coldfield URC, 1 Brassington Avenue, Sutton Coldfield
B73 6AA**

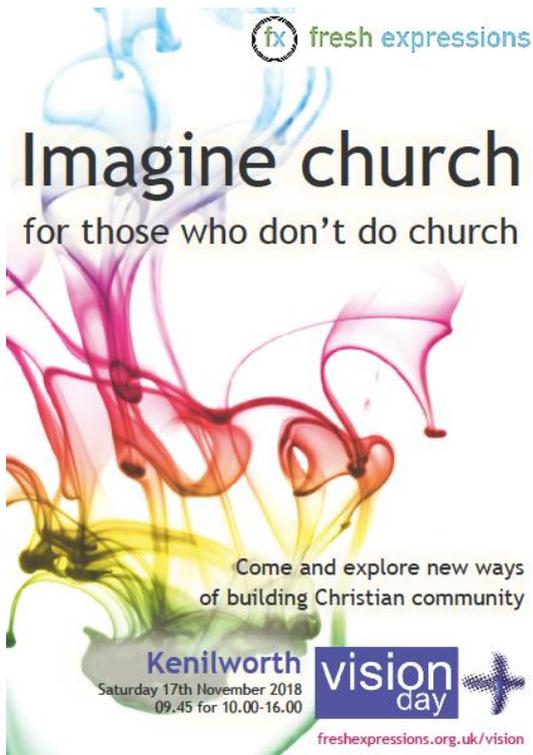
**Sam Lukwago
Synod Lay Representative**



BIRMINGHAM CRISIS CENTRE

The Centre deals with families that are victims of both physical and mental domestic abuse. Families come from all over Britain and are given a safe and secure place to stay, sometimes for several months, whilst their situation is assessed. We have donated nightwear and underwear to them in the past and our Christmas toys also go to them, but they are always short of money and rely heavily on donations. A nursery wing was opened recently and is beautifully furnished with equipment for the under-fives as well as computers for the older children, but they need cash for shoes, travel cards and other clothing since most of the women leave home with only the things they have on or can carry, and obviously the children grow as they stay for longer periods. The mothers are supported by discussion and advice groups, and children attend local schools to try to make the situation as normal as possible. The hope is that they will be able to find employment and housing when appropriate. Unfortunately, new clients arrive all the time. Our donations will help towards this valuable work.

Lorraine



Programme

Sessions 1-3 interactive learning with presentations, interviews, stories, activities and questions.

09.45 Registration and refreshments

10.00 Welcomes and worship

10.15 Session 1

What is happening and why it is important: How fresh expressions of church are changing the landscape.

11.35 Break

11.50 Session 2

Values and how fresh expressions of church are developing and can develop in your context.

13.00 Lunch

13.45 Local story feature

14.00 Seminars

15.15 Session 3

Where next?

16.00 End

Booking details

For more information or to book:

Rachel Vernon, 0121 783 1177

admin@urcwestmidlands.org.uk

Speakers

Pete Atkins (Fresh Expressions team)

Linda Rayner.

Registered charity #1080103,
contact@freshexpressions.org.uk,
0300 365 0563

Cost

FREE

Please bring your own lunch, coffees and teas will be provided
Please do book in, so that we can prepare the rooms

Venue Abbey Hill United Reformed Church, Abbey Hill
Kenilworth CV8 1LW

WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

PRAYER DIARY

How great you are, Sovereign Lord! There is none like you; we have always known that you alone are God. 2 Samuel 7:22

	Church members	Topical prayers
WK 1: 4 th -10 th Nov	Chris Mayhew Rob McManus, Anna Ostojitsch, Ieuan, Ciaran Margaret Miles	The Cadbury Pastorate: that we work and grow together.
WK 2: 11 th -17 th Nov	Deborah Moriaty Brian & Audrey Nganwa, Jonathan, Elizabeth & Michael	Those who mourn loved ones.
WK 3: 18 th -24 th Nov	Nancy Nicholls Jill Palmer	Our neighbours and our conversations with them that they may be aware of Christ in our lives.
WK 4: 25 th Nov- 1st Dec	Marilyn Raw Diane Rogers Tony Sames	Pray for each household in your street as you pass by them and for our church's witness in the locality.

NOTE: As always, please feel free to send any feedback on the 'Prayer Diary' and specific prayer requests that you would like to include in future lists to Sue Beeby

You may wish to add other members of the families mentioned to your prayers.