

Weoley Hill Church News



July & August 2019

From the Minister's study—

Dear Friends,

Whether we have school age children or not, whether we work or are retired, in the months of July and August many of us go on holiday, taking a break from our daily routines, from (church) activities and other goings-on that fill our diary.

We often ask each other what we are going to do or where we are going in the summer holidays. Are you taking some time off? Where are you going? And the response may be that we are going on a foreign trip, or visiting family, or participating in a special holiday program, or festival—or perhaps you may say, “my life is a continuous holiday!”

Holidays are carefully planned, looked forward to and (usually) much enjoyed as a welcome break from work, school or just our daily routine. For some of us it is an escape from the “yoke” of our daily responsibilities and tasks and the “burden” of our mundane every life.

Is it that we consider our “yoke” to be difficult and our “burden” heavy? That depends, of course, if we consider the ideal life to be one in which we are free from all responsibilities and tasks—for all that takes time and effort, be it work, study, chores or any service. From the media in all its forms we pick up the message that “paradise” is a white beach, waving palm trees, a turquoise sea, a lounging chair and a tropical cocktail in your hand...with no cares in the world! Or it may be a safari holiday in Africa, or a visit to Disneyland, or a cruise in the Med, or a cottage in the Lake District or just at home putting your feet up and doing nothing! We are made to believe that we will be perfectly happy when we are on holiday, with lots of time to relax, enjoy peace and quiet, lots of sun, picnics in the open air, BBQ's and dinners out, interesting places to visit, etc. Certainly they **can** make us happy.....and most often they **do**! And we desperately need holidays, especially in our hectic, competitive, 24/7 Western society. But when we make our holidays into our “garden of Eden” then, unwittingly, we add another burden to our life. We have to work hard to afford our “ideal” holiday.

We carefully plan our “escape” but then we are anxious about the “success” of our holiday. Nothing is worse than having your holiday spoilt by the weather, or travel delays, or unsatisfactory accommodation, or family quarrels, etc. etc.

We contrast our holiday with our everyday life, and our everyday life seems even more monotonous, dull or stressful. Our yoke becomes even more difficult, and our burden even more heavy. So where do we find wisdom?

We find wisdom in the Bible, in the message we receive in our Scriptures. The message that comes to us is that there is not some kind of “ideal” life which we have to work hard to achieve. There is no “ideal” to strive for, but there are plenty of blessings to count in our daily life. The Bible is realistic. Work, commitments and responsibilities are part of life. That is just how it is. But work, our commitments and responsibilities can be a means of witnessing to the goodness of God. How? By following the advice that we are given: our life, our work, our tasks can be lived, carried out and fulfilled in the spirit of love for our neighbour. If we serve our neighbour, then our yoke becomes easy, our burden light.

Is there not someone who is with us, in our daily lives? Jesus Christ who said, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11.30) Jesus Christ who showed us how to serve, and how in that service we can find true happiness! That said, I hope that all of us will have a relaxing and refreshing summer holiday, a break to give us renewed energy and enthusiasm to continue our “service” in our daily lives.

With all best wishes, *Leonora*

Personalia

Please remember the young people who are sitting exams and preparing for new stages of education or starting their working lives.

Please remember: Deb Moriarty, Marilyn Raw, Kath and Dave Upton, Mo Chamanbaz, the Chung family and the Lukwago family.

Note: you are welcome to give your Elder or the Church Secretary as an emergency contact. If you are away, you can leave contact details with your Elder or the Church Secretary. Emergency contact cards are available in the vestry.



General Assembly 2020

The 2020 General Assembly will be held at Aston University, Birmingham from 10-13 July. As the venue is in the West Midlands Synod, there is a call for members of local congregations to act as Stewards during the time of the Assembly. People may wish to act as a Steward for as little or a large amount of time—from two hours to half or a full day. This could include helping to set up the day before; directing people who arrive by public transport, dealing with luggage, registration, giving out papers on entry to meetings, helping people to their seats, answering questions and carrying messages, possibly helping to set up communion and much more

For anyone who has not been to an Assembly, this will be an opportunity to observe. If you are interested in volunteering, please let me know and I will forward your name (with mine) to the Synod Clerk, who will make the arrangements. Meals will be provided during volunteering sessions.

Cheryl

Neighbourhood News

News and events from other local churches:

Bournville: Anniversary worship & communion Sunday 7 July at 3 PM. Mediation continues on 2nd & 4th Thursdays at 3 PM.

Weoley Castle are contributing to the Weoley Castle Festival on Saturday 13 July and holding their annual youth Activity Week beginning Monday 5 August.

Joining the dots: ethical money; Selly Oak Ecumenical Lecture at Selly Oak Methodist, Thursday 18 July at 7.30 PM.

Farewell to Barnes Close: Thanksgiving for 30 years of CfR at Barnes Close, sharing plans, buffet tea. See Ann for details.

Pastorate barbecue

1 PM on Sunday 28 July

at Weoley Castle Manse (next to the church)

Bring your own burgers, sausages, etc, to barbecue. There will be a separate grill for vegetarian items. And bring a side dish or accompaniment to share if you can—salads, condiments, fruit, pudding, etc: Please talk to Nancy and sign up **before** 21 July so we can make sure there's enough of everything. Cheryl

ECO-FACT

Plastic bags, not just carrier bags but those single use ones around magazines, bread and fresh vegetables, bubble wrap and frozen food bags (the test is if they can s-t-r-e-t-c-h) can be recycled at most supermarkets. They have a designated bin. John Lewis and the National Trust now use ones that are biodegradable and so can be added to your compost bin. Why can't everyone else?

Lorraine

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Unfortunately the trip to the Wedgwood Centre at Stoke was cancelled as there was not enough support. This has been a continuing theme over the last few years. A small group met to discuss what changes to the meetings could be made and it was decided to change the format a little by meeting occasionally in members' homes, as well as occasionally in the Lower Hall. perhaps when we have a speaker, and keeping the Garden Party and Christmas tea as usual. Bryony Road, Middle Park Road and Weoley Hill Street Association members will also be invited. The first meeting to discuss these, and any other suggestions, will be on Wednesday 11 September at Cheryl's house. Everyone is welcome to attend but please try to tell Cheryl beforehand so she can collect enough chairs! Remember there is not a meeting in August.

The Garden Party will be our next meeting which will take place on Wednesday 10 July at Nancy's house, at 2.30 PM till about 4.00. Please bring a plate of something if you can but don't worry if you can't, there's always plenty!

Lorraine

Reminder:

Because we are hosting Joint Worship (with a soup lunch afterwards) on Sunday 29 September, when we have had Harvest Sunday in the past, we are experimenting with a change of date. This year's Harvest is on Sunday 20 October.

Special Commemorative Service

Trinity Sunday 16 June 2019

In our morning service we remembered the long connection of our church with the Selly Oak Colleges, and in particular, people who had been closely connected with the church while serving on the staff at the colleges. I started this idea as I particularly wanted to remember Ian Fraser who died in 2018 at the age of 100. Other members of the church asked for this to be widened. In the course of discussion members also mentioned the way in which the staff and their families of the Colleges formed a community which is still remembered. Different members of the church contributed in different ways. There is a thought that this is something which could be repeated, perhaps the same time next year.

John Fletcher

Tom and Kay Hawthorn

Tom and Kay's life together has been described as one long Abrahamic trek, going out into the unknown, just taking one step of faith in order to see the next step and no more than that. The last of these steps was to become members of the congregation at Weoley Hill, but there were several preceding ones.

Tom and Kay met at Oxford, married in 1944. Kay read History and then trained as a teacher, Tom read Classics and then trained as a Congregational minister at Mansfield College.

He served as an Army chaplain in Egypt and India, in a specialist psychiatric hospital, while Kay first taught, and then looked after their first child, Rachel.

Their life's work together was in the service of the London Missionary Society, first in Central China, in Hankow, from 1948. This was cut short by the Communist Revolution, and they returned at the end of 1950. For the rest of their lives they looked back on their time in China as one of great richness despite the turmoil: colleagues were

supportive and the students highly motivated and diligent. They pitched their tent next in India, Tom teaching first at the Scott Christian College in Nagercoil in Tamil Nadu, then in the Northern District of Kerala. They returned to England in 1956, this time with four children.

Tom then had a spell in the north of England as a secretary for the LMS and an itinerant ministry. In 1960, he and Kay exchanged that community for the isolated island of Niue in the South Pacific, where the mail boat came only once a month and there was then no airstrip. They took Andrew, aged three, while the other children were at school in England.

Tom and Kay came to Selly Oak Colleges in response to a request for an extra tutor at St Andrew's Hall in 1967. They worshipped then at the Congregational Church at Watford Road. They had much to offer and enjoyed during their time involved in the ecumenical and international federation of Selly Oak Colleges. Kay taught in the English department at Central House. They would have been happy to stay there, but after four years they responded to the call to serve at Tangintebu Theological College in the Gilbert Islands, now Kiribati, where they stayed for eight years between 1970 and 1978. Kay again was committed to the additional support of teaching and helping to organise the women's and girls' organisations.

And finally before retirement, they came to Holly Mount Church in Malvern, a green and hilly place and one where they were able to see more of their children and grandchildren. Kay was typically involved with church and community affairs. Retiring in 1983 Tom and Kay decided to return to Selly Oak, 'the centre of the universe', where they had let the house in Weoley Park Road that they lived in between 1967 and 1970. They joined, and involved themselves in the life of, Weoley Hill Church. Tom helped out during the interregnum between John Geyer's time and the arrival of Tom Arthur. He enjoyed the music tradition at Weoley Hill and always regarded it as an integral part of the worship and ministry. He also worked as a chaplain at the Accident Hospital. And Kay, as well as teaching English again, helped out with

the Junior Church and involved herself in Traidcraft and initiatives such as One World week. They gained many friends at Weoley Hill and enjoyed the fellowship and ministry.

In addition Tom and Kay brought the traditions of the itinerant life by their welcome of old friends and new visitors to their house, to eat and to stay. The tradition they had experienced since days in China was reciprocated in Selly Oak in their celebrated Chinese meals and curry evenings and in always welcoming the stranger in their midst.

It is hard to explain, on the face of it, how Kay and Tom chose and accepted the demands of the places and situations they encountered in their work. There were difficult conditions and anxieties.

They certainly had a strong and tender love for each other and an enduring faith which enabled them to take the next step, although the whole picture was not clear. They were indeed good and faithful servants.'

When Tom died in 1994, Kay continued for a while in activities connected with the church, but as her health declined she moved to Sellywood House and died in 2011.

Ann Evans

Ian M. Fraser 1917-2018

When I heard of the death of my friend Ian Fraser last year I expected the URC to celebrate his life. I then found that although he had served at Selly Oak Colleges as Dean of Mission from 1973 until retirement in 1982, he was never a minister in the URC. That is why I asked for us to celebrate his life here.

Because he and Margaret retired to Scotland in 1982, he is a name rather than a face to most of the current membership. He did visit here from time to time, the last time being the 75th anniversary of the church in 2008 when he came on the bus from Stirling—at 90!

What I experienced when I knew him here was the gift of friendship and counsel he gave freely, in his wide travels around the world and in the quiet village near Stirling where he and Margaret retired. After her death in 1987 he lived alone until moving into a home in the last few months of his life.

He never gave up thinking and writing. He wrote about Grenfell Tower. His many books will remain as part of his legacy.

This is a quotation from him, from a tribute by the Iona Community. He wrote these words after the Dunblane tragedy.

'Here, a small company in a small room, we take hold of the Universe and turn it in a fresh direction. This we do not because we are strong but because the one through whom all things were made, for whom all things were made, whose cross and resurrection redeemed all things, has entered into us and transforms our weakness into strength. That realisation leapt up from the heart of the Eucharist and grabbed me.'

John Fletcher



BRIDGE CLUB (Thursdays)

Can you play bridge? (any level)

We meet every Thursday in the Lower Hall, 7 to 10 PM

We are very friendly, and not too serious.

New members are very welcome .

If you are interested, please contact Emlyn Evans 07891 794498.

JOINING THE DOTS

ETHICAL MONEY

SELLY OAK ECUMENICAL LECTURE SERIES

How can we use our spending and saving power
to create good things in the world, to avoid harm to planet, wildlife and people?

**Carbon Offsetting, Ethical Banking, Global Warming,
Renewable Energy, Arms Trade, Money Laundering, Plastics,
Eco Church & more**

Lecture and Workshop with Colin Darling

Thursday, 18th July 2019 7.30 pm

SELLY OAK METHODIST CHURCH, LANGLEYS ROAD, SELLY OAK B29 6HT



for more information

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colin.darling@eccr.org.uk

UK registered charity number 1139618

ECCR

www.eccr.org.uk

July Retiring Collection: Children In Distress

This charity, based in Glasgow, was initially set up in 1990 by the Rev Dr John Walmsley and the parishioners of St Laurence church, Barkingside, in response to the plight of orphans and sick children in Romania. It has now spread to help those in the Balkans and Eastern Europe and tries to encompass the educational, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of the children, and perhaps their carers, who are disadvantaged by family economics or discrimination. The children may be terminally or incurably ill, living with genetic problems or developmental delay, and therapists try to provide strategies to gain independence or confidence, perhaps to sit astride a horse with Riding for the Disabled or to use a wheelchair. Their motto is “To cure, sometimes; to help, often; to comfort, always”. And they aim to create a better today for children who may have no tomorrow. See their website for more details.

Lorraine

EASYFUNDRAISING

We've been paid! A huge thanks to all our amazing supporters who shop through #easyfundraising! Please keep using it whenever you shop online—over 3,600 retailers send us free donations when you shop at no extra cost so it's free money for us! If you haven't signed up yet, visit: <http://efraising.org/8xLp4OsWfZ> and search for Weoley Hill United Reformed Church #ThanksAMillion

So far this year we have received £21.94 and since we started at the end of 2011 we have received £657.21—not an enormous amount but it is “money for nothing”.

We currently have 14 supporters registered but sadly not all 14 have shopped with Easyfundraising.

Thank you

David

AUGUST RETIRING COLLECTION MALAWI

The Mamie Martin Fund
(In memory of Jack and Phyllis Thompson)

This charity supports the education of girls in Northern Malawi. Jack and Phyllis Thompson were members at Weoley Hill in the 1980s and early 1990s. They contributed greatly to our church life in many ways. Jack taught Mission studies at the Selly Oak Colleges. Jack and Phyllis lived and worked in Malawi for a long time, and made a huge contribution there in the fields of missionary work, education and sport. They often returned to Malawi in later years. Sadly, Jack died from cancer in 2017 and Phyllis also died from cancer in 2018. It was their wish for donations to be given to this charity supporting girls' education.



Emlyn



Celebration Day  **Community for Reconciliation** **Saturday 7th September 2019**



at Barnes Close

The day will include

- AGM
- Thanksgiving for our 30 years at Barnes Close
- Sharing plans for on-going work
- Buffet Tea

Full timings and details will be available early in August. Book the date now.

Accommodation available over the weekend

Barnes Close has been part of CfR for 30 years and part of West Midlands Church Life for over 65 years. Come and help us celebrate

Bookings: cfrpeace@gmail.com

WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH PRAYER DIARY

Let us praise God for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son! For by the death of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven.

Ephesians 1:6&7

	Church members		Church members
WK 1: July 7-13	Ursula Aitken Edna Bayliss Sue Beeby	WK 5: Aug 4-10	Bill Campbell Kay Campbell Grace & Joy Carter
WK 2: July 14-20	Mary Bevin Iris Bird	WK 6: Aug 11-17	Mohamad Chamanbaz Juliet & Yvonne Chideya
WK 3: July 21-27	Jim Brackley Linda Bradley	WK 7: Aug 18-24	Jinsub, Youngsun, Edward & Grace Chung Ina Clason
WK 4: July 28-3 Aug	Doreen Bradley Jane Byford	WK 8: Aug 2 5-31	Joyce & Susan Cope

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

Names in the prayer lists are on our church register but please add other members of the families mentioned to your prayers.