

Weoley Hill Church News



September 2019

From the Minister's study—

Dear friends,

As I write Michael and I are still on holiday, spending a relaxing and refreshing time in the village of Le Chambon-Sur-Lignon, which lies on a high plateau in the Haute Loire department and the wider Auvergne region of France. It is a lovely “mountain” village which is known for its “green” tourism, its Protestant/Huguenot history and its courageous defiance during the 2nd World War. From 1940 thousands of Jews, many of them children, were given shelter in Le Chambon, and surrounding villages, and thus saved from deportation and near certain death.

Defying the French (Vichy) government, which was collaborating with the Nazis, the villagers of Le Chambon hid Jews in their homes for years. They provided the refugees with forged identification, provided education for the children, ration cards, and sent them to safety in Switzerland. The Chambonnaise are descendants of the Huguenots, the first Protestants in Catholic France. Having endured persecution in France they were able to understand and empathize with the plight of the Jews. Under the leadership of a young French pastor, André Trocmé, the people of Le Chambon felt it their duty to help people in need, never considering their actions heroic or dangerous.

What was so remarkable is that the entire community became involved in the rescue efforts. No villager denounced a refugee or a person concealing refugees; apparently the village was known to the Germans as “that nest of Jews in Protestant country” but they did not manage to find them and round them up. Whenever the villagers heard of an upcoming Vichy police raid, they hid the refugees they were protecting in the surrounding countryside of fields and forests.

The values of the village were perhaps expressed best by its minister, André Trocmé, who concluded his sermons with the words, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind and with all your strength and love your neighbour as yourself. Go practice it.”

And that is what they did; the villagers put their faith in action. Le Chambon, and surrounding villages, became a place of refuge, not only for the Jews but also for others seeking sanctuary. Among them were Spanish Republicans who had fled internment camps, anti-Nazi Germans, and many young Frenchmen seeking to avoid deportation to Germany for forced labour.

Elie Wiesel would write later, "What hurts the victim is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander. Villagers in Chambon, armed with their beliefs.....saved the lives of 5,000 refugees."

While after the war the villagers of Le Chambon and on the plateau remained silent regarding their rescue efforts during the war, as they modestly held the view that "we only did what we thought ought to be done," in 1990 Yad Vashem recognized all of the inhabitants of Le Chambon and surrounding villages collectively as "Righteous Among the Nations," a unique recognition of their support of the Jews during the Holocaust. And subsequently a museum, a "Lieu de Mémoire," was dedicated in Le Chambon that seeks to keep alive the story of the "righteous" as well as organizes events and exhibitions that draw people from all over the world to this exceptional village that shows "the banality of goodness" in a world in which "evil" (in its many forms) can sometimes seem so ubiquitous and persistent. Especially at this time when dangerous nationalist and xenophobic rhetoric has entered the political discourse in many countries (USA, Italy, the UK, etc) there is a message of peace and hope, of faithfulness and welcome that we can take away from the example of a "righteous" place like Le Chambon-Sur-Lignon. And we can be challenged to faithfully respond to human need as it represents itself to us today.

Opposite the museum is the Temple, the Protestant church, which has appropriately the inscription above its door, "you shall love your neighbour." A very active and lively Protestant community, it still advocates for and welcomes refugees in its midst. And on a pew in the middle of the church there are two life-size puppets of a man and a

woman (with a baby doll on her lap), obviously representing a couple from another country and no doubt made by the young people in the church. A writing on the t-shirt of the man reads “Il faut proteger les refugies” (=refugees need to be protected). It is that sentence that sums up the faith and faithfulness of this community.

Heartened by the story of Le Chambon, I look forward to continue our journey of faith and faithfulness at Weoley Hill, as we face the challenges of our time and remain true to our calling to be a loving and welcoming community, reaching out to our neighbour near and far.

With all best wishes,

Leonora

Pastorate joint worship & lunch Sunday 29 September *New date for Harvest 20 October*

What? What's happened to Harvest?

Because the last Sunday of September is a fifth Sunday, and because Leonora is leading worship at Bournville and Weoley Castle on the 22nd, Worship & Arts, with the Elders, decided to go ahead with Pastorate joint worship, followed by a soup lunch on the 29th. (See Nancy if you have a contribution for the lunch—soup, bread, cheese, fruit, with cake not being turned away.)

This also gives us an opportunity to try a later date for Harvest Sunday, which some of us have been advocating for a while. We'll see how it works. We hope this will make it easier for the uniformed groups to participate, since they will have a month, rather than a couple of weeks to prepare readings, skits, or other contributions to Harvest worship.

Cheryl Thornett

Former Weoley Hill Scout Wins Bravery Award

PC Andrew Dear was a cub and a scout at Weoley Hill in the 1970s and 80s. Last month Andrew was named as the national overall winner at the 2019 Police Bravery Awards, for his actions in saving a man's life in an overturned car. First on the scene of the serious car accident, he went to the aid of a man trapped between the roof of the upturned car and the road. The man had a severe head injury, and there was imminent danger of fire or explosion from leaking fuel. Andrew scrambled into the 10-inch gap so that an airway could be maintained and to take some of the weight of the car onto his own back. He stayed with the partly conscious and bleeding victim, talking to him and reassuring him so that a paramedic could secure an IV line and stem the bleeding.

Then Home Secretary Sajid Javid presented the award at a ceremony at 10 Downing Street, saying "PC Dear's bravery is truly extraordinary".

Andrew's very proud father Sam Dear, of Hemyock Road, paid tribute to the Citizenship training that Andrew had received in Weoley Hill Scout Troop and considered that it had been put to good use!



Chris Marlow

Recent Retiring Collections

April 2019	Restore	£145.00
May 2019	Barnabas Fund	£ 70.00
June 2019	Jubilee Debt	£105.00
July 2019	Children in Distress	£199.00
August 2019	Mamie Martin Fund	£265.00

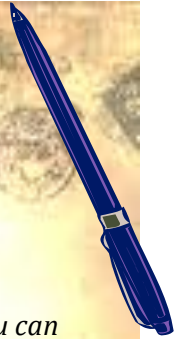
Personalia

Please remember everyone who is ill, recovering or undergoing treatment, and the youngsters & teachers who are moving on or starting again this month. We give thanks for those who have recovered.

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.

Mark Tubby is being inducted to his new CRCW post at Dovercourt, near Harwich at 3 PM on Saturday 7 September.

*We wish the **Revd Ian Ring** well in his future role as minister of a new Rubery/ Emmanuel Redditch pastorate.*



COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

September is when, once again, we ask you to contribute to this Christian Aid charity. Weoley Hill was one of the first churches to contribute at its inception over 26 years ago, originally as *The 1% Appeal*. Money raised goes into a central 'pot' to be distributed among four areas (Bangladesh, Central America, Palestine, and Zimbabwe) where small projects are helped over longer periods. It could be help in setting up banks to give small interest-free loans; providing sewing machines or goats to set up women's independent enterprises; building footbridges to shorten journeys or local meeting places, in fact any one of hundreds of schemes that benefit the poor of an area. You will soon get an envelope with information about this year's plans and last year's successes. Please take time to read the booklet and, if you can, then please donate up to 1% of your unallocated income in the small envelope provided, gift-aided if possible. All contributions are private and very welcome. With many thanks.

Lorraine DaCosta

Neighbourhood News

News and events from other local churches:

The Community for Reconciliation is holding a *farewell to Barnes Close* on Saturday 7 September. *AGM 2; Thanksgiving worship 3; Buffet Tea 3.45. Exhibition. All welcome*

Bournville: Meditation 2-4 PM on Thursdays 12 & 26 September.

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

We last met on Wednesday 10 July at our annual Garden Party, held as usual in Nancy's lovely garden. Although the sky was overcast, it was warm with a cool breeze on occasion and even a rare burst of sunshine which helped the afternoon go really well. Twenty-three people attended, including a few neighbours from the Middle Park Street Association, and all had a huge range of nibbles to choose from and even take home later! Very many thanks to Nancy for all the hard work done previously to make the garden look really splendid and for providing lots of seats, to Kumar who dashed in with 'emergency chairs' and again to Nancy and Rita for keeping everyone provided with tea and coffee throughout the afternoon.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 11 September, 2.15-30 PM at 17 Mimosa Close, (off Bryony Road, note change of venue), when we shall be discussing a proposed programme for 2020; all suggestions welcome. Please inform Cheryl if you are coming so we can arrange enough seats!



Permission to Smile

During the summer, the minister and church secretary had a meeting with the organiser of the *Permission to Smile* campaign (and were given a new banner). *Permission to Smile*, which is associated with Street Associations and the Civic Society, is trying a new way of encouraging people to form street associations and has asked us to help, which the elders have agreed we will do. We are only the second church to do so.

Residents of some local roads without associations will be invited to a free tea held at the church on the afternoon of 5 October, where they will be able to discuss forming an association with some of their neighbours. The invitation letters will specify their road and will have a named person in their road to respond to. (I am still looking for 'named persons' for some roads.) The minister will also be named in the letter, as part of the invitation, so we will feature as co-sponsors. Our part is in providing the venue, cake, and tea, as well as delivering the invitations, we hope with the assistance of street association members. So please help with delivering letters and start baking!

CT



September's Retiring Collection: The Bible Society

The Bible Society is known for producing Bibles and portions of Scripture in many countries world-wide. To do so, translation teams work in local languages and dialects in which there is no Bible as yet. A task that may take very many years.

Local Bible Society reps can live difficult and endangered lives, particularly where travel is hazardous or witnessing and passing on biblical material is illegal (there is often great demand for Bibles in such regions). Rezki, who has just taken on this risky role in Algeria and is monitored by government security agents, would value our prayers.

The work of the Bible Society is wider than producing literature. It works in refugee/asylum camps organising activities for children and trauma counselling; Open the Book - retelling and enacting Bible stories - proves powerful in many countries and in school assemblies in Britain. The Bible Society is involved in literacy programmes and leadership training. It produces study materials and on-line resources to help people relate to the Bible and make sense of it in their everyday lives.

The Bible Society does all this because it believes that 'when people engage with the Bible, lives can change for good'.

Sue Beeby

Calling all eco internet users

As eco-church members, why not try using an 'eco' search engine instead of the common default ones when looking-up information on your devices? Ecosia is the world's largest environmentally aware search engine and the profits are used to plant rainforest trees.

SB

WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH PRAYER DIARY

What matters is faith that works through love. Gal 5:6

I will show you my faith by my actions. James 2:18

	Church members	The persecuted Church
WK 1: 1 - 7 Sept	Alan, Lydia, Jacob, Esther, Levi & Joel Cotgreave Roger Cotgreave Lorraine & Fred DaCosta	<i>Afghanistan</i> Pray for courage and protection of secret believers in a country with strict laws against Christians & converts.
WK 2: 8 - 14 Sept	Gary Davenport Ken Davenport Séana & Richard Davies	<i>Algeria</i> The Church continues to grow under very restrictive laws & churches being closed.
WK 3: 15 - 21 Sept	Corinne Dawson David & Geraldine Evans	<i>Azerbaijan</i> All churches must be registered but this is a difficult process that can be denied.
WK 4: 22 - 28 Sept	Emlyn & Ann Evans Marius & Jennifer Felderhof	<i>Bangladesh</i> Violent attacks on Christians have increased as militant Islamism grows.
WK 5: 29 Sept - 5 Oct	Margaret Field John Fletcher	<i>Burma (Myanmar)</i> The Kachin & other mainly Christian minority ethnic groups have been attacked by the Burmese army.

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.