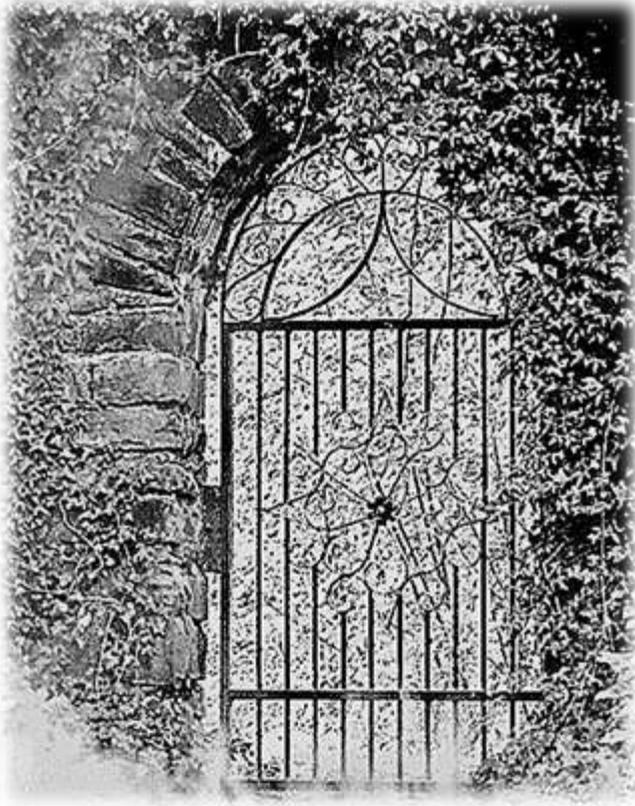


Weoley Hill Church News



January 2020

From the Minister's study—
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

While in the past I have made New Year's resolutions and really tried to keep them, I have to admit that too often I failed to do so. So come the first of January, I do not make any resolutions anymore but rather reflect on the past year and think of the year ahead. And while reflecting I often think of the "wisdom" of the philosopher who wrote down that "there is a time for everything" (Ecclesiastes 3) which then begs the question: what time is it now?

For many of us the bitterness of the political discourse and divisiveness of the Brexit debate (especially as the media portrayed it) has dominated our thinking over the last year. And the recent election result has left many of us anxious and fearful for the future direction of the United Kingdom and for those people and communities who are most vulnerable. Then there is the lack of decisive action that the urgency of the climate crisis demands which fills many, especially young people, with real dread. There is a withdrawal of international cooperation and a weakening of the institutions whose function is to help nations face the challenges of the climate crisis, of political instability, of persistent economic inequality, of trade wars and civil wars, etc.

Feeling anxious.....? What time are we living through? Was last year "a time to tear" and can we now move to "a time to sew?" Was it "a time to break down" and now we need to get to "a time to build up?" I certainly hope so.....

No doubt, it is a time like this that summons us to be of courage. It is a time that we need to stand up for the moral and ethical witness of the life and teaching of Jesus in whatever ways we can, in our lives, in our communities and in the wider world. Jesus Christ, whose birth we have just celebrated, calls us again and again to justice, peace, integrity, honesty, selflessness, compassion and generosity.

If we claim that we have been entrusted with the light and love that came down at Christmas, it is not for our own sake, to feel comfortable and secure, but it is for the sake of others, to share that light and the love with others. And that means that we have to think of and act upon the needs of others, in our families, in our community and in the world.

“None of us has the luxury just to bask in the glow of our own wellbeing...because that glow is actually not ours, it is God’s. And that glow is not just to help us feel comfortable and secure....it is to provide warmth and light for God’s world.”

As we pack our Advent and Christmas candles away, remember how we lit more and more of them during the festive season. One flame makes only a small difference, but four Advent candles and however many candles we light up on Christmas eve/day light up a room, light up the sanctuary and banish the darkness. So it is with the light that each of us has been given to bear. Certainly, we can illumine a few shadowy places on our own, but together, we can, and must, become a beacon of hope.

It is easy for us to give ourselves over to despair, fear, hopelessness, and anxiety. But that is not the path we are called to follow as bearers of Christ’s light. So, let us be courageous as we have ended one year and have ushered in a new one. Let us be faithful to the call of our God to make a difference in the world. Let us not recede into fear, but rather let us empower one another with faith, with light and with love.

All best wishes for the New Year!

Leonora

MORNING AT THE MANSE

The Morning at the Manse discussion meeting in January will be on **Wednesday the 29th**, NOT the 22nd. Do come if you can and, as always, you are very welcome to bring along a news item you wish to discuss.

Personalia

Deb Moriarty says she is recovering slowly.

As always, please remember friends and members who are unwell, recovering from illness or undergoing treatment.

We were delighted that Marilyn was well enough to be able to join us in Church on Christmas Day.

The church secretary is away until 6 January.



FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Twenty-one people attended the “Tea at the Nearly Ritz” and most were able to take home ‘doggy-bags’ of the small cakes and scones that were left after the delicious open rolls and copious amounts of tea provided. It all helped to pass a very pleasant hour and a half talking to friends old and new. Thanks to Doreen Bradley, Rita Byford, Lorraine DaCosta and Nancy Nicholls who all assembled the rolls and toppings and then laid the tables, and to all those who helped clear away at the end. A special thank you goes to Gordon Thornett who provided music, and word sheets, to well-known carols in which we all joined to add that real Christmas moment. Please remember there is **NOT** a January meeting, and that therefore our first meeting will be a ‘Pancake Party’ on February 12th—details later. Lorraine DaCosta

A message from the Korean Pastor, Jaechan Hwang:

It was a good carol service last Sunday. Thank you for having us, I appreciate it. I hope you have a happy new year.

Neighbourhood News

News and events from other local churches:

Carrs Lane Fair Trade Shop at Carrs Lane Church is looking for volunteers to help out a few hours a week both in the shop and administration. IT background would be appreciated. Contact fair-trade@carrslane.co.uk

Epiphany Bible Studies at 37 Tillyard Croft starting Tuesday 7 January at 10:30 AM. *Sitting at the feet of Rabbi Jesus. See article for details.*

The Revd. Hazel White has been appointed as the next vicar of St Mary's. Her induction will be on Sunday 9 February.

Weoley Castle will have an Activity Day on Tuesday 18 February.

Bank Security

As you may know banks are tightening up on their security and for this reason it is important that payees' names on cheques match the name on their bank account. Cheques may be rejected if the payee's name doesn't match the account name.

This means that cheques made out to the church **MUST** be payable to:

WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
(in full)

Thank you, David Marlow, Treasurer

Thanks

We have received the following letter from Lyn Ankcorn on behalf of the Birmingham Crisis Centre:

Thank you for organising the Christmas Tree URC toy service in aid of the Birmingham Crisis Centre.

You all have been very generous to the women and children – it is such a difficult time for the mothers, who have a very low income to look after themselves and their children; having moved completely out of the family home. Susan Ryan the Centre Manager is getting daily meeting with the mother's saying they would love to give their children presents; and simply have no money to do so. You have stepped in and provided wonderful gifts; - it is the Christmas Story, with the families being given shelter; and you are the good shepherds and the wise men bringing gifts. This shows the families who have witnessed cruelty, coercion, rejection and so much more; that they are loved and valued. They all face a long and difficult road to recovery; but your concern and generosity is so kind and will really help.

Wishing you all a Very Happy Christmas, and a Peaceful and Healthy New Year.

Yours sincerely
Lyn

A SUMMER FETE!

It may be only two minutes past Christmas but at the Church Meeting last September it was decided to hold a *Summer Fete* rather than a *Christmas Fair* as we were rather stuck for new ideas. It will be on **Saturday 27th June** and we will have our usual stalls, but we also want to do something differently which we hope will attract more visitors and interact more with the community. A borrowed textile exhibition from Westhill is already arranged and if you have any suggestions or can help in any way please pass them on to me at ANY time or come to a short meeting on **Wednesday 22nd January at 7.30pm** in the vestry. All money raised will go into our Benevolent Fund.

Lorraine

RETIRING COLLECTIONS 2020

January	Corrymeela
February	The Leprosy Mission
March	Alzheimer's Society
April	Permission to Smile campaign
May	Zambia Orphans Aid UK
June	Jubilee Debt Campaign
July	Solar Aid
August	Cobalt (cancer diagnostic imaging)
September	Children with Cancer UK
October	Youth and Family Work Fund
November	Midlands Air Ambulance Charity (MAAC).
December	St Basil's Centre

We also collect monthly for the Birmingham City Mission food bank, spectacles for Vision Aid, stamps and cash for the Leprosy mission, tools, household equipment for South Birmingham Young Homeless (now The Project) not forgetting constant requests for cakes/soup and other goodies and have occasional emergency collections as they arise. And don't forget quizzes, fetes and the poppy appeal. Please remember the Benevolent Fund is always in need of contributions.

JOINT PASTORATE MEETING

There is to be a joint pastorate meeting, attended by Elders from the three congregations, on the 30th of January. It is always a good occasion to share information about what is happening in our churches, review what we have done together and what more we could do or in what ways we can support each other's activities. If you have any ideas or suggestions, do let one of the Elders know. *Leonora*

FISH AND CHIP SUPPER AND QUIZ

Many thanks to all those concerned with this successful and enjoyable occasion. There were 50 people attending the quiz with a theme loosely connected to "Christmas". As well as answering questions with a *very* tenuous link to all the main participants and customs associated with the season, there were queries about carols and other wintery songs and finally a chance to compose different lyrics to "The Christmas Alphabet", with differing success! Altogether we raised £157 for the Youth and Family Worker fund, £78 profit from the food and £79 from the raffle, and thanks must go to all those kind people who donated extra prizes and then bought tickets to win them back! Thanks also to Nancy for her work in the kitchen as usual serving drinks, to Alan for his work sorting raffle tickets, to Levi for being the collector of answer sheets and for Mo and all of the folk who helped with setting out and clearing up. The winning team consisted of Rosie and Peter Mayer and Jean Gunter from the community choir, Maureen and Shirley from Bournville Church and Norma from our church, a lovely mixed group, with a total of 132 out of 150, well done.

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

The draw for the four wonderful hampers organised by Chris Grubb was held at the Christmas Lunch Club on Wednesday 4th December and raised £180 for the work of SHELTER. The Winners are 1st: Alan Cotgreave, 2nd: Doreen Bradley, 3rd: Linda Bradley and 4th: Cheryl Thornett, who later kindly donated her prize of the toiletries to the women at the crisis centre so that it went with all the toys from the toy service. Very many thanks to Chris and Peter for all their hard work buying and packing the hampers, and to all of you for buying tickets to support this worthy cause. If you missed out this year try again next time!

Lorraine DaCosta

A notice from Sigvard von Sicard

Epiphany Bible Studies 2020 will be based on A. Sprangles's and Lois Tverberg's *Sitting at the feet of Rabbi Jesus*. Grand Rapids MN: Zondervan 2018

Starting Tuesday 7 January at 10:30 AM at 37 Tillyard Croft B29 5AH. In preparation read *The Introduction* pp. 11-14 and Chapter 1 pp. 15-24 as well as *The Study and Discussion Guide* on pp. 222 and 223.

Sitting at the feet of Rabbi Jesus takes you on a fascinating tour of the Jewish world of Jesus, offering inspirational insights that can transform your faith. You will hear the parables as they must have sounded to first century Jews, powerful and surprising.

All are welcome.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

While we will not participate in the Week of Prayer pulpit exchange in Selly Oak, as Leonora will be away, please note that the week is observed from the 18th-25th of January. And as Rev Donald Sampson is on the preaching rota for the 19th we can claim to have a guest preacher from an ecumenical partner church!

Each year a text and theme is chosen to reflect on and this year the theme is "Unusual Kindness" based on the story of Paul being shipwrecked on Malta as told in Acts 27 and 28. As written in the introduction of the resources you can download from the CTBI website: *In spite of the turbulence of the world at the present time, we also discover acts of kindness, of love, forgiveness and hospitality in places or from people we did not expect..... We are invited in this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity materials to see God working through people and places which offer unusual kindness. If only we would do the appropriate kind of looking.*

WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

PRAYER DIARY

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

Jude v.24

MONTH: JAN 2020	CHURCH FAMILY and LOCAL STREETS	TOPICAL PRAYERS
WK 1: 5th - 11th Jan	Ursula Aitken Edna Bayliss Sue Beeby <i>Ramsden Cl, Corvedale Rd, Eymore, Dowles & Lovell Cls</i>	Our pastorate and our witness in the coming year.
WK 12th - 18th Jan	Mary Bevin Iris Bird Jim Brackley <i>Chedworth Close Guiting Rd</i>	For increased unity in our land and the desire to work together for the common good.
WK 3: 19th – 25th Jan	Linda Bradley Doreen Bradley <i>Radford Rd Hornbeam & Tredington Cls</i>	That nations and individuals seek to manage and use fewer of Earth's finite resources.
WK 4: 26th Jan- 1st Feb	Jane Byford Bill Campbell Kay Campbell <i>Clover Rd, Black Haynes Rd Naunton Close</i>	Christians who have been targeted or discriminated against in Egypt, including physically abused women.

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.