

Weoley Hill Church News



March 2020

From the Minister's study—

Dear Friends,

With many eminent scientists in our congregation, in the past and present, I should not draw attention to my ignorance of the sciences, but ignorant I am! However, I do enjoy glancing through science magazines and I read the articles within them when their headlines spark my interest. Also, I am occasionally handed an interesting scientific article to read at our monthly discussion meeting at the Manse, which I am very grateful for. I must agree with all who are excited about science and technology, it is interesting and exciting indeed!

Now let me ask you a question: Is faith “exciting?” I hope you say yes, but I have a feeling that many of you would not use the word “exciting” to describe faith. Science is exciting as its search for new discoveries, new facts, new solutions to problems seems open-ended. There is a genuine sense of discovery, of venturing and exploring in science. And science is challenging, of course, as from new discoveries and technological developments ethical questions arise.

In contrast, faith has come to be seen by many as past-oriented and a fossilized set of ideas. Faith seems to discourage too much exploring and questioning. There is the traditional set of beliefs that have been handed down to us and that we have grown up with. No need to question them, or is there? Well, I think there is, and that is just what theology is all about: thinking, questioning, challenging old ideas and exploring new ones.

New scholarship, new insights about the life and teaching of Jesus, new ways of thinking about God are being discussed by many theologians and people of faith (or no faith), in and outside of the church. Actually, that is really exciting!

We should never be afraid to be open to these new ideas; we should rediscover the sense of adventure in faith. Faith invites us to be life-long seekers. It calls us, as it called Abraham and Sarah, to set out on a journey, even though we do not know where it will lead us. There is so much to explore and discover in the Bible as we recognize its historical setting and its human interest. It is full of myths and metaphors, with a very rich meaning to discover which is relevant for us today. And it is exciting how secular learning, among which science, is challenging and enriching our faith, how theology is seeking to bridge the gap (among which the language divide) between church and society and how “thoughtful” faith wrestles with the challenging and difficult moral and ethical questions we are faced with.

Really, our journey of faith is never boring if we love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength and....all our MIND!

And so I hope that many of you will join a Lent Study group in which we will look at some Bible passages that “set our hearts on fire,” that have inspired writers and musicians, and we will consider how these passages speak to us today. Also in the months, and years (!), to come I hope that in reflection/study days we will do more thinking and exploring together and, hopefully, share a real “excitement” about our faith, just as much as we may be excited about science or any other discipline of interest.

If you have any suggestions for a next study/reflection day to be planned for the spring/summer, do let me know!

With all best wishes,

Leonora



Personalia

Long-time member Jim Brackley died on Saturday 22 February. Funeral details are not yet available.

Please remember everyone who is waiting for test results, undergoing treatment or recovering from illness.

Please remember the carers, especially long-term carers.



Burkina Faso Update

The last edition of this church magazine reported jihadist attacks on Christians in Burkina Faso in November. More attacks on Christians have been reported in the press recently. 46 people were killed or wounded while at worship on Sunday 16 February while others were kidnapped. Still more were killed during the previous week. Hundreds of thousands have fled from their villages in the north of the country. Attacks on Christians are frequent in many West and North African countries.

Sue Beeby



Neighbourhood News

News and events from other local churches:

Lent Lunches: Soup and rolls here on the 14th, at Selly Oak Methodist on the 21st, and at St Mary's on the 28th.

Lent Studies:

Tuesdays 10.30 AM at Christian Life Church

Tuesdays 2 PM here

Thursdays 10.30 AM at St Mary's C of E

Thursdays 7.30 PM at Selly Oak Methodist

Palm Sunday Evensong 6.30 PM at St Mary's

The Bournville Society Local history group

AGM followed by

Jonathan Lord speaking about HS2—

an overview of the project, the new station and archaeological finds.

7.30 Wednesday 4 March at Dame Elizabeth Hall,
off Oak Tree Lane.

Annual member ship £6; non-members £2 per meeting.

Tea/coffee & biscuits

All welcome

For further information phone the Secretary on

01214592547

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Over fifty pancakes were eaten by 18 people at the Pancake Party on Wednesday 12 February as a practice for Shrove Tuesday a fortnight later. After the initial surprise of not having frying pans—somewhat essential—they were quickly fetched and everyone tucked into the maple syrup, sugar and lemon juice on offer until all the batter was finished. At the same time everyone joined in to make small foot-long, string plaits needed for the service for the World Day of Prayer and 41 were completed. Thanks to all those whose donations covered the cost of ingredients with extras given to the coffee fund, and to all who made plaits, a daunting job if left to one or two people, and all those who helped clear up at the end. There is not a meeting in March but there will be a walk around Cannon Hill Park in April, more details next month.

Lorraine DaCosta

WOOLLY REQUEST

If anyone has any wool they will not be using, perhaps left over from finished or unfinished garments—any colour, any ply, any amount—please would you pass it on to me as I will be making some items for the handicraft stall in June and would much appreciate your help. Thanks.



Lorraine DaCosta

Lent and Easter

Lent study

Tuesdays at 10.30 AM at Christian Life Church

Tuesdays at 2 PM, Lower Hall, beginning 3 March

Thursdays at 10.30 AM at St Mary's C of E

Thursdays at 7.30 PM at Selly Oak Methodist

The groups will all use Churches Together material, *Setting your heart on Fire*—What biblical text sets your heart on fire?

This phrase is drawn from one of the most evocative and treasured New Testament episodes – the account of a mysterious stranger who meets two people journeying on the road to Emmaus, whose identity is eventually revealed as the three of them break bread together (Luke 24: 13-38). After the realisation dawns that their fellow traveller was none other than Jesus himself, the two disciples say to each other: 'Were not our hearts burning within us...'

Taking this biblical story as its starting point, the course invites us to 'open the scriptures' and read them with hearts and heads.

March Lent lunches: here on the 14th, at Selly Oak Methodist on the 21st, and at St Mary's on the 28th. Usually around 12.30.

Mothering Sunday, 22 March: Joint worship here, with Graham Sweeney preaching.

Palm Sunday 5 April: *No communion.* Led by the minister.

Maundy Thursday 9 April at 7.30 PM: Worship & communion here, led by the Revd Mark Bennet, vicar of St David's.

Good Friday 10 April at 7.30 PM: worship led by the minister.

Easter Sunday 12 April

Early Easter worship at 7 AM, led by the minister.

Easter breakfast, approx. 8 AM. *Please let Alan know.*

Easter communion at 10.30 AM, led by the Revd Brian Brown.

Notes from the Secretary

Please collect your AGM documents including the Annual Report today.

We no longer include a membership list with addresses and phone numbers in the Annual Report. Instead, we will also take account of changes to Elders' groups and circulate a current membership list in named envelopes after the changes are made.

NB: David Marlow is compiling a new edition of the Church Directory. Please inform him (and Ann Evans, Membership Secretary) of any changes to your address or phone number.

Because we have fewer people at communion services and fewer elders, there will usually be only two elders serving communion. Please help by sitting towards the front of the church—if you are particularly attached to 'your' seat at the back, please move forward after the Peace.

The Elders' Group Discussions at the Manse will resume towards the end of April, so look out for a letter from your Elder.

I believe Synod is still looking for volunteers for General Assembly, 10-13 July at Aston University. If you can only offer a few hours, this is welcome—for example, handing out papers at a meeting, helping people find their way to the venue from a station or hotel, or helping them find meeting rooms, loos and so on at the university. Let me know if I can forward your name.



Cheryl Thornett

ALZHEIMERS SOCIETY

This month's retiring collection is in aid of the **Alzheimer's Society** which was founded in 1979 by Drs Ann and Brian Hunter and is celebrating its fortieth anniversary this year. It is a care and research charity for those with dementia and their carers. Dementia is a broad term used to describe a number of different conditions affecting the brain including Alzheimer's Disease, Pick's disease, vascular dementia, frontotemporal dementia and others. These diseases cause nerve cells to die, damaging the structure and chemistry of the brain and currently there is no cure. However there are drug and non-drug treatments which can lessen symptoms and people can still live well with dementia. It is **not** a normal part of ageing and it is **not** just memory loss. The society works to provide advice and support, and demonstrate best practice, for anyone dealing with any form of dementia, to influence the state and society in general to enable those affected by dementia to live as they wish to live, and to carry out research into causes and cures. The society relies on voluntary contributions. A national helpline can be reached at 0300 2222 1122 and there is a website for further information.

Lorraine DaCosta



WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

PRAYER DIARY

God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

Phil 2: 9,10

	Church members & Local streets	Topical prayers
WK 1: 1 - 7	Lorraine DaCosta Ken Davenport <i>Weoley Park Rd</i>	For an end to the bombardment in Syria; for those whose lives have been destroyed; the medics who have continued to try to treat patients with limited resources & at danger to their own lives.
WK 2: 8 - 14	Séana Davies Corinne Dawson <i>Fox Hill, Tillyard Croft</i>	
WK 3: 15- 21	David & Geraldine Evans Emlyn & Ann Evans Marius & Jennifer Felderhof <i>Weoley Hill</i>	Christians in northern Nigeria ask for prayer as hundreds of Boko Haram gather ready to attack. Church leaders are usually the first targets.
WK 4: 22 - 28	Margaret Field Josie Fisher John Fletcher <i>Middle Park Rd & Close</i>	Those suffering from famine resulting from the locust swarms in East Africa and Pakistan.
WK 5: 29 Mar- 4 April	John Glen Colin Graham <i>Bristol Rd</i> <i>Head Injury Centre</i>	For wise decisions to be made regarding the Coronavirus; the impact that it is having on communities & economies.

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