

Cadbury Pastorate News

Bournville, Weoley Castle &
Weoley Hill Churches



Photo by Jörgen Norrland Andersson.

September 2020

From the Minister's study—

Dear Friends,

“Secondary pupils will wear facemasks after U-turn” is the headline in many of the newspapers on the day that I write this letter. Of course, it is not the first U-turn of the government; government policy, advisories and rules during the pandemic seem to change by the day. But it is interesting how wearing facemasks (or face coverings) by the public, at the beginning of the pandemic being advised against, is now mandatory in most indoor places, including the church. And I am all for it as I believe that it can help to limit the spread of the corona virus. But I also know that for many people, among which those who are hard of hearing, the wearing of face masks makes it much more difficult to communicate. Isn't much of our communication not only by words spoken but also by facial expressions? And facial expressions are largely hidden by face masks, except for the eyes.

In the Bible the face is a very important part of our humanity. Numerous passages in the Bible describe facial expressions that identify the person and his or her emotions. The face is sad, ashamed, arrogant, fearful, shining, joyful....And sometimes the beauty of the face is mentioned but mostly it is the sentiment, the feeling that is expressed in the face.

Even God is said to have a face. There is often mention of the face of God, even though it is hidden to the human eye. “No one can see me and stay alive,” God says to his people. Only in exceptional circumstances God reveals himself “face to face” (cf Exodus 33: 11). The people are facing God and God has turned his face towards the people. God looks upon his people. Nothing is considered worse than if God would turn his face away from his people. “Why do you hide you face....come to our help,” is a cry we read in several of the Psalms (eg Psalm 44: 24f)

As the face (as a metaphor, of course) is so important in our relationship with God and with each other, it is a shame that we have

to cover our face with a mask to protect each other. But not all our facial expressions are hidden behind a mask; the eyes can speak for us too! With our eyes we communicate too, consciously or unconsciously, and what may be unspoken behind our face masks may be visible in our eyes. Remember that Jesus said that the eyes are the windows to the soul: "The eye is the lamp of the body" (Matthew 6:22).

NB I am aware that this passage may need some more contextual interpretation in order not to exclude those who are blind.

The face mask may hide some of our facial expressions but, of course, does not hide the unique identity which is reflected in our face, "created in the image and likeness of God." They may hide some wrinkles, imperfect teeth, double chins or crooked noses (the wonderful features that all tell something of our life story) or the most beautiful, perfectly shaped facial features (unravaged by age!), but they cannot hide our unique personality.

Nor does the face mask prevent us from recognizing who is our neighbour, or brother or sister, as the following wisdom story tells us:

A rabbi gathered his students together very early one morning, while it was still dark. He put this question to them: "How can you tell when night has ended and the day has begun?" One student made a suggestion: "Could it be when you can see an animal and you can tell whether it is a sheep or a goat?" "No, that's not it," answered the rabbi.

Another student said: "Could it be when you look at a tree in the distance and you can tell whether it is a fig tree or a peach tree?"

Again the rabbi answered: "No." After a few more guesses the students said: "Well, how do you tell when night has ended?" The rabbi answered: "It is when you look on the face of any man or woman and you see them as your brother or sister. If you cannot do this, then, no matter what time it is, it is still night."

As we resume worship in the three churches in the pastorate and have to wear facemasks, for the time being, let us be conscious that for

some verbal communication may prove more difficult (and we can surely think of ways to make it easier). But also remember that while we may not be able to show all our facial expressions, yet we are happy to face each other again in church and be reminded that we face God and God faces us.....

All best wishes, *Leonora*

Beirut Appeal

A massive explosion at the port of Beirut on 4 August caused the deaths of more than 150 people, wounded 5,000, and left an undefined number of people reported as missing.

Around 300,000 people were displaced from their homes and, according to specialists, the explosion is among the five strongest blasts in human history.

In the region, the Covid-19 crisis is getting worse. Numbers reached record thresholds in recent weeks, deepening the health and economic crisis hitting the country since 2019.

To help those affected in the region, the United Reformed Church (URC), led by its Global and Intercultural Ministries, is supporting an appeal organised by the Compassion Protestant Society (CPS) - the diaconal arm of our local partner, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL).

The CPS aims to support 1,000 Lebanese families by fixing their homes and making them habitable, through a \$1000 USD grant provided to each family. These families will be chosen based on an assessment and registration process handled by a professional team recruited by CPS.

Karen Campbell, URC Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries, said: "The URC has sent letters of support to our sisters and brothers in Lebanon, particularly in Beirut. I know many of us, as congregations and individuals, are offering prayers for the region. These heartfelt

gestures are important and appreciated, but those affected by the humanitarian emergency need more. As Georges Ziadeh, Executive Director of CPS, quotes - 'Let us not love with words and speech, but with action and in truth.' (1 John 3:18) Let us do what we can, and believe that our actions will make a difference. "

It is intended that proceeds from this appeal will be match funded from the URC's World Church and Mission Fund.

If you would like to support the campaign, please make a donation by Friday 25th September 2020 via bank transfer using the following details:

Account Name: United Reformed Church Trust

Sort Code: 40-05-03

Account Number: 01191802

Please use the reference "BEIRUT" so that your donation can be easily identified and routed to the campaign.



Pastorate News

The online services and printed sheet will continue for the time being.

Bournville: the first in-person service will be 6 September at 3 PM.

The next issue of the Pastorate news will be available around 1 October. Contributions are requested! Send them to the minister, Leonora Jagessar, or Cheryl Thornett at Weoley Hill.

News from Weoley Castle

The most recent news from us is that we held an outdoor service in the car park on the Quarry Road side of the Church at 11 on Sunday 20 August. See the pictures of us keeping our distance! The group of about a dozen who were able to attend all agreed that it was well worth doing. Being outside allowed up to 5 of us to sing without doing a new risk assessment. We had the accompaniment of amplified music played by 'Joanna'. It was great to meet in person and to chat afterwards and share news. The showers didn't come along until well after we had finished, despite having "Our God reigns" as some of the incidental music! We plan our next service for **Sunday 13 September**, led by Leonora: this will be indoors and will include Communion. Apart from that, the online services continue.

The Elite Dance Club and Karate have resumed their sessions from 25 July. The leaders report that their Covid-safe procedures have gone like clockwork, and Gail has resumed the daily cleaning of the premises as an extra precaution. We shall shortly hold a meeting to consider exactly how to organise the re-opening of the Day Centres, while protecting both members and volunteers. We hope to re-start Day Centres at the end of September; other activities require more thought.

The Weoley Castle Manse is now occupied by Peter & Lena Cruchley: Peter finds himself back in his childhood home until they find a more permanent place to live. They are out of quarantine and you may recognise Peter in a picture. Lena is German, and they are pleased to have arrived back from Singapore before the Brexit portcullis crashes down!

We hear that Margaret Hurlston has had a successful hip operation (delayed by coronavirus), Madge Finch is happy with a minor operation on her ear, and Charlie Smith has graduated with a 2-1. Other members and friends were remembered during and after our outdoor service.



News from Weoley Hill

A small group of WH elders and F&B members met with the minister on 16 August for a 'dry run' service to test re-opening arrangements. The first service will be on 6 September, at the usual time of 10.30 AM. It will follow the online/printed worship, but will include communion. Please let Cheryl know if you plan to be in church on the 6th.

We plan to resume the scheduled retiring collections, with September's being *Children With Cancer UK**. Then the plan is to pick up the missed collections starting in January. If you think something should be changed, or wish to add a charity, please notify Lorraine DaCosta.

**Children With Cancer UK* is a United Kingdom-based charity dedicated to raising money for research and providing care for children with cancer and their families. The aims of their research projects are to

understand what causes children to get cancer and to develop improved treatments.

Personalia In Memoriam

Friend, Elder, long-time Weoley Hill member.... Marilyn Raw died after a long illness on Friday 17 July. Many of us, along with neighbours and other friends, gathered outside the church on 29 July to say farewell. The family placed flowers on the new bench, which will be our memorial to Marilyn, along with the gardens and planting which she did so much to create. Please remember the Raw family in your prayers.



The Thornett's daughter Sarah married fellow musician Jason Evans in London on 6 August. Best wishes to them both.

Please remember all the young people moving to new stages of their education or leaving education in these stressful times—and don't forget their teachers and parents.

Weoley Hill Calendar for September 2020

Saturday	5	10.30 am: Gardening group
Sunday	6	10.30 am: First worship & communion in church, led by the minister. Church Meeting regarding repairs to the JKH immediately after worship.
Thursday	10	7.30 pm: Elders meeting
Sunday	13	10.30 am: Worship led by Alan Cotgreave.
Sunday	20	10.30 am: Worship led by the minister.
Sunday	27	10.30 am: Worship led by Rev Martin Robinson (tbc).

***From: Ian Hardie, Treasurer of the United Reformed Church
and John Piper, Deputy Treasurer***

August 2020

To: The members and friends of all our 1,400 URC congregations

'THANK YOU' for your unique and vital contribution to the life of the United Reformed Church, and for the work of the kingdom which we are able to do together in God's name

We are living through an extraordinary and challenging time – a very anxious time for everyone; a difficult time for many; and a time of suffering and loss for some. Yet, the main purpose of this letter is to say 'thank you' to each of you for all that you have done for the Church in the past; for all that you continue to do even in these difficult times; and for what you will do in the future.

As we are treasurers, you will not be surprised that the focus of this letter is on finance. But we recognise that finance is only a means to the end which is our doing of God's work together.

'Thank you' for your giving to your local church. Financially, this giving is the lifeblood of your own church and of the whole United Reformed Church across England, Scotland and Wales. It is this personal giving that enables your local church treasurer to pay your church's bills. Typically, the largest of those 'bills' is the contribution your local church pays to the URC Ministry and Mission Fund. This Fund meets the central costs of the United Reformed Church. The total budget is around £20 million and is approved each year by Mission Council. Over 80% of this money is spent on ministers and church related community workers – their training, stipends and pensions. But the other 20% also achieves an enormous amount on behalf of us all. General Assembly 2020 was severely constrained because of the Covid-19 lockdown, but the reports written for General Assembly are available on the URC website, and they paint pictures of all the work

that has been done in our name over the last two years and much of that work is ongoing.

'Thank you' for your giving and the giving of your local church last year. In 2019, over £19.4 million was given by local churches and synods to the Ministry and Mission Fund. The total contributions from local churches reduced very slightly but the average giving per member has, once again and remarkably, gone up by more than inflation.

'Thank you' for your continued giving this year. We fully understand that circumstances this year are difficult. Most local churches have been unable to meet for over five months. We have not had the usual opportunities to make our offerings for the work of the Church. But most of the costs of the local church and of the denomination have not reduced and some have increased as a consequence of the pandemic. We are also aware that some have lost income or work this year and are therefore in great financial difficulty. But there are others on fixed incomes who are actually better off than they might otherwise have been. So, please continue to give what you can in whatever way you can – or save it up until you can hand it over.

Any giving of ours is a response to the amazing generosity and love of God which we see in Jesus. Nevertheless, it is important for us to say 'thank you' to each and all of you.

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter then please speak to your church treasurer, who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ, Ian and John



WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

PRAYER DIARY

Come near to God, and he will come near to you. James 4:8

	Church members & local streets	Topical Prayers
WK 1: 6th-12th Sept	Alan, Lydia, Jacob, Esther, Levi & Joel Cotgreave Roger Cotgreave Lorraine & Fred DaCosta <i>Chedworth Close</i> <i>Guiting Rd</i>	Pray for our pastorate churches as they adapt and meet the challenges of witnessing in changed circumstances.
WK 2: 13th - 19th Sept	Gary Davenport Ken Davenport <i>Ramsden Close</i> <i>Corvedale Rd</i> <i>Eymore, Dowles & Lovell Cl</i>	Focus on the activities that we used to provide & how we might continue to serve, perhaps in different ways.
WK 3: 20th – 26th Sept	Séana & Richard Davies David & Geraldine Evans <i>Radford Rd</i> <i>Hornbeam & Tredington Cl</i>	For those in our congregations who are not able to get out much.
WK 4: 27th Sept – 3rd Oct	Emlyn & Ann Evans Marius & Jennifer Felderhof <i>Clover Rd, Naunton Cl</i> <i>Black Haynes Rd</i>	Naser, like other prominent Iranian Christians is in prison for 10 years. A pastor & his wife have just fled the country after losing their legal appeal. Remaining church leaders are often young in their faith.

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.

The Cadbury Pastorate

Planned re-openings:

Bournville and Weoley Hill URCs plan to resume in-person worship on Sunday 6 September, Bournville at 3 PM and Weoley Hill at 10.30 AM, following government guidelines. Weoley Castle Community Church will resume worship on Sunday 13 September at 11 AM. Sunday worship can be still found on the Weoley Hill website as an audio/visual presentation or in print form, and through email and postal distribution on request.

Some groups which normally meet in Weoley Hill and Weoley Castle will resume meetings soon—check with the organisers.

Please check the churches' websites for further news and any changes, as well as details of precautions to be observed.

PASTORATE MINISTER: the Revd Leonora Jagessar

WEOLEY HILL CHURCH Office: 244 6711

Secretary: Cheryl Thornett 475 6338

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BOURNVILLE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Secretary: Maureen Peart 605 3540

