

# Weoley Hill & Weoley Castle Church News



***December 2025 & January 2026***

## ***From the Interim Moderator—***

### **How long, O Lord!**

As Christians we should be used to waiting... and waiting... and waiting... and waiting... Advent is the season of expectation and preparation, when we, the Church, prepare to celebrate the coming (adventus) of Christ in his incarnation – his ‘becoming flesh’. We also look ahead to Christ’s final advent as judge at the end of time.

Yet, other than a brief pause, often on the first Sunday in Advent, we tend to move quickly over the judgement and distil Advent into a far more relatable waiting period and for a far more acceptable gift, that of a wee baby.

Indeed, in the gospels we hear warnings that despite bad things happening, we cannot know when Jesus will return - and we certainly shouldn’t see the bad things happening as a sign that Jesus is coming back. More than that, I guess, there is enough turmoil in the world to worry about without thinking too much about ‘end times’.

What can we take from Advent if we are to avoid either falling into the doom of the inevitability of wars and disasters or the overly sentimental and sanitised crib scene with optional tinsel and fairy lights?

Perhaps, we can honour the coming of the Christ-child, not by simply opening the doors of the Advent calendar each day or burning down an Advent candle but by living an active Advent? It could be a small act of kindness one day, a prayer for someone you know is struggling (or even for someone you struggle to like) on another day, then a favour for a neighbour, or perhaps sending someone a card or note of thanks or to say you are thinking of them.

Or perhaps we could think...

Melanie

## Prayer page

*Lord of the years, as we look forward to celebrating Your birth and then to a new year, we thank you for coming to us as a helpless baby, as a refugee, as a village carpenter's son, as a teacher, brother, friend, as God's suffering servant, and our living Lord.*

We give thanks that a minister is interested in serving our pastorate. We pray for wisdom and discernment on our part and on hers.

We give thanks for the pleasures and fellowship of the Christmas season. Help us to remember the people who are often forgotten and left out through illness, poverty, lack of family or social conditions.

We give thanks for the safety and security we enjoy relative to many others, and for the people whose labour underpin them. Help us to remember the many people who are not safe or secure, the people who work and campaign for them, and show us how best to support them.

We give thanks for the gifts of time, talent and money given to support our churches and to spread the Word to all who will hear. Help us to give wisely and generously, to follow the star of Your light and to listen Your angels when they sing or counsel.

*O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know thee more clearly,  
love thee more dearly,  
and follow thee more nearly, day by day.  
Amen.*

Att. Richard of Chichester

# Pastorate News

*The Revd Naomi Sakala of the Reformed Church of Zambia has accepted the invitation from the four churches of the Pastorate to visit us to meet people, take part in activities and preach with a view as to whether she should become our minister. This may well be in January, but no timing has yet been fixed.*



## Advent & Christmas

Sunday	7	Weoley Hill	10.30 AM: Toy service.
Advent	2	Weoley Castle	11 am Toy & Gift Service
Saturday	13	Weoley Hill	2 PM: Community choir Christmas singalong concert
Sunday	14	Weoley Hill	After worship: Church Christmas lunch.
Advent	3	Weoley Castle	11 am: Worship including communion
Monday	15	Weoley Castle	Day Centres & Lunch Clubs Christmas Dinner
Saturday	20	Weoley Hill	5 PM Carol service
Sunday	21	Weoley Castle	11 am Christmas Festival Service
Advent	4		
Thursday	25	Weoley Hill	11 AM: Christmas Day combined family worship

## Weoley Hill News

**Barbara Viney**, a long-time member, Elder and Pulpit Supply Secretary for a number of years, died on 4 November after several years of ill health. Barbara was a supporter of Jubilee Debt and often brought other causes to our attention. She was a teacher, a lover of music, reading and drama, played tennis and enjoyed long walks.

Phil says: 'Barbara lived a life rich in love, friendship, and laughter. She was devoted to her family and friends, full of warmth and resilience, and passionate about drama, sport and music. She leaves behind cherished memories and a legacy of kindness that will live on in all who knew her.'

Please remember Phil, their daughter Helen and her husband Joel, and granddaughters Gabreilla and Alana in your prayers.

**The Thornetts** have a granddaughter, **Zoe Mei**, a sister for Felix, born on 18 November. Mother Sarah is doing well.

**The retiring collection** for December is Médecins sans Frontières. January's retiring collection is for Crisis at Christmas (the crisis won't be over just because it's January).

**Toy service** reminder: Sunday 7 December. Please bring your gifts unwrapped so the Crisis Centre staff can choose the most appropriate children to give them to. Separate gift wrap and ribbon or bows are appreciated.

**The Church budget meeting** follows worship on 7 December.

**Christmas lunch:** 14 December after worship. This will be a simple meal with soup, rolls, cold cuts, and mince pies. Cost £6

per head—do bring a friend but we need the numbers so we have the right amount of food.

**Carol service** 20 December at 5 PM with mince pies afterwards. Please invite friends and neighbours! See Ann if you will do one of the readings.

**Christmas day** 11 AM family worship led by Alan

**Sunday after Christmas** led jointly by the Elders—see Ann if you have a favourite reading or carol.



### Used Stamps

Please save your used stamps this Christmas. I will take them to an Oxfam shop that collects them. If you can, it's best to trim round them to about 3mm but don't worry if you haven't the time. Sue @WHURC

### West Midlands Synod Meeting 17 and 18 October 2025

Ann and I attended the residential meeting at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole hotel at the NEC. Thank you to Ann for navigating as I had assumed the meeting was at the same hotel as previously, which was not correct.

The hotel provided a good environment for the meeting.

The meeting had a mixture of worship, full sessions and workshops some which happened in several of the sessions. We had a keynote speaker on the Friday evening after our excellent 3 course meal. It was Revd Dr Jonathon Oloyde who is behind the National Day of Prayer initiative.

I attended sessions on the Climate Crisis, Local Church Safeguarding and Pioneering.

Ann attended Climate Crisis and Ecological emergency. We need to get the word out to community and engage with it and encourage more green issues. An article from this is in this edition of the newsletter. More next time. Synod is in the process of setting up Eco church grants so watch this space. Ann also attended Greening your Church which is also Eco oriented and presented by members of Wombourne church who have received the gold Eco award. There is a book 'Making your church sustainable' by Nigel Walter and Ann will try to get a copy. Her final workshop was also Pioneering and led jointly by 2 Pioneer workers one based at Weoley Castle church and the other in the Northfield community. Their role is to meet with people outside the church environment and form a 'church' which fits their needs. Synod has a pioneer representative, Angi Barker based in Winson Green.

There was a business meeting held by Zoom on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. I forgot to attend this. I understand that the business resolutions were all passed. There are opportunities for churches to bid for resources as a result.

I have the papers should members wish to have more information.

John Fletcher

### ***Addressing Climate Change and Enhancing Biodiversity*** **Climate Change (Presented at Synod)**

Here are some of the ways our community can influence climate change:

(a). Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

- Shift to Sustainable Transportation Choose walking, cycling, public transport, or electric vehicles to cut back on fossil fuel emissions.
- Improve Energy Efficiency Use LED bulbs, insulate homes, switch to energy-efficient appliances, and consider installing solar panels.

- Embrace Renewable Energy. If possible, switch your home energy provider to one that sources from wind, solar, or hydro.

(b).Compensate for the Carbon you Produce.

- My wife and I donate to Ecologi.com which manages a range of carbon impact projects and which helps us compensate for almost half a ton of our carbon footprint every month.

(c).Change Food Habits

- Eat a Plant-Rich Diet Livestock farming is a major emitter of methane. Reducing meat and dairy consumption lowers greenhouse gases.
- Minimize Food Waste Compost leftovers, store food properly, and only buy what you'll use-landfilled waste produces methane.
- Buy Fairtrade to help people in the developing world impacted by Climate change and low income.

(d).Consume in Ways which Help the Planet

- Buy local products to reduce food miles
- Buy Less and Buy Better Support brands with strong environmental ethics.
- Prioritize durability over disposability.
- Support Circular Economy Practices Repair, reuse, donate, or recycle rather than discard products.

(e).Educate and Advocate

- Stay Informed Read up on climate science and policy. Share facts with friends and family.
- Push for Policy Change Vote for leaders committed to climate action and engage in community or online campaigns.

Dave Trenery 22 July 2025



## Weoley Hill Calendar for December 2025

Saturday	6	7.00 PM	Clarinet choir concert
Sunday	7	10.30	Advent 2. Worship & communion led by Alan. AM: Toy service. noon: Church budget meeting after worship
Saturday	13	2 PM:	Community choir Christmas singalong concert
Sunday	14	10.30	AM: Advent 3. Worship led by Alan. ca. noon: Church Christmas lunch. <i>Guests welcome, but numbers needed by 7 December. £6 per head. See Lorraine or Cheryl.</i>
Wednesday	17	7.30 PM:	Elders' meeting
Saturday	20	5 PM	Carol service led by Ann
Sunday	21	10.30	AM: Advent 4 Worship led by Ann Evans.
Thursday	25	11 AM:	Christmas Day family worship led by Alan.
Sunday	28	10.30	AM: Worship led by the Elders.

## Calendar for January 2026

Sunday	4	10.30 AM:	Worship & communion led by Revd David Tennant.
Sunday	11	10.30 AM:	Worship led by Ann.
Wednesday	14	7.30 PM:	Elders' meeting
Sunday	18	10.30 AM:	Worship led by Alison?.
Sunday	25	10.30 AM:	Worship led by Alan.

**Tuesday Fellowship;** 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at 10.30 AM: See Sue or Ann for details.

**Community Choir:** Fridays 6.45-8 PM in term time. See Gordon or Alan for details.

# **FREE CHRISTMAS CONCERT AND**



## **SINGALONG**

**Weoley Hill Community Choir**

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December  
at 2.30pm**

**at Weoley Hill United Reformed Church  
Green Meadow Road, Selly Oak, B29 4DE**

**Free Admission**

**Retiring collection in aid of Birmingham Hospice  
Refreshments after the concert**



## Weoley Castle News

**Sunday morning services:** 11 AM at Weoley Castle Community Church – except Christmas Day: - 11 AM a joint service at Weoley Hill

Dec 7<sup>th</sup>: led by Richard Alford. Toy & Gift Service

Dec 14<sup>th</sup>: led by John Burgess: including communion

Dec 21<sup>st</sup>: led by Andy Vail: Christmas Festival Service

Dec 25<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Day service at Weoley Hill

Dec 28<sup>th</sup>: Bible Study - led by Ted

Jan 4<sup>th</sup>: led by a WCCC member

Jan 11<sup>th</sup>: led by Phil Turley: including communion

Jan 18<sup>th</sup>: Bible Study - led by a WCCC member

Jan 25<sup>th</sup>: led by Frank Challenor

**Sunday afternoons at 4 PM.** A '*Carols on the Square*' on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November will probably have happened by the time you read this. It is supported by all four Churches in Weoley Castle (WCCC, Elim, St. Gabriel's & St. Rose). At Church, there will be community celebrations on Dec 7<sup>th</sup> and also on the 21<sup>st</sup> with carols, and a family service on Dec 14<sup>th</sup>. The next family service is planned for January 11<sup>th</sup>, but arrangements on following Sundays may be a bit fluid, because of the expected arrival of Susie's baby just after that.

**The 'Warm Welcome'** on Fridays with food pantry, café and free lunch will continue as usual, with the last one before Christmas on Friday Dec 19<sup>th</sup>. There will be a gap of two weeks before it re-starts on January 9<sup>th</sup>.

**The Day Centres and Lunch Clubs are planning a Christmas Dinner** at Church on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December – limited places - need to book with Mary. The last DC/LC will be on Friday Dec

19<sup>th</sup>, re-starting on Monday January 5<sup>th</sup>. We are grateful to Stephen Burnand and Kim Benson for filling in some of the gaps in the kitchen caused by Chris Hopkins' absences.

**Other Christmas Activities.** Look out for the 'Advent Christmas Trees' that will appear on the Square and outside various Churches. All four Churches are contributing to a 'Christmas Card' (containing a Christmas message and detail about the Churches' activities), which will be delivered to some 5000 houses in the area. 'Love Weoley Castle' will once again be organising a personalised 'Letter from Santa' to a couple of hundred local children, whose parents enter their details onto the local Facebook page.

### **News of the Fellowship**

**Keith Twamley** continues to feel rather better than the doctors' predictions, and Diane is expecting him to get a scan soon to reveal what is happening.

**Chris Hopkins** claims to be getting better - but at a slower rate than she would like, so still has to take things easy. Chris recently lost her stepmother, but she and a contingent from the Hopkins family were able to attend the funeral.

**Rachel Jewson** (pastor at Elim) has been taking a sabbatical this Autumn to help with her daughter Laura's pregnancy, because it was known that the baby would be born disabled. Unfortunately, little Felix died on November 1st. May her family and the Church know that the love and prayers for Felix were not wasted!

**Gail Dean** (wonderful cleaner at Church and in people's houses) lost her father to a chest infection on November 15th. He had been suffering from dementia, but he still had appreciated her frequent visits to him in the care home and in hospital.

**Sophie, wife of Joe Bevan**, gave birth to their first child Joshua, just a few days after Joe had led a service at WCCC.

**Beckie Reay**, a member of the Tuesday Knit & Natter Group gave birth to much-wanted son Oliver and brought the little mite along to the group a couple of days later for everyone to meet him.

**Latha** (who volunteers at Church on Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays) has been told that she can choose to have limited leave to remain in the UK rather than going through a Tribunal hearing for asylum. This leave can be renewed every 2½ years on a 10-year route to permanent residence. This is good news for her and especially for the children who can feel at home at last. However, let us hope that our seemingly heartless Home Secretary does not stretch that 10 years out still longer!



A silver birch tree beside the Church had died and needed to be taken down. It was a wonderful spectator sport to see how tree surgeon Jack managed to do so without needing a ladder. There may be a few logs remaining for anyone with a wood-burner.



## **Community news**

### **Celebration Concert for human rights**

**Music – song – dance – spoken word**

**Sunday 7 December – café and stalls from 2PM, concert 3-5PM**

At Bournville Friends Meeting House, by the Bournville Christmas Tree, 65 Linden Road. Admission £10, free for children and refugees/ asylum seekers. All proceeds to Amnesty International and Freedom From Torture.

*The next issue will be available around 1 February.*

*Contributions are requested! Send them to Ted Forgan at Weoley Castle or Cheryl Thornett at Weoley Hill.*

# **Knock, knock: Christmas is coming!**

**Knock, knock! Who's there? Noah. Noah who?**  
Noah good Christmas joke?

**Knock, knock! Who's there? Luke. Luke who?**  
Luke at all those presents!

**Knock, knock! Who's there? Gladys. Gladys who?**  
Gladys Christmas. Aren't you?

**Knock, knock! Who's there? Dexter. Dexter who?**  
Dexter halls with boughs of holly...

**Knock, knock! Who's there? Santa. Santa who?**  
Santa Christmas card to you, did you get it?

**Knock, knock! Who's there? Anna. Anna who?**  
Anna partridge in a pear tree.

**Knock, knock! Who's there? Olive. Olive who?**  
Olive Christmas; don't you?

**Knock, knock! Who's there? Howard. Howard who?**  
Howard you like to sing some Christmas carols?

**Knock, knock! Who's there? Mary and Abby. Mary and Abby who?**  
Mary Christmas and Abby New Year!



# Weoley Castle & Weoley Hill Churches

Weoley Castle Community Church, Quarry Rd:

Worship Sundays at 11 AM.

Sunday afternoons at 4 PM: *Informal, family-friendly services with food*

Weoley Hill URC, Greenmeadow Rd:

Worship at 10.30 AM.

*Sunday worship can be still found on the Weoley Hill website in outline or in complete form.*

*We are forming a new Pastorate with Cotteridge & Carrs Lane churches and hope to call a minister to the Pastorate soon*

**WEOLEY HILL CHURCH Office: 244 6711**

Secretary: Ann Evans 628 4558

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