

Weoley Hill & Weoley Castle Church News



February 2025

From the Editor —

Dear all

First, an apology for something written on short notice, but the scheduled letter-writer hasn't been able to write on in time to get the newsletter ready for the first of February.

It is tempting just to quote the whole sermon of US Episcopal Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde, partly as an excellent example of speaking truth to power and also of reclaiming an official occasion like a national prayer service for the Word of God.

I will quote some of her words on unity, which are very wise and very appropriate for us as we work towards a new Pastorate and think of the futures of our congregations.

... we have gathered this morning to pray for unity as a nation—not for agreement, political or otherwise, but for the kind of unity that fosters community across diversity and division, a unity that serves the common good.

Rather, unity is a way of being with one another that encompasses and respects differences, that teaches us to hold multiple perspectives and life experiences as valid and worthy of respect; that enables us, in our communities and in the halls of power, to genuinely care for one another even when we disagree....

Unity at times, is sacrificial, in the way that love is sacrificial, a giving of ourselves for the sake of another. Jesus of Nazareth, in his Sermon on the Mount, exhorts us to love not only our neighbors, but to love our enemies, and to pray for those who persecute us; to be merciful, as our God is merciful,

and to forgive others, as God forgives us. Jesus went out of his way to welcome those whom his society deemed as outcasts.

Now I grant you that unity, in this broad, expansive sense, is aspirational, and it's a lot to pray for—a big ask of our God, worthy of the best of who we are and can be. But there isn't much to be gained by our prayers if we act in ways that further deepen and exploit the divisions among us. Our Scriptures are quite clear that God is never impressed with prayers when actions are not informed by them. Nor does God spare us from the consequences of our deeds, which, in the end, matter more than the words we pray.

What are the foundations of unity? Drawing from our sacred traditions and texts, let me suggest that there are at least three.

The first foundation for unity is honoring the inherent dignity of every human being....

A second foundation for unity is honesty in both private conversation and public discourse....

A third foundation for unity is humility, which we all need, because we are all fallible human beings....

This is intended as encouragement, not criticism! We will have to work out and increase the gracious Christian unity which is so much greater than mere uniformity, a gift of God's Grace, and which is part of our Reformed tradition, to form a workable, working pastorate and to find ways of spreading the Word and growing Christ's church in this area.

Yours prayerfully
Cheryl Thornett

Prayer page

A prayer of US Episcopal Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde:

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on Earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let's remember before God:

- † The work of the Pastorate Vacancy Committee in preparing a joint profile; the Moderators in looking for possible matches; ministers considering moves; Elders, church officers, all our congregations together and our friends and the communities we serve.
- † People we know, and people we don't, who can no longer live independently; for their families, friends and carers.
- † People grieving the loss of a loved one or losses of any kind.
- † Everyone who is suffering through this winter, whether storm damage, cold home, financial hardship, mental illness, one of the many diseases going round....
- † All victims of violence, of injustice, of hatred and prejudice, of poverty, of climate change, of preventable illness....
- † We give thanks for everyone who does the Lord's work of loving-kindness, unifying, caring, healing, strengthening, striving for justice and peace, preserving the world He has given us....



Pastorate News

South & Central Birmingham Pastorate

(Carrs Lane, Cotteridge, Weoley Castle & Weoley Hill)

Update: The Vacancy Committee met on 22 January. The individual church sections of the profile are ready or nearly ready, and a map will be included to show where the churches are. (Google Maps is very misleading, showing the area of Weoley Castle down in Shenley Green and Weoley Hill as just a bus stop.) We need to get our areas on the map—literally! The summary form, which prospective candidates use to decide which profiles they want to see, is also nearly complete, so we hope it will all go to the Moderators before the summer.

Revd Melanie Smith, the Interim Moderator, led worship in Weoley Castle last month and will lead worship and communion at Weoley Hill on 2 March. The committee also discussed ways we could worship together without leaving churches closed to visitors on a Sunday morning. Afternoon or evening worship in the summer was suggested, possibly Pentecost or Trinity Sunday. Any suggestions?

Other matters discussed included the purchase of a new Manse—please keep your eyes out for suitable properties, preferably between the Bristol and Pershore Roads. The URC policy asks for 3 bedrooms, a separate room for a study, preferably downstairs, and separate reception rooms to allow for meetings and family life. (Purchase of a new Manse doesn't have to wait on the sale of the former Weoley Hill Manse.) No one has yet agreed to be the Pastorate banker, so Melanie explained some of the alternatives, which will be put to the respective Elders for approval.



Weoley Hill News

The retiring collection for February is *The Leprosy Mission*.

We were pleased to welcome Yungsim as a new member in December and to baptise a lad from a local school, at his request, in January.

Bill Campbell writes from Switzerland that he is working on a new book on Paul and has joined the Swiss Reformed Church.

“Re-engage” charity

Re-engage is a charity focused on ensuring that older people are heard, valued and engaged.

Re-engage is making life less lonely for thousands of older people every year with volunteer-led activities aiming to make them happier and more able to trust others.

A local resident is one of the drivers who regularly help to transport people living alone to their Sunday-afternoon tea parties in a variety of venues. He had asked us if they could use the church buildings for such an event, but unfortunately at the times needed our buildings are not available. However, he is planning to offer his very large garden as a venue during the summer and hopes there may be people available who would be willing to help with such an event.

When we know further details, I will publicise this and hope there are members or friends who would enjoy being involved with this very worthwhile charity. In the meantime, check out their website at <https://reengage.org.uk/about-us/>

Chris Marlow



Weoley Hill Calendar for February 2025

Sunday	2	10.30 AM: Worship & communion led by Revd Alison Geary.
Tuesday	4	10.30 AM: Tuesday Fellowship
Saturday	8	9.30 AM Work party
Sunday	9	10.30 AM: Worship led by Blair Kessler.
Tuesday	11	10.30 AM: Tuesday fellowship
Wednesday	12	7.30 PM: Elders
Sunday	16	10.30 AM: Worship led by Ann Evans. 7.30 PM: Worship & Arts meeting
Tuesday	18	10.30 AM: Tuesday Fellowship
Sunday	23	10.30 AM: Worship led by Alan Cotgreave.
Tuesday	25	7.30 PM: Pastorate meeting at Weoley Hill
March		
Sunday	2	10.30 AM: Worship & communion led by Interim Moderator Rev Melanie Smith

Anyone is welcome to join the **Tuesday Fellowship**, which usually meets 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at Sue's house, but shifts days and venues when required. See Sue or Ann for details.

The **Art Group** meets 10 AM-12 on Wednesdays in term time. Everyone is welcome; there is no set programme. See Lorraine for more information.

The **Community Choir** meets 6.45-8 PM on Wednesdays in term time. Everyone is welcome to join in. See Gordon or Alan for more information.

Is anyone taking photos at Weoley Hill?



Weoley Castle News

Services: 11 AM on Sundays

Feb 2nd: Café style Bible study, led by Jonah

Feb 9th: led by Frank Challenor—including Communion

Feb 16th: led by Ted

Feb 23rd: led by Richard Alford

Mar 2nd: Café style Bible study, led by Sam

Sunday afternoons at 4PM:

Informal, family-friendly services with food – led by Sam, Katie, Susie & Jonah.

Family Fun Day: 10 AM to 2 PM with free light lunch, Tuesday of half term: 18 February.

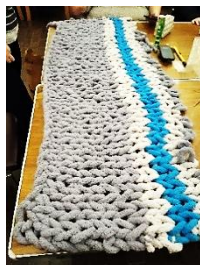


Christmas pictures: Gail Dean visited Madge Finch at her care home and sent a delightful image. Santa visited the toddler group and gave each child a present. Daniel Teplitski used just a fraction of his strength to lift a brother and sister.





Beckie, a new member of the Tuesday **Knit & Natter** group, showed us how to knit a huge area in one evening, using giant wool and fingers instead of needles.



We look forward to working with **Rev. Samantha Sieber** who has just been licensed as vicar of St Gabriel's.

News of the Fellowship

Christine Miles died in Rowley Regis Hospital, Thursday evening 30 January, at about 10 PM, just a few minutes after asking a nurse for a cup of tea. Her rapid but peaceful departure means that she has been spared a period of increasing disability. We give thanks for her (& Miles') unique contributions to the world.

She recently resigned as Church Secretary due to her declining health and no longer managing at home. The Elders have proposed that Ted Forgan take over as Church Secretary and that there should be a new Elders' election.

Carol & Gibson are becoming Church Members, adding to Katie, Sam, Susie & Jonah, who joined last year.



The next issue will be available around 1 March. Contributions are requested! Send them to Ted Forgan at Weoley Castle or Cheryl Thornett at Weoley Hill.

Eco Tips

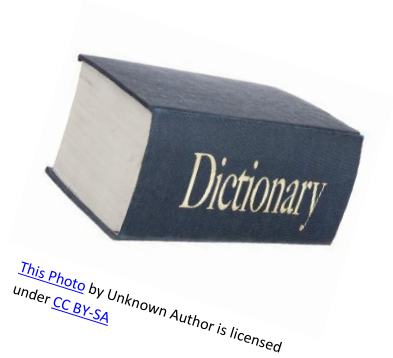
Since tips aren't being contributed, this will be suspended for the time being.



Improve your word power

(learn these new definitions of words)

1. Decrease
2. Elongate
3. Pasteurise
4. Bigamist
5. Moisturiser
6. Antiquated
7. Marinade
8. Vanish
9. Umpire
10. Rambling
11. Malady
12. Gravy
13. Flourish
14. Insolent
15. Pandemonium



1. Do the ironing.
2. Scandal about Musk stretching the truth.
3. Water too deep to stand in.
4. Heavier fog than usual.
5. Yoda thinks you've been crying.
6. Comparable to an ant.
7. Soft drink served at weddings.
8. A bit like a van.
9. Indecisive Transylvanian blood sucker.
10. Jewellery for male sheep.
11. Rather like a duck.
12. Like a churchyard.
13. A bit like flour.
14. Swimming near Southampton.
15. A musical instrument for Pandas.

Weoley Castle & Weoley Hill Churches

Weoley Castle Community Church, Quarry Rd:

Worship Sundays at 11 AM.

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.

THE PASTORATE IS CURRENTLY IN VACANCY

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Secretary: Ann Evans 628 4558

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