

Weoley Hill & Weoley Castle Church News



June 2025

From the Interim Moderator—

Writing as your Interim Moderator, I know that you are eager to hear news of a potential new minister to serve in the newly formed South and Central Birmingham Pastorate. As a new Pastorate you will be 'sharing' a minister for the first time and will hopefully find opportunities to get to know each other like the joint service at Weoley Castle Community Church on Pentecost Sunday. Given that it's Pentecost, I wonder whether you are already speaking the same language, or whether there will be some translation required of terms, customs and practises as you get to know each other and strengthen your relationships.

Oddly, this brings to mind a line in a song by the 1980s Australian band, Men at Work, where the singer is travelling around the world and has a series of short conversations, including this one:

*Buying bread from a man in Brussels,
He was six-foot-four and full of muscle,
I said "Do you speak-a my language?"
He just smiled and gave me a Vegemite sandwich.*

It's not great poetry and certainly, given some of the illustrations in the rest of the song, "Down Under", not usual material for Church liturgy.

Digging deeper, I hear in this exchange a natural human instinct to connect and communicate with people we don't know when in a foreign land. I hear a recognition that there could be a language barrier. I hear that symbols can tell you a lot without using any words (in this case there is assumed knowledge that you all know Vegemite is the ubiquitous Australian equivalent to Marmite).

In these lines, both characters are strangers in a strange land; nevertheless, one is the host. The Israelites were often strangers in strange lands and, so, when they settled, they were expected to show hospitality to those who were passing by or chose to live among them. This theme is continued into the New Testament in Paul's words to the

new church in Ephesus, “you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God,” (Ephesians 2:19). In other words, in the collective memory of being Church, we are both stranger and host.

At Pentecost, we celebrate how those early disciples were able to be understood by people who spoke many different languages, from all over the known world. What does this mean for us as strangers and hosts? How do we make ourselves understood when many of our words and symbols sound foreign in the ears of most people nowadays? Are our words and actions heard and understood by people outside the church? Are we waiting for the Holy Spirit to translate or do we speak anyway, in the hope that the Holy Spirit will help all of our understandings? Or even, do we feel like strangers in wider society, not able to understand the world around us? How do we offer hospitality to those we don’t know?

If we try to find connections to the Biblical narrative, then the invitation is for us to listen and learn, to host and be hosted.

By the way, I don’t have any news on a potential minister yet, but I look forward to journeying with you as you learn each other’s language as a new Pastorate in the household of God.

Melanie Smith

The July/August issue will be available in early July. Contributions are requested! Send them to Ted Forgan at Weoley Castle or Cheryl Thornett at Weoley Hill.

Prayer page

Spirit of God, speak to us in words we understand; warm our hearts with the fire of love and courage; light our path; move among us and take us in Your way.

We give thanks for the beauty that is in the world, the beauties of nature, of art, and of human kindness.

We give thanks that some people throughout history have been moved by the Spirit to make peace, to institute justice, to find ways of healing bodies and minds, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and house the homeless.

We pray that enough people will be moved by the Spirit to develop and implement practical ways to reduce climate change and pollution, and for our own will and ability to contribute.

We pray for the peacemakers, the doers of justice, the healers. Inspirit us to support them, and to assist, practically and through our words, in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and housing the homeless.

We pray for those who are closed away from the beauty of the world around us by age, illness, caring responsibilities, poverty, incarceration.... And we pray that the beauty of human kindness will come to them.

We pray for all the young and not-so-young people sitting exams and for their parents and teachers at this stressful time.

We pray that the Spirit will work in this new Pastorate, refreshing our missions and enlarging our fellowship. We pray that the Spirit is speaking to a minister ready for the challenge.



Pastorate News

Weoley Hill News

The retiring collection for June is for Corrymeela.

Thanks for our hospitality 50 years ago



50 years ago, when Norman Healey was the minister, WH gave meeting space in the JKH to the Dawoodi Bohra Muslim Community, part of the Ismaili tradition. After 5 years they moved elsewhere as their community grew, eventually building their own mosque in the Jewellery Quarter. Representatives returned on Monday 12 May to revisit a key place for them and to offer a thankyou gift; they will invite us to a celebration they plan later in the year. (The basket of goodies was raffled on behalf of Birmingham Hospice at the Community Choir concert on the Saturday.)

Grace Carter died on 7 May. She is now peaceful after years of quiet confusion and being in a care home for more than 18 months. Please remember her children, Hugh and Joy—particularly Joy who has cared for Grace for many years. Her funeral will be here on Thursday 12 July at 11 AM and the burial will be at Kings Norton Cemetery.

Garden Party 16 July

Advance notice: this will be at Nancy's as usual—please invite a friend or neighbour to join us. People will be asked to bring food contributions but of course not everyone can still do so. Come anyway! If you can contribute a bit extra or help with the preparations, see Nancy.



Concert (17 May)

The Weoley Hill Community Choir, which meets every week during term time in our church, recently gave an afternoon concert, which attracted a good sized and appreciative audience. The programme consisted of a variety of songs, ranging from simple folksong arrangements to *singalong* items from musicals in which the audience were invited to join in with the choir. One highlight was the song, *Flying Free*, which incorporated a beautiful flute solo, performed by one of the choir members. After the concert refreshments were served in the John Kydd Hall, with cakes generously provided by members of the choir (and church members).

There was no admission charge, but a collection was taken in aid of Birmingham Hospice, and a representative of the Hospice attended the concert and gave us a short talk about its history and valuable work in the community. We also held a raffle, which raised £82 for the cause, but at the time of writing we haven't heard how much was raised in the collection.

It was encouraging to see a good few unfamiliar faces in the audience, and many said how much they had enjoyed the concert. Perhaps we should do this sort of thing more often!

Gordon Thornett

Weoley Hill Calendar for June 2025

| | | |
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| Sunday | 1 | 10.30 AM: Worship & communion led by Revd Brian Brown. |
| Tuesday | 3 | TBC Grace Carter funeral |
| Sunday | 8 | 10.30 AM: Pentecost Parade service led by Ann Evans. 4 PM: <i>New Pastorate joint Pentecost worship at Weoley Castle</i> |
| Sunday | 15 | 10.30 AM: Worship led by Revd Ian Thornley. |
| Wednesday | 18 | 7.30 PM: Elders (change of date) |
| Sunday | 22 | 10.30 AM: Worship led by Alan Cotgreave. Church meeting after worship |
| Sunday | 29 | 10.30 AM: Joint worship led by Ian Carnell. |
| July | | |
| Sunday | 6 | 10.30 AM: Worship & communion led by Revd David Tennant. |
| Sunday | 13 | 10.30 AM: Worship led by Revd Elaine Hutchinson. |

Tuesday Fellowship on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 10.30. See Sue or Ann.

Community Choir on Fridays, 6.45 – 8 PM in term time. See Alan or Gordon.

Save the date

Cheryl and Gordon will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Saturday 26 July. Please plan to join them in the JKH for an informal lunch. Details a little closer to the time.



Eco church

We haven't had many contributions in the newsletter recently about Eco Church and climate issues so I think it would be good if we can work together towards obtaining the silver award.

The A Rocha Bronze Eco Award we have is from 2019 so it is well overdue for another look.

The categories that the award looks at are:

Worship and Teaching Buildings and Energy

Land and Nature Lifestyle

Community and Global Engagement



In the past we were not too bad in covering the first 2 or 3 sections but the other 2 involve us all.

I think we need to see how we can improve with the latter 2. This will require a questionnaire to find out what we are all doing and this will be ready by the summer. In the meantime, read this and think and pray to see what you can do for God's creation. I have taken an extract about Lifestyle from the A Rocha Eco Award website.

We worship a God who loves the Earth he created and calls us to care for it. While it's important to take action together as a church, we also have an individual responsibility to take action in our daily lives so that we tread lightly on the Earth, and use our voices to speak up for nature. This category is about our churches encouraging people to act as individuals and households—integrating creation care into daily lives out of integrity, as an act of worship and obedience to God and as we grow in discipleship. Within this category, we encourage the church to play a role in educating and influencing individual church members, and wider communities, about the actions they can take and the influence they have. Andy Atkins, Chief Executive of A Rocha UK and a lifelong campaigner, challenges us to consider our understanding of the concept of lifestyle:

It's time we revised the narrow definition of 'lifestyle'. Our purchasing habits, dress, diet and travel decisions are not the only means God gives us to act for his creation. Using our time and 'voice' to campaign is also a behaviour, a choice about the shape and content of our daily lives; and the combination of the two is much more powerful than either on their own.

We can all work doing our small parts to help sustain if not improve God's creation. This can be by influencing others, looking at our Carbon Footprint and personal choices about food, transport, how we use our money and our consumption of goods and services.

Look out for the questionnaire soon and complete it please.

Think and pray about how to help God's creation.

Thank you

Ann Evans



Weoley Castle News

Services: usually 11 AM on Sundays

June 1st: 10.30—joint service with Elim & St Gabriel's at WCCC (includes communion)

June 8th: Pentecost—Bible Study—led by Jonah

4 PM: Joint service at WCCC for members of the S & Central Birmingham Pastorate, followed by tea and conversation.

June 15th: led by Andy Vail with music by the Northfield Baptist Band

June 22nd: led by Joe Bevan

June 29th: 10.30 joint service with Weoley Hill – at WH—led by Ian Carnell

Sunday afternoons at 4PM. Please see the separate programme.

News of the Fellowship

Keith Twamley is at the time of writing being cared for at Willow House in West Heath. However, he hopes to spend some time at home, once the hospital bed and support services are in place. Please remember Diane, Keith & the family in your prayers.



Join us on Sunday afternoons!



SERVICES 4-5pm

Informal and accessible
services with refreshments,
all ages welcome!

25th May

8th June
Churches Together

22nd June

13th July



CELEBRATIONS 4-5.30pm

Community events with
free food, games and
activities!

1st June

15th June

6th July

(ft. Ms Kim's Kitchen)

20th July



(29th June - Love Weoley
10th Anniversary Event)

WEOLEY CASTLE COMMUNITY CHURCH
115 QUARRY ROAD, B29 5LE
CONTACT: SAM.POURSAIN@SEEDBEDS.ORG

Some thoughts for Father's Day (June 15th)

A father and his car keys are soon parted.

By the time a man realises that maybe his father was right, he usually has a son who thinks he's wrong.

Children are natural mimics: a son acts like his father, despite every effort to teach the child good manners.

Children need your presence more than your presents.

A child can ask questions that a wise man cannot answer.

A father is a banker provided by nature.

Fatherly love is expecting the best from your children, despite the facts.

There are three stages in a man's life: he believes in Santa Claus; he doesn't believe in Santa Claus; he is Santa Claus.

A father should watch football with his children, so he can teach them when to shout at the ref.



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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

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