

Weoley Hill & Weoley Castle Church News



May 2026

From Alan Cotgreave—

As I sit to write this morning my body is aching slightly and I'm waiting for a sponge cake to come out of the oven. Two unrelated events but never-the-less events that have things in common and got me to thinking.

My body is aching because yesterday I took part in the Great Birmingham Run, something that has become a regular thing for me. Admittedly I "only" completed the 10K event this year rather than the Half Marathon but still it's an achievement and today my body is telling me about it!

I've taken part in many events like this over the last few years and every time I'm struck by something really powerful. The large number of people from the city come out to take part and to support these events. At the start line in Centenary Square there are thousands of people ready to cheer runners on and at the finish, which this year has moved to Jennens Road by Aston University and the Royal Conservatoire, again thousands of people encouraging struggling competitors over the finish line.

We each wear our names on our bibs and so to hear your name shouted as you run is amazingly uplifting. The crowds may not know us individually but the feeling that we are known by name makes a massive difference.

What has that to do with the sponge cake currently in the oven? Well, the reason I'm baking it is because at lunchtime today we are holding a street party on our road. These began with Jubilee and VE Day celebrations several years ago but now we have them "just because". Many people on the street, young families, not so young families, students, older people living on their own all get together to eat, talk and have fun for a couple of hours. It means

we speak to people we might not otherwise know and we strengthen the feeling of community on our road. As a result people feel they can ask each other for help when it's needed at other times of year and neighbours always greet each other when we pass in the road on the way to the shops or to work.

Knowing people by name makes it so much easier to form meaningful relationships. As a teacher I know how much easier it is to make sure students are doing what they should if I can use their names! In Isaiah 43:1 we read those reassuring words, "I have called you by name – you are mine". We can all have personal relationships with God because he knows us by name.

"There are hundreds of sparrows, thousands, millions and God knows everyone and God knows me." These are words that many of us will have sung in Sunday School when we were young.

We are just about to enter a new and exciting time as a church as Revd Naomi Sakala comes to join us in the pastorate. But that's the thing isn't it, she is not coming to be OUR minister but a minister for the pastorate.

At Weoley Hill we already have a strong relationship with the congregation at Weoley Castle, a partnership that has grown over the years. Joint services and joint newsletters are just a small part of that. It seems to me that what we need to do now is to begin to develop a similar relationship with the other churches. I know that events over the week when Naomi came to visit were conducted jointly but what can we do to make those ties stronger? How can we start to get to know each other?

Surely one of the things we can do for Naomi, and for ourselves and the pastorate is to get to know each other better. It isn't

going to happen overnight but equally it won't happen if we don't start to make some moves.

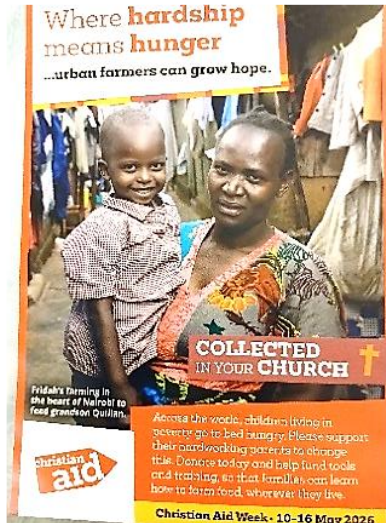
At Weoley Hill in our next church meeting we plan to talk about how we can help move things forward, what we can do to help. Maybe this is something for us to think about.

Right now, I need to go and decorate my cake for the street party. One of the members of Carrs Lane Church is my neighbour and will be there!

Blessings

Alan

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2026 10 - 16 MAY



Prayer page

As we celebrate the Resurrection and the coming of the Spirit:

We give thanks for the new life of Christ and for the breath, warmth and word of the Spirit.

We give thanks for the cycle of life in the world and for the beauty of spring.

We pray for the world we live in, the physical world so often degraded or destroyed. We pray for knowledge and determination to slow and stop the harm and to put things right where possible.

And we pray for the human world, all our brothers and sisters wherever they live, especially for the people who suffer injury and death by the actions of others and the people who are pushed to the fringes and disregarded, the people to whom Jesus so often showed love and salvation. We pray for the breath, warmth and word of the Spirit to act through us to bring the new life of Christ where it is needed.

We pray for the new Pastorate, and for Revd Sakala, asking for a renewal of commitment, for growing outreach and for our joint growth as the Body of Christ in this city.

We pray for everyone who is ill, awaiting diagnosis or treatment, or recovering, and for the people who tend and care for them. We pray for people mourning a family member or friend.

We pray for everyone taking exams and for their families and teachers.

We pray that all our young people, ours in the widest sense, will inherit a better world than currently seems possible.

Pastorate News

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

Weoley Castle News

Sunday morning services: 11 AM at Weoley Castle Community Church

May 3rd: Informal Family service led by Sam, Susie & Jonah

May 10th: led Andy Vail—including Communion

May 17th: Informal Bible Study, with cuppa & biscuits—led by Jonah

May 24th: led by Joe Bevan

May 31st: Joint service at 10.30 at Weoley Hill Church

June 7th: Informal Family service led by Sam, Susie & Jonah

News of the Fellowship

Chris Hopkins had another bout of ill-health over Easter but now is improving. So far none of the continuing tests have indicated the cause. We are most grateful to **Kim and Mary** who are doing the cooking for the Day Centres and Warm Welcome.

Other News

The beginner's "English Conversation Class" for people whose first language is not English has just started at WCCC on Tuesdays from 1.30 - 3 PM. There were 9 people at the first session led by Anne, Janet & Yvonne and more are welcome.

With the aid of declutterers Jess & Anne, the ‘Church Declutter’ took place from Tuesday 14th April until Thursday 16th. We disposed of about two tons of stuff that had gathered over the years, including the costumes worn by a ‘Rose Queen’ and her attendants before she opened one of the ‘Strawberry Fayre’ fundraisers about 40 years ago. Some stuff was donated, some went to the tip in a big white van (see the pictures) and some went in a “Cashless Jumble Sale” on the Thursday. A lot of stuff remains, but it’s far better organised!.





At WCCC on Sunday afternoon 26th April, was another Weoley-Good: Food-Fayre—organised by ‘Love Weoley Castle’ using a ‘Community Cohesion’ grant. There was a really pleasant atmosphere as about 80 people shared foods typical of Poland, France, Italy, India and the Caribbean. Kids (and some adults) also enjoyed craft activities and it finished with ice cream served by an American. Thanks to Bart, Enzo, Paramjit, Divya, Kim and Greer for providing the food. See the picture taken in just one of the two halls that were occupied

On Saturday 16th May on Castle Square from 11 AM to 2 PM will be ‘Weoley Castle Earth Day’, with a variety of stalls from local community organisations interested in the environment, plus entertainment.

Weoley Hill News

The retiring collection for May is for Friends of the Earth

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2026 **10 - 16 MAY**

For 80 years, Christian Aid has been fighting poverty and injustice, since its origins in 1945 when the Churches of Britain and Ireland united to support Second World War refugees.

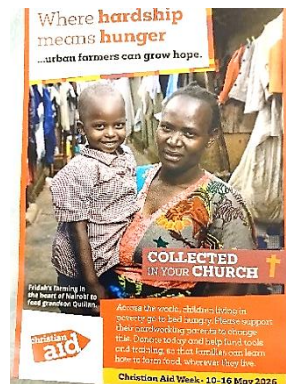
Please support the charity as much as possible. We will have collections in church, and also a concert in church on Saturday afternoon June 20th. Please support this—further details of the time in due course.

There will also be a Gardeners' Market 16 May 2026 (10 – 11.30 AM) at Selly Oak Methodist Church. (Plants of all kinds—vegetable, salad, pot, bedding, perennials....)

One of the main focuses this year is on supporting those living in urban poverty in Nairobi.

Emlyn Evans

We are no longer distributing Christian Aid Envelopes, but please take one for your own donation on Sunday 10 May and return it to Emlyn.



Weoley Hill Calendar for May 2026

10 - 16 May: Christian Aid Week		
Sunday	10	10.30 AM: Worship led by Ann.
Monday	11	3 PM: F&B meeting
Tuesday	12	7.30 PM: Bournville Freeholders and Leaseholders Association AGM at Weoley Hill.
Wednesday	13	7.00 PM Elders' meeting
Sunday	17	10.30 AM: Worship led by Revd Ian Thornley
Sunday	24	10.30 AM: Pentecost. Worship led by Alan
Monday	25	Bank holiday
Sunday	31	10.30 AM: Joint worship led by Annette Sampson
June early notice		
Saturday	20	2.30 PM: Community choir charity concert

The Tuesday Fellowship meets most 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 10.30 – 12. See Ann or Sue.

The Community Choir meets Fridays 6.45 – 8 PM term time. See Gordon or Alan.

Eco church

This is a special year—we are celebrating 25 years of A Rocha UK

A new online publication has been produced by A Rocha which includes monthly notes so here is May's:

MAY Support pollinators. Nothing says Spring like the buzz of a bee! But these precious pollinators are declining due to habitat loss, climate change and agricultural intensification. Wednesday 20 May is World Bee Day, so look around to see how you can improve habitats for bees and other pollinators. Read more about bees, butterflies and habitats that support them in our

Target 25 resources at arocha.org.uk/what-we-do/target-25. Sow a pollinator friendly seed mix, make or buy a bee hotel, let some wildflowers grow in your garden, and don't use pesticides. Pray that our pollinator populations will increase. For more about World Bee Day visit: awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/world-bee-day/

Eco information from Selly Oak Methodist church.

This a summary of some of the items Alison Geary mentioned when she came recently.

Why Your Garden is Important

There are nearly 23 million residential gardens in the UK which cover an area 4 times larger than England's nature reserves, and gardens in England cover 30% of the urban area. Gardens provide 'islands' or 'stepping stones' which help birds, bees, butterflies and other native wildlife to search for the food they need, and the places to live and multiply. Motorway embankments are designed to work in a similar way and are sometimes known as linear parks.

So whatever you do in your garden to help wildlife, for example not mowing the lawn in May when insects use tall grass and weeds as places to breed, or making a bug hotel or just having a pile of rotting logs where bugs can find nesting places, or a shallow bowl of water always there (or, even better a pond) for birds, you are contributing to the richness of the whole countryside. And, if you don't have a garden, even a window box or a flowerpot can help. A crocus in a window box has nectar which is just right for a bumblebee.

Richard Balmer

Gardeners' Market Saturday May 16th 10.00-11.30AM



Plants of all kinds vegetable, salad, pot, bedding, perennials.... can be brought and bought. When seeds germinate and are being thinned out consider potting those not needed and bringing them along to the market. They can be planted in any recycled plastic container. Similarly, any spare plant plugs are welcome.

Recyclable Items Collection

Batteries are taken to the supermarket and spectacles go to Lions International. Stamps go to the RNIB. I [Alison] take soft plastics to Sainsburys. We can be paid for recycling printer cartridges (HP and Canon) and mobile phones, the money going into the church funds. All are examples of helpful recycling which we can collect at church. If you are aware of others please advertise it.

Synod meeting report March 2026

This was mainly a business meeting sharing information and making decisions on resolutions. John was unable to attend so I have voting rights for the first time!

Worship was based on a book Tears of Things by Richard Rohr subtitled 'prophetic wisdom in and age of outrage'. Very interesting.

At the last Synod meeting I collected a few coasters which are for table talk starters. I haven't put them out, sorry, but will do so sometime after Easter. They do offer different questions via a QR code.

The Durgapur appeal achieved its target and more for last year, so we were reminded to contribute again as the appeal is for 5 years. 50 people or churches donating £50. David has set this up for us.

The synod treasurer reminded us about the new grants available such as for compliance testing. David will claim for this even though our compliance figures exceed the grant of £1000 annually.

The synod vision for the next 12 -18 months was presented and the meeting agreed to aim the fulfil these.

Our top priority is to ensure that each local church has a clear mission focus and aims. Secondly, we want to ensure all churches are well connected to the wider church. Thirdly, we will provide programmes and support so that every church can at least maintain their membership year-on-year and have at least 50% of our churches showing a net growth in any year. Fourthly, if we are to meet the net-zero objective set out in our Synod Environmental Policy (agreed March 2024 Synod) we need to take urgent action on carbon emission reduction.

Quite a challenge. The first challenge is tied in with the reintroduction of the LMMR (Local Mission and Ministry Review) initiative as this is something which should be include into our profiles. Profiles are working documents, now referred to as a 'Living Document' and should be regularly visited to review aspects of it. Synod has asked every church to submit theirs even if it is not up to date. Thy will be looked at

to see what help synod can offer. Ours was recently updated ready for encouraging a new minister, it must have worked as we now have Naomi as a minister in waiting.

The next resolution that was considered was about Lay presidency (Lay people presiding at Communion). Alan and I are authorised when there is pastoral necessity. As ministry is changing and ministers have more churches in their charge the need for Lay people to preside at communion is increasing. The resolution was about asking General Assembly to clarify the meaning of pastoral necessity.

"Lord today is there someone you want me to connect with outside the church family?" This is a question we can all ask God about. If the answer is yes, do it by asking someone how they are and a conversation may follow and lead you to do a bit of evangelising.

Another item on the agenda that encouraged me is a new proposal about the 'Growing Younger programme'. This is coming from the Pioneering Reference Group and Synod Children's & Youth Development Officer (CYDO) recommends the employment of four full-time Young Person Development Workers (YPDWs), aged 18-25, to provide practical, flexible support to churches across the Synod on a Fixed Term Contract of up to three years dependent on funding. Would we benefit from tapping into this? There are several pages of information about this in the Synod papers.

Synod Vacancies. There are vacancies for:

Synod Treasurer (from March 2026)

- Chair of Trust
- Synod Executive Area representatives






If you are aware of anyone who could fill those roles, please contact me and I will pass the information on. If anyone would like any further information about any of the topics in this report let me know and I can share what I have.

Thank you for reading this

Ann

Uncle Rebus' Puzzle Page

The pictures represent everyday words or phrases. Answers upside down below

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17	18	19	20

1. Bigwig. 2. Square Meal/Lunchbox. 3. Foreign language. 4. Three Wise Men. 5. Pain in the neck. 6. Cutting Edge. 7. Speaking in Tongues. 8. The short end of the stick. 9. Man Overboard! 10. DOWntown 11. Up to it. 12. A Balanced Meal. 13. Birds and Bees. 14. Tricycle. 15. Put on Weight. 16. Blood is thicker than water. 17. For Instance. 18. End of an Era. 19. Safety in Numbers. 20. Up for grabs.

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.

*An outline of Sunday worship can be found on the
Weoley Hill website.*

*We have formed a new Pastorate with Cotteridge & Carrs Lane
churches and have called a minister who will join us later this
year.*

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