

Weoley Hill & Weoley Castle Church News



May 2025

From Ann Evans—

Dear friends

This is the month when we get two Bank Holidays. I sometimes wish these were spread out during the year, but they are not. Every day of the year has something assigned to it and during May we have World Tuna day, Star Wars Day (May4th be with you!), and Towel day to mention some frivolous ones but Fair-trade day and Ascension amongst other days.

It makes us think about holidays and for those who are not tied to school holidays for various reasons it can be a popular time of year to go away before it gets too crowded and can be warm enough but not too hot.

Holidays or Holy days are days to rest. Taking a holiday is supposed to give us time to rest and recuperate so we return to our roles in life refreshed to carry on. I sometimes find that we do quite a bit while away or travel a distance and come back saying I need a holiday to recover! My mother used to say it was traveling that was tiring and then I thought it wasn't but now I'm older I'm inclined to agree with her.

Emlyn & I will be having a break away at the end of the month going to France with our daughter and family for a few days. We do have breaks away with the family several times a year and always enjoy it, but it is not always relaxing. Mind you if we travel in their car at least we don't have to do the driving!

What holidays did Jesus take? I am not aware of him taking any breaks from his task of spreading the news of God's kingdom. The gospels seem to be about an endless series of preaching and healing and telling parables and performing miracles. However, he refreshed himself by going to a quiet place to pray to God, his

father, and at night on several occasions. Maybe that was the only time he could escape from the crowds who wanted to meet this charismatic man and even be cured of their ailments. When did he sleep?

Jesus observed the Jewish holidays the most well-known being Passover as he did with the 'last Supper' on Maundy Thursday before his arrest, death and resurrection.

A May date in the Christian calendar is Ascension Day. As a child and into adulthood I remember it being a day off school when in primary school but not secondary school. When did that stop?

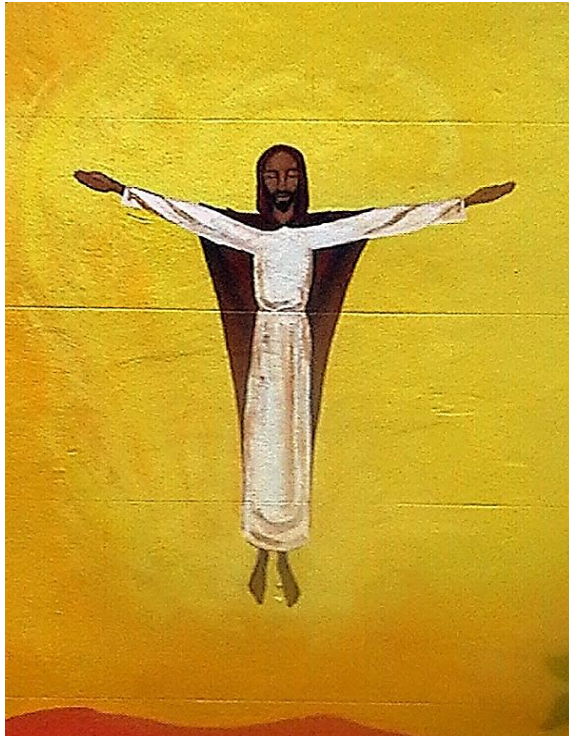
It is always on a Thursday so can be overlooked. It is the 6th Thursday after Easter day which is 40 days following Easter. This year it will be on Thursday 29 May. It is not as a major festival like Christmas or Easter but still important in various Christian and Orthodox traditions.

However, it does mark an important moment. It is the end of the earthbound ministry of Jesus; it includes the words of Jesus' commission to his disciples; and it also prepares the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Apostle's creed mentions the ascension; 'He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.' That is part of the regular liturgy of several denominations.

There is not a great deal written about the Ascension in the Bible but there are several references to it even from Jesus at the tomb on Easter day telling Mary not to touch him as he hadn't yet ascended to his father. The short but more descriptive accounts are at the end of Luke and the beginning of Acts which gives some continuity between the gospel accounts of Jesus life and the

spreading of the Good News from Pentecost onwards by others. Jesus prepared disciples by handing on the baton to them. Both these books were written by Luke.

Jesus left this earth and returned to his Father and has been depicted by various artists over the centuries.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC](#)

Jesus is alive and with his father and is in heaven and there to help us all when we turn to him and when we need him.

God's blessing on you all at this forthcoming Ascension time, holiday time and beyond.

Ann

Prayer page

Risen and living Lord, you call us to follow in your way and to care for all our neighbours not just with conventional words but with acts of love. Help us to feed your sheep.

We give thanks

- ✦ For the life and witness of Pope Francis
- ✦ For the life and witness of all the people, often unnamed and unknown, who have brought others to faith and have nurtured faith in others.
- ✦ For acts of love and kindness in a world that can be cold and uncaring, whatever and whoever the doer, thanking You as the source of all goodness.
- ✦ For everyone who reaches out past the barriers that divide neighbour from neighbour, thanking You who love us all as Your children.

We pray for

- ✦ Hearts and minds to hear the Your word even and especially when it comes from people who are often unvalued and neglected.
- ✦ Peace with justice. A time of Jubilee for impoverished peoples, of restoration and of burdens lifted.
- ✦ All who have the privilege and burden of momentous decisions, from the cardinals electing the next Pope; to everyone involved in finding and approving a Pastorate minister; government bodies, and electorates, executives of and investors in global corporations, to be moved by the common good, not just by power and greed.

Faithful women proclaimed the good news of Jesus' resurrection and the world was turned upside down. Help us to keep faith with them; may our witness be as bold, our love as deep, and our faith as true. Amen.

Pastorate News

New Pastorate Manse: the Synod property office has made an offer for a house on New House Farm Drive, near Manor Farm Park, and it has been accepted. No chains are involved

Our combined profiles have been submitted.

Weoley Castle News

Services: 11 AM on Sundays

May 4th: Bible Study—led by Carol

May 11th: led by Phil Turley—including Communion

May 18th: led by Sam

May 25th: led by Brian Brown

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

The initiative by Sam & Co. of family-friendly worship and community engagement continues on **Sunday afternoons at 4pm**. On Easter Sunday, some 35 people (nearly half of them children) joined in an Easter Celebration, with games, craft,



pizza, a prayer table and a proclamation of the Easter message: see the picture.

The 35th anniversary of the URC hymnbook, 'Rejoice and Sing' is being celebrated by a gathering in Coventry on Saturday 3rd May.

For **Christian Aid Week**, Debbie, Hope and Mary are holding a fundraising "Big Brekkie" on Tuesday 13th May.

Some 75 children attended our Easter-themed **Family Fun Day** on Tuesday 15th April. One of the many things they did was painting the Easter story: see the picture.





We are very grateful that the owner of **Beckbury Chippy** has begun donating to the **Incredible Surplus** food pantry. In addition, he recognised that Good Friday is an important day in the Christian calendar (he is a Sikh) and provided a large number of fish & chip meals, to feed nearly 30 adults and children at **Warm Welcome**: see the picture. This, and telling the Easter story with the children's paintings, represented our "service" on Good Friday.

News of the Fellowship

Madge Finch is back in her care home after being in hospital due to her fall, but she is rather unstable on her pins.

Keith Twamley is now receiving palliative care for his liver cancer. Please remember Diane, Keith & the family in your prayers.

Weoley Hill News

The **retiring collection** for May is for St Mary's Hospice.



Reminder: Quiz night with fish & chips in aid of Fairtrade on Saturday 3 May at 6 for 6.30 pm. £9 per head. See Lorraine.

Iris Bird 1929-2025



Iris was a great pal ...part of the glue that held Weoley Hill together...a happy Christian.... Tom Arthur

Iris was a true Brummie, born and growing up in Winson Green, working in a Ladywood factory during the war, marrying Harold Bird in Christ Church, Summerfield, in 1953 and eventually

moving to Selly Oak with Harold and daughter Gillian. She worked as a telephonist for the Post Office and at Birmingham University. After Harold's death, Iris moved to Hollybrow and eventually to Bourn View care home.

As an Elder and one of the real pillars of Weoley Hill, Iris was particularly involved with our hospitality and fellowship, organising coffee rotas, founding the Lunch Club and organising meals and refreshments for our social occasions. She took an active and caring interest in the wellbeing of others, someone who would go the extra mile.

Our sympathy to Gillian and to all Iris's friends. She is greatly missed.

Weoley Hill Calendar for May 2025			
Saturday	3	6.30 to 9.30 pm:	Quiz night with fish & chips in aid of Fairtrade. £9 per person
Sunday	4	10.30 am:	Worship & communion led by Ann.
Sunday	11	10.30 am:	Worship led by Revd Barbara Calvert. Christian Aid Week
Wednesday	14	7.30 pm:	Elders
Sunday	18	10.30 am:	Worship led by Ann.
Tuesday	20	7.30 pm:	Pastorate meeting at Weoley Hill
Sunday	25	10.30 am:	Worship led by Alan Cotgreave.

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

Art club Wednesdays 10-12. See Lorraine

Community Choir Fridays 6.45-8 pm. See Gordon or Alan



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

May 11th - May 17th

Delivery only envelopes—we plan to deliver in the streets around our church again this year. Please see Emlyn if you can spare some time to help.

This year Christian Aid celebrates 80 years of supporting some of the poorest, most dispossessed people in the world across all faiths, those with no faith, and all ethnicities.

Focus this year. During Christian Aid week this year the focus is on Guatemala, where gruelling heatwaves and extreme weather are destroying crops and livelihoods.



Meet Aurelia

An inspirational farmer and community leader. Aurelia and her family belong to the Indigenous Q'eqchi' community of the Alta Verapaz region.

The [climate crisis](#) and industrial plantations have changed Q'eqchi' land dramatically. Gruelling heatwaves, savage storms

and unpredictable seasons are ravaging farms. Industrial agriculture is taking over the last of the region's natural resources to feed the world's richest countries.

Many of the vital crops that Aurelia depends on are withering and dying before her eyes.

Restore Campaign

This illustrates the urgent need for CA's **Restore** Campaign which seeks to challenge the reckless corporations that are driving the climate and debt crises which are trapping millions of people in poverty.

The UK Government is uniquely placed to make polluters pay and leaders to cancel debts. Many of the world's biggest polluters have headquarters in the UK and 90% of debts owed by low-income countries to private companies are governed by UK law. There is a **petition** to sign and they are organising regular online webinars and workshops if you would like to know more.

(Go to www.christianaid.org.uk>news>campaigns)

Donate to Christian Aid today.

The organisation, now in its 80th year, and its supporters are joining together once again during Christian Aid Week (11-17 May) to fundraise in all kinds of ways – from coffee mornings and craft stalls to hiking and biking for the 70k in May challenge.

With 7 days to make a difference, every gift, act and prayer counts.

Will you demonstrate the unstoppable power of hope and help fund vital tools and training, so farmers like Amelia can push back against the climate crisis and beat hunger?



<https://giving.give-star.com/online/christian-aid/weoley-hill-urc-christian-aid-2025>

Using this link donations will go direct to Christian Aid who will be able to tell us how much we raise at Weoley Hill URC Church.



Shared lunch

It's been a number of years since we have shared a meal with the Korean congregation, but happily their new minister, the Revd Sun-Jong Park (Samson), suggested this for the Sunday after Easter. We had beautiful weather and a plentiful selection of delicious food. One of their members even brewed tea and coffee to order!

Plans have been pencilled in for shared worship and a shared Harvest/Anniversary meal in October. The time between the end of our worship and the start of theirs allows for eating and fellowship.



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.

And now for something completely different—

The URC hymnbook 'Rejoice and Sing' is 35 years old. As a student, I knew a person who later wrote one of the hymns in that book. However, at that time he was famous among his friends for writing little ditties commenting on the world, very loosely based on Congregational hymns! Even now, 60 years later, I can still remember some of his ditties, and copy two of his "hymns" below.

Ted Forgan

Based on 'Onward Christian Soldiers': #527 in the hymn book 'Congregational Praise' - not in 'Rejoice and Sing'

Onward! Christian Soldiers,
To a nuclear war
Send your guided missiles
On a Russian tour.
Blast those heathen cities;
Atomise them quick:
Those that don't die outright
Will be radiation sick.
Downward Christian Soldiers:
To your shelters go.
Hell will burn above you;
You will rot below.

This can be seen as a warning against the Church Militant becoming the Church Military, and also a commentary on the danger of nuclear war.

*Based on 'Who is on the Lord's side?': #528 in the hymn book
'Congregational Praise' - not in 'Rejoice and Sing'*

Whose side is the Lord on?
Who are His Elect?
Don't you know the Tories
Are His chosen sect?
Liberals are heretics,
Labour: philistine.
Firm on Tory shoulders
Rests the hand divine.
Master keep thy people
Conservatively thine.
Church and Queen and Country:
Tory and divine.

*This is a riff on the much-quoted phrase of Maude Royden,
Christian and suffragist in the early part of the 20th Century: 'The
Church of England is the Tory party at prayer'*



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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