

Weoley Hill & Weoley Castle Church News



October 2025

From Alan Cotgreave—

For many years, as a family, we have taken our summer holiday in the Gironde region of France, enjoying the outdoor life by the beautiful lakes and the exhilarating seas of the Atlantic. We have usually stayed in a caravan on a camping site complete with all the facilities to hand to make our holiday comfortable. This year we broke with tradition and, although we went to the same area, we chose to stay in an Airbnb rental. We had a large house in which there was plenty of room for each of us to have our own space should we need it. The thought of all six of us contained in the small space of a six-berth caravan for the odd occasions when it might rain did not bear thinking about. As a result we had a fantastic holiday spending much time together as family, which we don't get to do all that often these days but with the opportunity should we need it to be by ourselves.

Time in our own company is important for all of us, time to consider ourselves and just to 'have space' is vital. The more I think about it, the more I realise that this is one of the main attractions for me about my running activities. As I run around Edgbaston reservoir and wonder at how close I am to the city centre given how green, quiet and calm it is, I relish my time not having to think about the clutter of life.

Jesus often chose to spend time by himself, except of course we are never by ourselves, what I mean is Jesus often chose to spend time alone with God.

In Mark's account of the feeding of the 5000 Jesus was attempting to go to a 'solitary place' when the hoards chased after him. Earlier he had spent a long time speaking with crowds illustrating his point with parables when he encouraged the

disciples to get away from the crowds on the occasion that they found themselves in the midst of a storm.

After the last supper Jesus went to Gethsemane and told the disciples to “sit here while I pray”.

Times of quiet and calm to pray and be alone with God were just as hard for Jesus to find as they are for us now.

As we enter the autumn period things start to get busy for us. For many it's a time of new beginnings as academic years begin, for others it's the chance to rush away on a holiday while the destinations are quieter, but whichever camp we find ourselves in it brings with it the preparations for Harvest, then Advent and ultimately Christmas.

We are all in danger of finding ourselves busy, busy, busy; rushing around getting ready for these amazing and important events which celebrate the greatness of our Lord, but will we allow ourselves the time to stop and be with God alone, to listen to Him and develop our own personal relationship with Him? Otherwise the events we plan and prepare for will just be like any other secular event, fun but missing the point.

It's time for us all to take heed of the words of that well-loved hymn and “Be still for the presence of the Lord the Holy one is here”.

One thing I know for sure is that the Cotgreaves won't be holidaying in a caravan again, I need space to be alone. Alone with God.

Alan

Prayer page

Thanks be to God, the source of all good things: the food that nourishes us, the water that life requires, the land we walk on, the air we breathe. And thanks for the beauty, variety and wonders of our world and for everything that lives, especially our brothers and sisters around the world.

We give thanks for the uncounted people who:

- † provide all we do not grow or make ourselves—farmers, fieldworkers, fishermen, tenders of livestock; cleaners and packers, factory workers, transport workers, shop workers, restaurant staff, and more.
- † simply keep everything going—the roads, the lights, communications, transportation, sanitation, public safety, green spaces and so much more.
- † staff the health service, carers (paid and unpaid) of all kinds, charity workers, hospice staff, counsellors, researchers.... For teachers, mentors, explainers, supporters, creators of resources....
- † build up the faith and do God's work among us: clergy, lay, theologians, bakers of cakes, washers of dishes and stackers of chairs, teachers, readers, prayers, community workers, quiet souls who bring grace among us....
- † Our families of all kinds, birth families, found families, church families, family who precede us in glory, the great and diverse Family of Mankind with all its glories and even all its horrors.

We pray for the people who have so much less than a fair share of the good things of life. Help us to share better with them.

We pray for the people who strive for justice and for peace and that we may be counted among them.

Pastorate News

Weoley Castle News

Sunday morning services: 11 am—except 5th October

Oct 5th : Harvest Festival led by members of WCCC—at 4 PM

Oct 12th : led by Melanie Smith—including communion

Oct 19th : Bible Study led by Carol

Oct 26th : led by Joe Bevan

Nov 2nd : Bible Study led by Sam

Sunday afternoons at 4 PM. These alternate between informal family services, with tea and eats, and community celebrations, with games and pizza—or food cooked by the community. These are led by Sam & Katie, Susie & Jonah.

Oct 5th & 19th: family service; Oct 12th & 26th: community celebration

Monday mornings: Debbie Flynn hasn't felt able to continue with her 'Swap Shop'. We recognise and thank her for all the hard work and dedication that she put into it. The Day Centres are particularly grateful for the wheelchair, bought with funds that she raised. The Church will continue to offer a **'Warm Welcome' on both Mondays and Fridays**, as Chris Hopkins will host a free café with snacks from 10 till about 11.30 on Mondays, while all the Friday activities will continue as usual from 9.30 till about 2.30.

A 'Foot-Man': Mo Yasin, a chiropodist is intending to come to the building in the morning on the second Monday of each month. On the notice board outside the vestry, there is a sign-up sheet for an appointment with him on Monday 13th October. His phone number is 07961069982.

Apples!: we hear that the Woodgate Urban Farm is having an ‘Apple Day’ from 11 AM to 2 PM on Saturday October 4th. Go and pick apples, or take some of your own to get apple juice from the press.

Flags: at least two residents of Weoley Castle have festooned their front gardens with bunting consisting of flags from all over the world. See the picture!



Commitment for Life: it is usual during October that we remember the URC's program of development aid—aiming to enable better “harvests” for people around the World. Envelopes for donations to this will be available during the month, and should be returned via the Church letterbox.

News of the Fellowship

Keith Twamley had a spell in hospital due to an infection but at the time of writing is glad to be back home again. **Diane and Keith** are looking forward to their **golden wedding celebration** on Saturday October 11th.

Susie Bateson has announced that she and Jonah are expecting in January!

Weoley Hill News

The retiring collection for October is for the YMCA.

Harvest service 12 October: this is a parade service with the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts taking part. **Please note:** *don't drop your offerings at the front as you come in. We are keeping the table empty and the young people will place your offerings on the table as part of the service. See the appeal from the Foodbank (P 14) for suggestions of what to bring. Also note: our Harvest lunch does **not** follow this service; instead we will join the Korean congregation on 19 October—see below.*
CT

The service on 19 October will be joint with the Korean congregation celebrating 42 years as a church—not all worshipping in our church building. It will be led jointly by Ann and their Pastor Samson, and will be of the style the Koreans use. They sing most of their hymns/songs in one slot and some prayers are part of the address. This will be followed by a joint 'bring and share' meal, so please get thinking what you will be able to provide.
Ann Evans

Remembrance: If anyone would like to support the Peace Pledge Union ,by purchasing White Poppies for Remembrance Day see Margaret Hurlston
There will be a selection arriving very soon .



Weoley Hill Calendar for October 2025

Sunday	5	10.30 AM: Worship & communion led by David Tennant
Wednesday	8	7.30 PM: Elders meeting
Sunday	12	10.30 AM: Harvest worship and parade service led by Ann Evans and uniformed groups.
Sunday	19	10.30 AM: Joint worship with the Birmingham Korean Church led by the Revd Samson Park
		CA NOON: Harvest/ anniversary thanksgiving bring & share lunch with the Korean Church
Monday	20	3 PM: F&B budget meeting
Sunday	26	10.30 AM: Worship led by Ian Carnell.

Tuesday Fellowship: 7 & 21 October, 10.30 AM. See Ann or Sue.

Community Choir: Fridays in term time, 6.45 PM. See Alan or Gordon.

Farm quiz

Many thanks to all those who attended the quiz on Saturday 20 September, based on Old MacDonald's Farm—his animals, crops and county show. Thanks to those who donated prizes for the raffle, which always raises half of our final donation, and special thanks to Emlyn for putting out tables and chairs, Gini and Cheryl for stalwart work in the kitchen washing up all those classes, cutlery and mugs, and to Norma, who was the scorer. This job was doubly important as for the first time we had a draw!

The outcome was decided by scores from the fill-in sheets based on garden plants and car manufacturers' logos, and the winning team, by only one point, was Gini and Kumaran Tambyraja, John and Richard Wilson, and Bob Mundell (lovely to see him after such a long time). They won garden bulbs, with the booby prize being a packet of 'cow' biscuits (Malted Milk).

We raised £178 for the foodbank at Cotteridge, including 2 small donations. Watch out for the next quiz in spring 2026. Unfortunately, the cost will rise due to the extra cost of the meal.

Lorraine DaCosta

From the Treasurer:

Here are this year's retiring collections up to this week.

Birmingham Crisis Centre	117.00
Birmingham Hospice	90.00
Brushstrokes	82.00
Corrymeela	65.00
Debt Justice	55.00
Sightsavers	77.00
St Basil's	136.00
Tearfund	70.15
The Leprosy Mission	91.00
Transform Trade	174.00
World Day of Prayer	213.15
Total Mission	£1,170.30

Changes to Church Banking

For many years the church has used Lloyds Bank plc (Lloyds) for our banking. The type of account has changed from time to time, but our use has always been free of charge. The present current account is called a "Treasurers' Account".

On 13th November 2025 this will change to a "Charity Account" but, sadly, the charity will stop and charges will be levied on the account.

Our banking use has changed over the years, partly due to the advent of on-line banking and partly due to reduced income from church members. I used to go to the local branch every week to bank cash and cheques. Now the only local branch is in Northfield and I usually go about once a month. The amount I deposit is variable but is often about £800- £900 (mixture of cash and cheques).

The new charges will mainly relate to our 'in branch' banking because we are allowed up to 100 electronic transactions per month free of charge. These are things such as Standing Orders, Direct Debits and bank transfers.

Paying in money at a branch will incur charges of 75p per £100 in cash and 50p per cheque. This is slightly reduced if the money is paid in via an Immediate Deposit Machine to 42p for both types of deposit (I'm not sure if those machines accept coins).

The use of an Immediate Deposit Machine requires a Debit Card which we don't have on our account because we operate a "dual" signature account. This means that cheques require two signatures and any on-line bank transfers require a second person to approve the transaction. We can have a Debit Card issued for the account but that would enable cash withdrawals to be made by only one person.

A Debit Card would have other benefits. It would enable paying in of cheques and cash at a Post Office. Using the Post Office has been an alternative option, pushed by Lloyds when they have been closing branches, but I have been unable to use it without a Debit Card for identifying the transaction.

Many charities which we support are paid by cheque as the only other alternative offered is by Credit Card on-line (their preferred method). This is the only time I use cheques on the church account.

Finally, it is worth noting that the church does have a card reader for deposits to our account. It does incur a small charge of 0.69% (69p per £100) but may be a convenient way for members to pay into the church account. Lack of use means that it usually stays in the Vestry but is always available.

- If you prefer to continue writing cheques could you perhaps add 50p to the amount you give, or could you consider changing to giving by Standing Order?
- If you already give by Standing Order, please ensure that you regularly (annually?) increase the amount you give and not just leave it at the same amount when you set it up. Inflation quickly devalues the amount.

David Marlow (Church Treasurer)

Part of gold award article *from URC website*

Now, reader, you might be wondering what steps are taken to achieve the Eco Gold Award for your Church. Well, it involves having an ethos that is environmentally focused which is the focus of your congregation and community. It also involves key documentation and processes such as a comprehensive land management plan and completion of Eco Church's online survey. The Eco Church Survey will tell you whether the answers that you have submitted make you eligible for a Bronze, Silver or Gold Eco Award. Eco Church will also want to interview people from within your Church's Eco team along with looking at your Climate Stewards 360-degree carbon footprint report.

To achieve their gold award, Wombourne URC wrote about the eco garden they planted for the wildlife as well as the Church and members of the public to reflect and enjoy God's creation. They also set up a Church notice board so passersby would be aware of events and service times. There are also reminders to switch off lights and heating as well as implementing temperature limiters in their meeting room. All "A" rated boilers have programmable timers, and many light bulbs are now LED. All toilets are dual flush and are each twinned ("twinning toilets" means you can donate to provide safe water, decent toilets and healthy hygiene to a country of your choice) and they are beginning to buy eco-friendly cleaning products. The congregation and other people who use the hall can also donate items that can be recycled and reused.

The Church's newsletter has a coloured photo each month which invites readers to be thankful for the natural world along with an eco-section that encourages readers to continue to search for and implement sustainable ways to look after the earth. Wombourne URC also have ties abroad and provide resources for those who live in Gambia so they can help themselves to access education and health care.

These implementations are among the wide variety of ways that congregations can continue to steward God's earth. This gives you a glimpse into the actions that lead to achieving a Gold Eco Award and are hopefully encouraged by seeing fellow brothers and sisters in Christ reach an incredible milestone! We, at the Synod, also want to encourage and congratulate everyone for all the hard work they are putting in at each of your churches and hopefully this article has encouraged you in continuing to steward God's creation!

Emma Wright,
Communications Officer

Editor's note: Recycling can be confusing, even if you have council guidelines. (When, that is, they collect recycling again.) These guidelines come from a website aimed at local councils and give an overall picture which may not always match what our council does, but I hope they will be helpful. I'll try to include one set each month. The web address is included below.

THE RECYCLING GUIDELINES:



<https://www.unisort.co.uk/what-can-and-cant-be-recycled-recycling-guide/>

YES PLEASE

All card from around the home. including:

- Cardboard boxes (e.g. cereal boxes, dishwasher tablet boxes).
- Corrugated cardboard.
- Online delivery boxes and cardboard envelopes (Remove all plastic inserts, polystyrene, and packing tape).
- Greetings cards without glitter (*Tear off the glitter section, as well as any badges and batteries—the glitter cannot be removed and the card has to be rejected.*)
- Egg boxes
- Brown paper.

NO THANKS

- Glitter covered greetings cards. (*Check for local recycling via either kerbside collections or collection points*)
 - Food and drink cartons.
- N.B: These guidelines are for materials commonly collected at kerbside rather than on the go' therefore do not include coffee cups or sandwich boxes*

Community news

Selly Oak Quakers

warmly invite you to our Quaker Week event
Love Your Neighbour: a Fundraiser for Palestine

at Selly Oak Quaker Meeting,
930 Bristol Road, Selly Oak B29 6NB.
on Saturday 4 October, 6.30-10 PM

A Chance to meet as neighbours and share what we are doing to
Love Our Neighbour in our religious communities

We will have a vegan and Halal Green Feast with flavours from
the Middle East.

A talk by Debby Flack about her time in Palestine as an
Ecumenical Accompanier and musical entertainment by Jazz Trio
"Outside up"

To help with numbers for catering please sign up to say you are
coming at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/love-your-neighbour-fundraiser-for-palestine-tickets-31514275045>



From the Cotteridge Church—

The B30 & South Birmingham Foodbank

Stocks of food are desperately low. In the four weeks leading up to Harvest. The B30 Foodbank will feed about 1000 local people by providing food parcels for individuals and families facing hardship. Since 2014, with your help. the B30 Foodbank has fed **over 100,000 local people about 1/3 of whom are children** through donated food distributed by a team of approximately 100 volunteers & no paid staff

Help to cover the costs of purchasing food, storing and distribution.

<https://b30.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/>

We are now buying most of our food from your donations.

Shopping list:

Tinned meat/fish

Tinned veg/fruit

Cooking sauces

Coffee (small jars)

Milk (UHT or powdered)

Fruit juice (long-life/non-fridge)

Tinned pudding

Jam

Rice 500g

Please include some of these items in your Harvest offerings.

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

An enormous harvest of apples this year!



1. Why are apples so bad in interrogations?
2. *What is worse than finding a maggot in your apple?*
3. What's the best thing to put into an apple pie?
4. *What can a whole apple do that half an apple can't do?*
5. How many apples do you need to make an apple pie?
6. *Why didn't the apple maggots go aboard Noah's Ark?*
7. Who led all the young apples away to the kitchen?
8. *What do you call an apple that walks sideways?*
9. If you had 4 apples and 5 oranges in one hand and 6 apples and 7 oranges in the other, what would you have?
10. *Why do Daleks eat apples?*
11. A friend told me that all apples are yellow...
12. *Did you hear about the apple juice that was spilled onto the computer keyboard?*
13. Did you hear about the two apples who fell in love and got married?

1. They always crumble.
2. *Finding half of a maggot.*
3. Your teeth.
4. *It can look round.*
5. 3.14 apples.
6. *They'd heard it was only for pears.*
7. The Pie Piper.
8. A crab apple.
9. Very large hands!
10. *Because an apple a day keeps the Doctor away ...*
11. I told him: 'that's bananas!'
12. *It was a cider attack.*
13. They lived appley ever after!

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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