



# Weoley Hill Church News



katsrcool

*March 2017*

*From the Minister—*

**Dear Friends**

Last Wednesday was Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. I want to invite you to enter into the wilderness this Lent! That doesn't sound like a very encouraging invitation does it.

I think Lent reminds us how Jesus was sent into the wilderness to be tested so that he might be strengthened and emerge knowing more fully what his life's purpose would look like. We can do the same. Lent is a time for self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study and preparation for Easter and so we might enter into the wilderness to wrestle with our own inner struggles; and in time emerge, knowing more fully who we are. So far, so good. But how?

I am writing just after I saw an article on the web entitled "Desert Survival—8 simple tips". I don't think the author intended this in any spiritual sense but it made me think (very painful!)

Five of the "tips" might offer some guidance for Lent 2017.

**1—Get under cover**

This is about finding shade in the desert and moving when the heat of the sun is not at its peak. This Lent we could take time out each day to reflect, to study and to wrestle with our own limitations. But we need to pace ourselves because forty days and forty nights is a long time to survive. The aim is to emerge enlightened and renewed, not burnt out and damaged. We need to be gentle with ourselves. So, take shelter, let God be our protective shade!

## **2 and 3—Don't guzzle the water and stay hungry**

In the inhospitable wilderness, it is essential to ration the water and to eat carefully. The article tells that the more we eat, the thirstier we will become; this means we need to consider rationing supplies. The time we set aside for daily reflection will become a precious thing; we will come away refreshed. If we ration that time with a discipline, we might even look forward to it! When choosing some reading material or reflection notes for the season of Lent, we should choose something that we really want to read and then make sure that we limit ourselves with a discipline. Don't read ahead, don't guzzle the water. That time each day will become very special as we wait to discover what will happen next.

## **4—Make your mark**

This survival tip from the desert is about increasing our chances of being saved. We should use the landscape and natural resources to mark out where we have been so that if there is an airborne rescue party looking for us then they will know where to find us. Crossing the desert during Lent can be an interesting journey and take us into unknown territory, keeping a record of the journey, perhaps through a journal, can help us find our way as we read, study and contemplate where God is in our life and in our actions.

## **5—Keep your mouth shut!**

The article was talking about how we lose moisture through our mouths in the desert, but we can all recognise what else this might mean: *silence*. Factor it into Lent. Be still, be silent, listen.

My final point has nothing to do with "Desert Survival!" It is healthy and appropriate to use Lent to take time with God and examine our priorities but we should never stop there. Lent is

not just about caring for our spiritual sides nor about giving up chocolate, wine or anything else for the duration.

Rather our reflection should lead to something positive, giving away the money we save from not eating chocolate biscuits, wine or whatever, or campaigning on behalf of those who are most vulnerable or have no voice in our communities or overseas, for example.

And remember, Lent lasts for forty days which doesn't include Sundays. Sunday is the day of resurrection, a day of celebration. So, not necessarily forty days of discipline!

Whatever we decide we should stick with it – and I pray that we find the Spirit renews our faith as walk the path of Jesus.

With my very best wishes

***David***



## *Personalia*

The funeral of Len Fisher will take place here on Friday 10 March at 2.15 PM, followed by a service at Lodge Hill Crematorium at 3.30 and refreshments later at Mortons in Northfield. Tea & coffee at the church. Please remember Josie and daughter Kay.

Graham Webb, the son of Iris and Ron, died suddenly while on holiday at the end of February. Please remember Iris, Ron, daughter Sue and all the family.

And please remember all the members of our fellowship who are mourning a loved one.

Please remember all who are ill, waiting for, or undergoing treatment: Ann Evans, Colin Graham, Deb Moriaty, Kath and Dave Upton, Primrose Garrow, Margaret Miles, David Littlejohns and Ian Ring



### *Notice from the Lettings Secretary:*

I shall be away from Sunday 26 March until Monday 10 April. During this period Cheryl Thornett will have the bookings diary. Her phone number is 0121 475 6338 and her email address is [cherylthornett@hotmail.com](mailto:cherylthornett@hotmail.com).

Rosemary Hay

## *Neighbourhood News*

*News and events from other local churches:*

**Selly Oak Methodist Church:** a talk on Global Warming & Climate Change from a Pacific Perspective, 7:30 PM, Wednesday 15th March

**Don't forget the Advice Cafés at Weoley Castle every Thursday.**

## **Outstanding Taekwondo**

In September last year we had a new class starting twice a week in our church hall for Taekwondo with Sang Young Park as the instructor. He has just informed me that he has been appointed as the British National Team Coach for Taekwondo and we must congratulate him on this great honour. It is good to have him coaching in our midst and not surprising that his classes are so successful.

Rosemary

# A Decade of Good Reading

The Weoley Reading Group celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in January this year—sadly I had failed to check the records and hadn't appreciated this landmark when we met that month. I think we will have to celebrate belatedly with cake when we next meet in March!

It was Pat Weaver's inspired idea to begin the group in 2006, and we met to discuss our first book—*The Island* by Victoria Hislop—on 18 January 2007 (we have since read 2 more of her books). Members were from both Weoley Hill and Weoley Castle churches, though we have since lost the Weoley Castle members, Debbie Keeves to family and work commitments, Audrey Stables to infirmity, and sadly Anne Izzard who died in 2015. We began with one solitary male reader, John Aitken, who was an enthusiastic member as long as his health permitted and introduced us to some interesting and challenging books.

Our number is now just 9, all ladies, but we are keen readers and tackle a wide variety of books as we take it in turns to choose the next book. Our meetings begin with a chat and a cup of tea or coffee and then we discuss our views on the relevant book, but this always leads to a much wider-ranging discussion which sometimes wanders far away from where we started! We certainly put the world to rights.

The book we will be discussing in March is the wonderful *The Garden of Evening Mists* by Tan Twan Eng. I am loving reading it, in my case for the second time, and will be interested to find out how everyone else enjoyed it (or not!) Over the years we have read classics, lots of modern fiction, history as well as historical fiction, satire, comedy, poetry and also the Book of Esther from

the Old Testament. 86 books in total, and if we are honest we would say that in all likelihood most of us would not have read many of them without the book group—but how thankful we are that we have been introduced to such a variety of works: from literature to detective stories, from the Bible to an Alan Bennett farce!

We meet roughly every 6 weeks so we have plenty of time to read each book. It would be lovely to have some new faces—male as well as female! Let me know if you would like to join us.

Christine Marlow

## **Pause for Hope**

Can we bring this special event to your attention? If you, or anyone you know, is affected by cancer you are invited to join with others to Pause for Hope at 3.00 PM on Sunday 19 March at St Chad's Cathedral. There will be opportunity during the service to light a candle as a prayer for someone with cancer or in memory of someone lost to cancer. It is an ecumenical service and all are welcome.

# FISH 'N' CHIP SUPPER AND QUIZ

This quiz was indirectly based on the works of Agatha Christie, titles from her books giving themes for the tenuously related questions. Thirty-seven people tried to solve the mysteries, using as many grey cells as possible to find out whodunit, wherewasit or even whatwasit before enjoying the usual excellent supper. The winners were Iris, Doreen and Tom and Nancy from church, plus Liz (banner group) and Rita (lunch club).

A total of **£118.50** was raised for **Traidcraft** and thanks must go to Nancy for organising the kitchen, even in the dire circumstance of a dishwasher breakdown, for all those who helped with the resultant washing and drying, for Alan organising the raffle ticket sale, for Jacob and Esther who did the collection of answers and for all those who helped clear up at the end. Perhaps a few more of you will attend the next one later this year!

Lorraine

## Retiring collections for March: Youth and Family Worker Fund

If anyone has not yet heard about this project, see Marilyn for details.

# FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Ten members took part in a *seated* triathlon to 'celebrate' St Valentine on Wednesday 8 February. The first event, while drinking tea or coffee and of course eating cake, was a Q&A session about this elusive figure.

*If* he did exist, it was as a very early figure in the Christian church, supposedly martyred in 273 by the prefect of Rome, Claudius II. He had unwisely tried to convert Claudius after being sent to Rome from his home town of Terni in northern Italy as a punishment for marrying Christian couples and preaching the gospel. A judge had earlier him arrested him but spent much time discussing Christianity with him and, after Valentine had cured his daughter of blindness, destroyed his household idols and had the whole family baptised.

While waiting for the execution to be carried out in Rome, the gaoler's daughter fell in love with Valentine and according to later legend he left her a letter signed 'from your Valentine'. His body was retrieved by his followers and several places lay claim to it. You might find it in Madrid from the 1700s, Dublin from 1836(they have a letter from Pope Gregory XV1 to prove it!), but also in Greece, France, Poland, Malta, Glasgow and even the Oratory in Birmingham has a reliquary containing the body! No church in England is dedicated to him.

The stories surrounding Valentine were mainly added in the fourteenth century and have been attributed to at least 11 saints of this name, one a woman, and because of their dubious origin and lack of facts he was removed from the General Roman Calendar in 1969. In the Middle Ages the middle of February was thought to be the time when birds chose their mates and it was believed in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century that the Ides of February (13-15) were when the festival of Lupercalia was celebrated in Rome, a festival dedicated to purifying the city, releasing good health and celebrating fertility. The idea was later discounted! He is the patron saint of lovers, marriage, engaged couples but also of plague, epilepsy, beekeepers and against fainting fits!

The second event was making a heart shaped packet, (looked easy but wasn't!) by weaving cunningly cut card. Finally, the packet was later used to take home heart-shaped biscuits which we decorated with different coloured icing and sprinkles. The hour passed quickly, with much talking and laughter, and thanks go to Nancy for providing the biscuits and the cake, the last few slices of which were distributed to everyone "for later!"

Our next meeting is **Wednesday March 8 at 2.15pm for a 2.30pm** start when we will be *Strolling in Slovenia* with John Davies. Come along to learn about this interesting country and bring a friend to hear our first speaker of the year.

Lorraine

## **Global Warming & Climate Change from a Pacific Perspective**

7:30PM, Wednesday 15th March 2017

Selly Oak Methodist Church, B29 6HT

A talk by Julia Edwards who is a mission partner with the Pacific Conference of Churches and the Methodist Church in Fiji. She has been researching climate change in the Pacific and advocating for climate justice globally since 2010, working alongside communities as they relocate, and market vendors so badly impacted by Cyclone Winston, Julia has a wealth of stories and information to share. You can get a flavour of Julia's work by reading her latest newsletter from Fiji. Jubilee Debt Campaign Birmingham wishes to support this event as part of our theme exploring damage being done in other parts of the world which have direct links with Birmingham, as we've been encouraged by Nick Hurd MP, the Climate Change Minister

# *Lent and Easter*

## ***Ecumenical Lent Groups***

Tuesday evenings at 7.30 PM in the Lower Hall

Wednesday mornings at 10.30 AM at St Mary's Vicarage

Thursday evenings at 7.30 PM at Selly Oak Methodist

## ***Lent Soup Lunches***

All on Saturdays from 12-2 PM.

4 March Selly Oak Methodist Church, Langleys Rd,

11 March St Mary's Church, Bristol Road,

25 March St Mary's Church, Bristol Road

8 April Weoley Hill United Reformed Church.

## ***Mothering Sunday***

26 March (AGM to follow worship)

## ***Joint Pastorate Worship & Communion***

at Weoley Castle at 11 AM, 2 April

## ***Palm Sunday All-Age Worship & Parade***

9 April

## ***Maundy Thursday Worship***

At St David's, 7.30 PM

## ***Good Friday Tenebrae Worship***

7.30 PM, an ecumenical service.

## ***Early Easter Contemplative worship***

with the minister at 7 AM, breakfast to follow

## ***Easter communion***

10.30 AM, with the Revd Brian Brown



Statement on the  
United Reformed Church  
Past Case Review

We have all made mistakes and we want to learn from those mistakes.

People have been hurt by bullying or abuse in churches in the past. Things went wrong and people may be carrying the hurt inside them. We want to learn from the past and do better in the future. The Past Case Review is a way for the United Reformed Church to listen and to learn.

We truly want to hear about any behaviour which may need challenging, or if you have been hurt in the past by anyone in the United Reformed Church.

If anyone who has had any connection with your church wishes to share something that has happened to them within any United Reformed Church, we would ask them to get in touch with the Past Case Review team.

We want our churches to be safer places, where people can grow without fear.

Telephone: 020 7916 8682

Website: [www.urc.org.uk/past-case-review](http://www.urc.org.uk/past-case-review)

Email: [pastcase.review@urc.org.uk](mailto:pastcase.review@urc.org.uk)

Further resources and information are available online at [www.urc.org.uk/past-case-review](http://www.urc.org.uk/past-case-review)

# WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

## PRAYER DIARY

*From Isaiah 40: 28-31*

The Lord is the everlasting God; he created all the world. He never grows tired or weary... He strengthens those who are weak and tired... Those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed.

	<b>Church members</b>	<b>A prayer</b>
<b>WK 1: 5- 11 March</b>	Lorraine DaCosta Gary Davenport Ken Davenport John Davies	Our father God, you know the joys and the stresses of our daily lives. Grant us the assurance that you will give us the strength to meet each day's needs and the peace to rest in that knowledge. May our lives then be lived fully in and for you. Amen
<b>WK 2: 12 -18 March</b>	Seana Davies Corinne Dawson Roland & Arrah Ebot-Arrey, Reyan & Malcolm Rob & Anila Edge, Oliver & Yona	
<b>WK 3: 19 - 25 March</b>	David & Geraldine Evans Emlyn & Ann Evans Samantha Evans, Chelsea, Mikey, Kayden & Chase	
<b>WK 4: 26 Mar - 1 April</b>	Marius & Jennifer Felderhof Margaret Field Josie Fisher John Fletcher	

*NOTE: As always, please feel free to send any feedback on the 'Prayer Diary' and specific prayer requests that you would like to include in future lists to Sue Beeby*