

Weoley Hill Church News



January 2018

From the Church Secretary

Some of us are very glad to see the back of 2017. Of course it has been a mixed year, as all years and all times are, but too much of this one seems like a continuation of the worst of 2016, and there have been too many losses. There are the deaths—Val Cotgreave, Len Fisher, Robert Cope, Jean Greening, Brian Wood, and of course the death of the minister, David Littlejohns, so soon after his ministry with us had started. And some of our older members are no longer able to worship with us, having moved into care facilities during the past year or so—Corinne Dawson, José Marsland and Edna Bayliss.

At the start of 2017, we didn't think we would be back in vacancy at the start of 2018, with all that means.

It's hard to keep going after one blow, never mind a series of blows. It's hard to see where God's will can be—or how God can will tragedies, whether personal or global. It can hurt or make us angry when people trot out platitudes about 'all things work for good', even if they are Biblical platitudes. And it's just plain hard work to be done by ever fewer hands.

Last January we were praying for Ian Ring's recovery from illness and anticipating David's ministry, but some things are the same, We still need to take a hard, realistic, prayerful look at where we are and what lies ahead. The elders are formulating some Mission Pledges for the next few years, based on the challenges we face and the priorities (such as youth and family work) that we have already identified. We will revamp our Profile in line with this, As Weoley Hill and as part of the Cadbury Pastorate, we need to pray, to adapt, to listen, to be willing to give up what we have 'always done' to further our work and witness. We have to

accept that nothing human is perfect, but to hope and pray for the best.



Looking to the future:

Monday evenings are no longer a good time for the *very* small Prayer Group, so this needs to be re-scheduled and perhaps re-thought. While prayer does not depend on being in a particular place at a particular time, it is good to pray together.

We hope to arrange a second First Aid training session.

I hope to arrange a visit from the local organiser of *Open the Book*, to tell us more about how volunteers are bringing the Bible to life for primary children, and how we can be involved in this Bible Society project—the slide show and script for *The longest journey*, as presented by Junior Church, are examples of the Bible Society’s work for youngsters. This could also be an opportunity not just to work together as a pastorate, but ecumenically with other local churches.

During Lent, there will be a series of ecumenical talks with discussion on *Faith in the workplace*—Ted Forgan is part of the panel—which will take place here on Wednesday evenings. We hope to have a Tuesday afternoon Bible Study as well, so if anyone knows of good study materials, please pass the information on.

In prayer and in love.

Cheryl

Personalia

Our sympathies to Kath Wood and family on the death of Brian on 12 December.

Tom Bradley is recovering from surgery.

Please remember everyone who is ill or undergoing treatment in your prayers, particularly Audrey Stables from Weoley Castle.

And please remember those members and former members who now reside in care homes.



Benevolent Fund

This fund, separate from both the regular Sunday collections and the other monthly retiring collections, enables the minister to distribute funds where he sees the need within the congregation or community. During the vacancy, the elders take responsibility for the fund. There continues to be a need to help out from time to time in very special cases and it is therefore important that we keep sufficient money in the account to be able to respond to urgent needs. Please respond as generously as you are able to our retiring collection this month.



Toy Service



We have received thanks from Birmingham Crisis Centre and from John and Lyn Ankcorn for the gifts of toys, which were delivered on time despite the snow.

Neighbourhood News

News and events from other local churches:

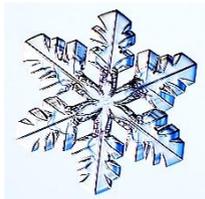
Carrs Lane Players:

perform *Pools Paradise* by Philip King at The Church at Carrs Lane on Thursday and Friday 22 & 23 February 2018 at 19.30 and Saturday 24 February 2018 at 18.30. Tickets are £7.

Pre-play suppers will be served on Thursday and Friday 22 & 23 February 2018 at 18.00, costing £5, and afternoon tea on Saturday 24 February at 17.00, costing £4.



Thanks to everyone who prepared and led our Christmas services, especially to Alan for his Christmas Eve and Christmas Day marathon! Thanks also to Junior Church for presenting 'The longest journey' and for rescheduling it on the 31st after the original service was snowed out.



FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Our special Festive High Tea on Wednesday 13 December was a new idea and was very well received by the 18 people who attended, despite the snow and rainy weather. Thanks to David and Chris Marlow , Cheryl and Lorraine for clearing the car park!. There was a selection of finger sandwiches (turkey and cranberry sauce, beef and horseradish, cream cheese and cucumber, and cheese and onion chutney), with mini pork pies, and a further selection of mini cakes (meringue creams, scones with clotted cream and strawberry jam, and of course mince pies and mini Christmas cake), all served with fresh tea and coffee at each table. It was all very civilised and enabled everyone to sit and have a chat with people they do not normally sit with, plus there was enough for all visitors to take home a 'doggy bag' for later! All monies raised will be used for any expenses in 2018 when we already have a range of speakers and activities planned, with hopes to see more of our regular, and perhaps new, members. Thanks to all those who helped prepare the room and also prepare and serve the food.... Doreen Bradley, Rita Byford, Lorraine DaCosta, Deborah Moriarty, and Nancy Nicholls.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 10 January, 2.15 for 2.30 pm start, when we hope to have two Ladies from our Korean/English Chat group to give us an idea of their life in South Korea and how this compares with life in Britain. Please come along to support them and find out how "others see us".

Lorraine DaCosta

LUNCH CLUB

Thirty two people sat down to the Christmas meal served on 8 December. They were welcomed by a cup of mulled wine before sitting down to a starter of chestnut soup, followed by turkey, pigs-in-blankets, stuffing, roast potatoes, sprouts and carrots, with bread and cranberry sauces. Lastly Christmas pudding and cream or custard filled any spaces before a final hot drink. Michael Walpole thanked all the cooks and helpers for all the meals provided over the year and generously gave each one a bottle of wine. Many thanks to him and, of course, all the helpers in the catering group who give of their time in the menu planning and administration, the purchase and preparation beforehand and with the serving and clearing up afterwards: Linda Bradley, Doreen Bradley, Rita Byford, Lorraine DaCosta, Gill Hitchin, Norma Johnson (vegetarian option), Deborah Moriarty, Nancy Nicholls, Gini Tambyraja, and Cheryl Thornett. A great team who provide this valuable community service.

The first Lunch Club of 2018 took place on Wednesday 3 January, with butternut and sweetcorn soup, sausage and bean casserole, baked potatoes, broccoli and chocolate bread-and-butter pudding. The price is likely to rise to £5 soon—please see Nancy if this will make it difficult for you to attend.

Lorraine DaCosta

RETIRING COLLECTIONS 2018

The following are the approved collections for next year. We have 5 ongoing commitments*, and # are new charities that we haven't supported before.

Donations for cakes are regularly requested as well as requests for spectacles, tools and stamps so many thanks to all those who contribute. Will recorders please submit the information about the suggested charity to Cheryl the month before the collection.

Month	Charity	other event or collection
January	Benevolent Fund*	
February	Leprosy Mission*	Fairtrade .quiz
March	"The Project", (previously South B'ham Young Homeless)	
April	Chance for Childhood (Africa)#	
May	Corrymeela*	Christian Aid
June	Jubilee Debt *	
July	RNLI (Lifeboats)#	
August	Heart of England# (B'ham) Heart Foundation#	
September	Amnesty International	Harvest/Commitment. 4 Life
October	Youth & Family worker*	Y&FW .quiz
November	Birmingham Crisis Centre (for victims of domestic violence)	Autumn fair
December Christmas	SHELTER	Toy Service

Lorraine DaCosta

Song of the Southlands

“Go south,” the swallows called to me
As they gathered on the telephone wires,
Conferring, trading traveller’s tales
Of lands and places they had seen,
From Tripoli, Sorrento and Trier
By which they found their way.

“Go south, from your poor passing sun
Whose summer days, though fat with gnats,
Are far too short, the autumns chill
When nights draw on, and winters long.
Go south with us, to rolling, golden hills,
Whose poplars spear the arcing sky.”

“Go south, now, to the lands we love,
Where broad, brown rivers constant flow
From mountains whose eternal snows
Reach upwards for the kiss of sun;
Majestic waters, surging, swelling,
Rolling onwards to the sea.”

“Go south,” my yearning soul replied,
With longing heart and restless feet,
“To see again those valleys dark,
O’er hung with olive groves and vines
Rich with the harvest of the sun
And soft with breezes off the hills.”

“Go south” and so I walked their way,
Through Schwartzwaldtal and Alpine peaks,
Down Rhineland ways, Donau and Po
To Garda, Tuscany and Lombardy
Then slowly homewards, yet
My heart was not content.

“Go south,” I said, “The little I have seen
Is not enough, it cannot be. Those longings,
Raised, will haunt my winter nights.”
Like lovers calling, clasping to their hearts,
I hear them still, “Go south again,
Go south, once more, to stay.”

John Davies

WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH PRAYER DIARY

*The LIGHT shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.
John 1:5*

JAN 2018	CHURCH FAMILY	THE WIDER COMMUNITY
WK 1: 7 -13 Jan	Ursula Aitken Edna Bayliss Sue Beeby	Pray to our God of Hope: for hope in the Middle East;
WK 2: 14 - 20 Jan	Mary Bevin Iris Bird Jim Brackley	For hope for those who have had to flee their homes and for political prisoners;
WK 3: 21 - 27 Jan	Linda Bradley Tom and Doreen Bradley Joy Brain	For hope for reduced tensions between nations; For greater moves to protect Earth's environment;
WK 4: 28 Jan- 3 Feb	Jane Byford Bill Campbell Kay Campbell	For hope for our country's future as negotiations with the EU continue.

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

You may wish to add other members of the families mentioned to your prayers.