

Weoley Hill Church News



October 2019

From the Minister's study—

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

While a bit later than usual, we will celebrate Harvest on the 20th of October when we give thanks again for the beauty of the earth and the abundance of its fruits that we enjoy. As a community of faith we will affirm again that 'the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.' (Psalm 24:1) And certainly many other Psalms will come to mind that express joy and thanksgiving for the goodness and generosity of the earth, God's creation, which is both God's possession and God's gift. We are merely living on God's property and of God's charity. That is a biblical understanding that helps us to be grateful and express our gratitude in our Harvest service. But not only does it help us to be grateful but it also reminds us of our responsibility to care for the earth... 'to till it and keep it' (Genesis 2:15), not to abuse it or destroy it!

Many years ago, when we lived and worked in Grenada, my parents would come over each year to stay with us for a few weeks. One year our church, the Presbyterian Church in Grenada, invited my father to give a talk about 'the rights of future generations and the environment.' At the time my father was professor of Philosophy of Law writing a book on the subject of our responsibility to future generations and the 'rights' that future generations have to inherit the earth 'in all its beauty and bounty' (my words). It was an interesting evening, not in the least because in the discussion that followed a young woman in the audience spoke out, with utmost conviction: 'Surely we have nothing to worry about. God is in control. God will rescue us (from environmental

disaster).' Well, if God is in control, if God is going to deliver us, God better get on with it! No, rather, we have been given the freedom and responsibility to care for the natural world in all its amazing diversity and abundance.

At the time, those many years ago, we just started to talk seriously about global warming and climate change but, given our inadequate response, we now have moved on to talk about a climate 'crisis' or climate 'breakdown'. And already one of those 'future generations' is now rising up, protesting and demanding their 'right' to inherit a clean and healthy environment and habitable and sustainable world.

I was really moved by the speech that Greta Thunberg delivered to the UN in which she said, *'You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words....People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction. And all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!'* and at the end of her speech she talks of the betrayal felt by young people. *'The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say, we will never forgive you. We will not let you get away with this....And change is coming, whether you like it or not.'*

Change is coming....and we have to change! We are called to change our ways, making the necessary lifestyle changes in order to become less dependent on fossil fuel, to reduce our carbon emissions, reducing, reusing and recycling (eg to preserve vital natural resources), eating less meat, etc. And we are to demand of our government and of leaders in industry

and business to show moral courage and commitment to take real action.

Worry and fear should not paralyze us, but hope should spur us to action. Hope that is grounded in many stories of empowerment and courage that we read about in Scripture, in the media and that we know from personal experience. It is hope, not despair, love, not fear that will inspire us to respond faithfully to the challenges that we are faced with. We share a vision that another world is possible – a world envisioned in the first chapter of Genesis when God called creation to be 'good, very good'.

So let us give thanks for God's good creation, for 'the seed-time and the harvest, for life, health and food' but let our harvest celebration include the commitment to change our ways in recognition that 'the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof' and that 'we do not inherit the land from our ancestors but borrow it from our children.' (Origin of quote unknown)

Do come and join the All Age Harvest service on the 20th of October and you are very welcome to the bring and share Harvest lunch after!

With all best wishes,

Leonora

USE YOUR (ECO) L.O.A.F.

Not just bread of course, but any food that is **Local, Organic, Animal Friendly and Fairtrade**. Locally produced food doesn't just help the local economy but obviously cuts down on transport costs both financial and in terms of fuel and its carbon footprint. If you can walk there so much the better, or perhaps try to get everything in one go and don't forget to take re-useable bags. **Organic** vegetables are not sprayed with chemicals, which may kill off the good pollinators as well as the bad, and organic meat is from animals which are reared fairly and humanely, which is also the third 'slice' of the 'LOAF'. Labelled free range eggs and meat with the red tractor symbol are indicators of these. Lastly try to buy **Fairly** traded goods. After many years successful marketing, there are many supermarkets that now sell such goods. Look for the green and blue yin/yang symbol not just on food but on clothes and sometimes jewellery and ornaments. These goods support local farmers and workers in poorer areas and offer fairer prices and better working conditions. The church always uses Fairtrade coffee and tea and you can order Fairtrade Christmas cards soon. You may not be able to use or buy all the 'LOAF' items, which can be a little more expensive, but if you can remember even one item occasionally you will be doing your bit for the environment

Lorraine DaCosta



Personalia

Alan and Joel Cotgreave hiked up Snowden last month on behalf of a Nishkam High School charity.

Please remember the people in our fellowship who are suffering long-term illnesses and the people caring for them.

Please remember children in new classes or schools, or beginning exam years, the new intake of university students and anyone moving to a new stage of their life.



Harvest

Remember Harvest Sunday is 20 October this year. We will be decorating the church on the afternoon of the 19th, so you can bring things in then if you like. As always, any fresh produce will go to the Salvation Army to provide meals, and staple items will go to Birmingham City Mission.

There is a bring-and-share lunch afterwards, and we hope members of the Birmingham Korean Church will join us.

Neighbourhood News

News and events from other local churches:

Bournville and **Weoley Castle** have *Harvest* services today. (6 October)

Bournville has *Christian meditation* on 2nd & 4th Thursdays—the 10th and 24th this month.

Weoley Castle: *Free Family fun day* with a Christmas theme, lunch included, 10 AM-3 PM on Tuesday 29 October (half term).

October Retiring Collection for Médecins Sans Frontières

Médecins Sans Frontières brings medical help to victims of conflict, natural disasters, epidemics or health exclusion.

When we hear of disasters or conflicts, we often hear of MSF being there bringing aid and medical help to the victims. Sometimes they are the sole or main agency able or willing to stay in dangerous or difficult areas. Sadly, we occasionally hear of attacks on MSF workers.

As well as providing immediate response to situations, MSF also trains local workers, leads vaccination programmes, organises and manages health facilities and co-ordinates relief organisations. The provision of shelter, drinking water and latrines is also a vital part of their work.

Apart from being on the front line, MSF works with those who are unable to access healthcare because they are forced to live outside mainstream society, such as prisoners, street children, sex workers, migrants, drug addicts, the mentally ill, slum dwellers and communities affected by criminal violence and gang warfare.

Sue Beeby

Proverbs 31.8

Safeguarding the vulnerable

On Saturday 14 September Lorraine, Sue, Linda and Norma attended a full day course on safeguarding children and adults at risk entitled *Thirtyone, eight* (Proverbs). It was evident from the start that this was relevant, not just for those in posts such as Junior Church, but for everybody. We are all responsible for noticing the signs of abuse in others. Likewise, we can all be vulnerable and at risk at some time and in need of extra care and support. The reasons for this could be grief, loss, illness, disability, poor mental health, dementia, learning difficulties, etc.

There are four types of abuse recognised in children: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Children may display physical harm, anxiety, self-harm, depression, neglect in hygiene, etc.

In vulnerable adults there are nine forms of abuse: neglect, financial, psychological, domestic, discriminatory, sexual, physical, organisational and modern slavery.

If you do notice anything that seems 'not normal', or someone talks to you about the stressful situation that he/she is in, it's important to just listen and let them know of your care and support, but not to ask questions and influence the conversation. Then (with the person's consent) it should be reported to a safeguarding officer only (either Norma Johnson or Leonora Jagessar), who will then take the necessary steps.

If it is a child who is giving concern, it **must** be reported, no consent necessary. It is important that in either case, complete confidentiality is exercised.

Therefore the five points to remember are:

- 1) Recognise—signs and symptoms
- 2) Respond—show love and care
- 3) Record—mental or written (with consent of adults)
- 4) Report—to safeguarding officer
- 5) Reflect—don't investigate concerns yourself and don't discuss with others.

If an adult does not give consent for you to share information, consider: is there anyone else at risk, has a crime been committed, does he/she understand the implications, will he/she, or someone else, come to serious harm? The victim may need the information to help understand the risks.

On a positive note, we are a caring congregation and always look out for each other. A revised safeguarding policy will be put on the notice board for everyone to familiarise themselves with, so please read it and continue caring.

Norma Johnson



FRIENDSHIP GROUP

PROGRAMME 2019-2020

After some discussion it was decided to reduce the number of events throughout the year. The following is the proposed programme for next season, mostly the second Wednesday of the month.

October 9	2.30	Talk about a visit to The Golden Triangle, India. Lorraine's house
November 13	2.30	Talk by speaker from the Leprosy Mission , which we support annually JK Hall
December 10	3.00 PM. Note time	"High Tea at the Ritz"(almost!)... £5 pp JK Hall
2020		
February 12	2.30 PM	Pancake Party to coincide with Lent. Donations if possible, please. JK Hall
April 8.	2.30 PM	Short or Medium walk around Cannon Hill Park. Cafe later Meet there. Lifts arranged.
May 16, Saturday	2.-4 PM	Bring and Buy for Christian Aid JK Hall
July 8	2.30	Garden Party. Bring a plate of something if you can. 54 Middle Park Road

There *may* be further short walks arranged (there are 24 parks in Birmingham!) if these prove popular but further details of all events will be available in that month's newsletter. All events are open to **everyone** not just church members so do invite a friend, or friends, if you think they would find it interesting, beneficial or just tasty!

Lorraine DaCosta

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

Last year Chris Grubb organised the provision and raffle of two Christmas hampers which raised £158 for **Shelter**, our Christmas collection. She would like to do the same again and is asking for support in the provision of items during October, and up to the raffle draw on Wednesday 3 December at the Christmas lunch. To ensure we don't have 24 tins of ham and nothing else there will be a tick sheet in the JK hall. If you feel you can offer something on the list, (non-perishable food or 'smellies') or some money to buy items, please just tick the item or contact Chris. Tickets will be on sale from 3 November price £1 each.

Lorraine DaCosta



Thanks from the Mamie Martin Fund

Dear Mr Evans - thank you so much for the very generous donation of £265 from members of the Weoley Hill URC Church - and I will ensure that this donation is allocated to the Thompson Scholarship Fund. The Mamie Martin Fund is managing this Fund on behalf of the Scotland Malawi Partnership and two girls are starting school about now having been awarded Thompson Scholarships. Donations - like the one from your good selves - are still being received but a start has been made on awarding the Scholarships to meet the beginning of the academic year. The kindness and generosity of church members is much appreciated. With many thanks again and all good wishes

Hazel Dawson

Administrator - Scotland

Notes from the Secretary

Please ensure that no inappropriate items are flushed down the loos—we have had more than one blockage recently. If you notice anything, please tell an Elder or member of F&B.

This month: There is a *residential Synod* from the evening of the 11th to the 12th. Ann Evans and Cheryl Thornett will represent Weoley Hill. Ann will collect the *prayer books and diaries* that were ordered.

Are you happy with the form and content of our worship? Is there something you particularly like or dislike, or is there something you wish we did? Be ready to discuss our worship on Sunday 27 October, when Alan Cotgreave is leading worship.

Coming up in November: Do you have any ideas for *Remembrance Sunday*, especially pertaining to the outbreak of WWII? See Ann.

Another Pastorate reflection day at Bournville, Saturday 16 November from 10-2.30. The theme is *Preparing for Christmas: learning to walk in the darkness.* Bring a packed lunch.

Another *fabulous Quiz night* with a fish and chips supper, 30 November.

We are still waiting for a quote for the additional work to be done on the rafters in the organ loft area.

The Church Secretary will be away from 8-15 November.

Cheryl Thornett

Weoley Hill Village Council, Scouts
and Cricket Club present their annual

BONFIRE &

TICKETS ON THE GATE : ADULTS £7 CHILDREN £3 UNDER 4 YRS FREE

Fireworks Display

Saturday 2nd November 2019

GATES OPEN AT 6PM IN THE PARKWAY BY WEOLEY VILLAGE HALL

Bonfire lighting 6.30pm - Fireworks 7pm

ADVANCE TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM

Advanced tickets : Adults £5 Children £2 under 4yrs Free

Weoley Hill Village
Hall B29 4AD
Tues & Thurs
6.30pm -7.30pm
from 15th October
to 31st October &
Saturdays from
10am-2pm from
19th October to
2nd November

Shenley Court Hall B29 4ED
from 14th Oct - 1st Nov
Mon to Fri 9.30am-10.30am
& 3.30pm - 4.30pm

BVT Head Office B30 1QY
Mon -Fri 10am -4pm
from 14th Oct to 1st Nov

WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

PRAYER DIARY

Give thanks to the Lord because he is good; his love is eternal. Ps 136:1

	Church members	Topical prayers
WK 1: 7th-13th Oct	John Glen Colin Graham Christine Grubb Rosemary Hay <i>Witherford Way & Close</i>	The building of good relations within the locality as more street associations result from the recent initiative.
WK 2: 14th-20th Oct	Gill Hitchin Norma Johnson Betty Johnston <i>Greenmeadow & Hemyock Roads</i>	Those affected by the hurricane in the Bahamas. For bold initiatives to be taken globally to lesson our impact on climate change.
WK 3: 21st-27th Oct	Daniel & Dora Kyereh Sharon Letissier & Hannah <i>Swarthmore & Presthope Roads</i>	For peace in Yemen. That food and basic resources become available.
WK 4: 28th Oct- 3rdNov	Doreen Longman Sam & Alex Lukwago David & Christine Marlow Jose Marsland <i>Hollybrow, Long Leasow, & St Denis Road</i>	For Christians in the Central African Republic who have had to flee their homes and land, having continued to be targeted since the civil war.

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

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