

Weoley Hill Church News



November 2017

From the Church Secretary

Dear friends

We've spent such a lot of time grieving recently, it seems. We had hoped that David would provide leadership and inspiration. And now we have lost a member, elder and good friend to many of us, Jean Greening, after a year which has seen the loss of members, former members, and family. I hope this season of saints, souls and remembrance will bring healing and hope.

This is not where we had hoped and prayed we would be when we were preparing for David's induction and ministry, but we can only carry on and pray and work for the future.

The residential Synod last month, on themes of mission and discipleship, offered some inspirational thoughts and ideas that are not beyond our reach. The elders will be thinking, talking and praying about what our mission is at their study day—what do you see as our mission? As Weoley Hill; as a Pastorate.... I hope we all join in this search.

Some of us were introduced to *Open the Book*, a programme devised by the Bible Society to take Bible stories into primary schools. Mark Tubby says some Weoley Castle schools would love to have groups come in, and a member of Bournville said the same about her school. This struck me as a great thing to do, and a project that the Pastorate could undertake together. I think a lot of us would really enjoy this, and for many children the project brings their first knowledge of the Bible.

We also saw examples of community activities that other churches run, some of which we could certainly consider as an

addition to the Community Choir and the Community Garden.
Are there any more ideas?

In the meantime, we are about to begin a 6-week course of Bible Study leading up to Christmas, using a guide from the Scottish Bible Society. Please sign up for a study—if there is enough demand for a different time, we can always add a session.

Cheryl Thornett



Bible Study

‘Advent’ Bible studies begin early this year, on Tuesday 14 (2 PM in the Small Hall) or Friday 17 November (10 AM--see Sue Beeby). We are using a study from the Scottish Bible Society *Conversations* series which looks at Old and New Testament readings about the Messiah.

Mark Tubby's poem in memory of David

As I begin to write, I think, it was all too brief, but then
You've given us many treasures that I can share, my friend
I remember sitting, sharing, crying, laughing, in your study
Planning life, discussing things, and drinking lots of tea
I reckon I was quite a pain with all the questions that I asked
And when *the ministry* came up you steered me on the path
You said "the more I think about it the more that I think yes"
So, when I look at where I am now, God spoke to you, I guess
And what about the time you broke down our old back door
There isn't many ministers who'd do that, I'm pretty sure
You know, David, you were there for us through lots of thick and thin
And I try to follow that example, well, perhaps every now and then
It tells us how Jesus himself blessed the children, in Matthew
So, you followed his example, and blessed both of our two
In troubled times for us, you were really quite a stubborn rock
I know you were far from being well, but you always took the knocks
I remember how Iona seemed to equip and inspire you for more
We travelled up with you, I saw why, sitting on the quiet shore
And I smile when I think of you, sitting on Worthing beach one day
Wrapped up in woolly blankets, while the children went to play
You've given us memories that I will hold and I will cherish
So, may God bless and hug your family, is now my biggest wish.
Thank you David, I will miss you, my friend!

Mark Tubby

Personalia

Jean Greening died on Tuesday, 24 October. We will celebrate and give thanks for her life here on Wednesday 8 November at 11 AM. Please remember her family in your prayers.

Please also remember: The Marlow's grandsons, who have been ill; Séana Davis, who has been in hospital with an infection; Edna Bayliss, who has a badly-broken hip, Kath and Dave Upton, Hilary Littlejohns and family.



Cheryl Thornett would like to thank everyone who helped to make her 70th birthday such a special occasion, especially Nancy and Lorraine for all their help in setting things up. The collection for Breast Cancer Care came to about £300, including a couple of donations sent directly to the charity. Many thanks for the donations.

Neighbourhood News

News and events from other local churches:

Bournville URC: Meditation Group at 3 PM on 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month.

Weoley Castle: Lunch Mondays and Fridays at 12 NOON.
Support Cafe 10 AM-1 PM every Thursday. Advice cafe, Carers' cafe, Arts Cafe, or chat.

Barnes Close: Reflection Day 10 am to 4 pm on Thursday 9 November.

First aid training

Monday 27 November, 3.30 to 5.30 pm

Focussing on first aid for older people.

Led by a Red Cross First Aid trainer

The elders and F&B are very pleased that this training is being made available to us. Places are limited to 15, so we are asking Elders and people with Health & Safety responsibility to sign up first, with any remaining places going to anyone interested. See Cheryl.

AUTUMN FAIR

Are you ready for this year's event on **Saturday 18 November from 2 - 4 PM**? We are going to operate a *jar tombola* instead of our usual bric-a-brac stall and as usual we need your help. Therefore we are asking for donations of things in jars. These could be jams, pickles, sauces in fact **anything** in a jar bought fresh from any retailer.

Perhaps you could be a little more inventive? Using a **clean** jar, any size, **fill** it with one of the following... chocolates, cotton wool balls, jewellery, money, perfume, sewing kit, soaps, stationary, sweets, toiletries, toys in fact anything you think would make a good prize, (but no alcohol in case a child wins). Obviously the more jars we have the more money we can raise and we are aiming for 100 jars to raise £100. You can give donations to me at any time up to and including the afternoon of the fair, but the earlier the better so jars and tickets can be prepared.

There will be stalls from the Guides and Scouts, Traidcraft Christmas cards, handicrafts and a model train display as well as the usual books and of course cakes (more donations needed here please!) and refreshments. Money raised will go to our Youth and Family Worker fund so do come along to support the church in our endeavours to begin this work.

Lorraine DaCosta



FRIENDSHIP GROUP

A mixed group came together to discuss their experiences of **breast and prostate cancer**, either directly or of family and friends. We learnt that the biggest cause of unnecessary deaths was late diagnosis of both types. Thankfully the perceived stigma that used to surround this disease, and which then caused many agonising deaths in the past as people refused to visit a doctor, or even talk about it, has declined. Even so there are still cases where women try to ignore any lumps and, as with men, sometimes by the time symptoms are causing problems it is too late for successful treatment.

Although the regular mammogram screening for women stops at age 70 you can still request a test after that, and younger women may also ask for tests as it has been found that the cancer is more aggressive and quicker in that age group. In a few cases even pre-pubescent girls can be screened if there is a concern and it must be remembered that some men also develop breast cancer. There is a physical examination and a blood test available to confirm suspected prostate cancer.

Nowadays tumours the size of a grain of rice can be detected and there are many treatments available, not all of which may be used, and may be used to differing degrees, for the individual patient. *Chemotherapy* has a wide range of side effects, some temporary and some occasionally permanent. It impairs the immune system and causes hair and nail damage. There may be a rash, or numbness of the fingers and toes may cause a patient to drop things or bruise feet, and they may become photosensitive. Chemotherapy may be given by tablet, injection, or through a tube inserted into the arm or chest, so that the chemicals are infused directly into the blood stream. This could be every 3 weeks for 4 months, but higher doses for shorter times or vice versa, or more frequent treatments, are also used for different patients, and the tubes need to be flushed and cleaned on a weekly basis. A newer form of *radiotherapy* involves the insertion of

tiny radio-active particles directly into the cancer, rather than using a large x-ray machine, and there are different types of *surgery* according to the position and size of the tumour. Some tumours react positively to a regime of anti-oestrogen or anti-androgen tablets and all these treatments are being refined all the time so that what was done 20, or even 10, years ago may not be appropriate now. Better screening and pathology means that sometimes chemotherapy is not needed. This avoids the side effects of chemotherapy, but the process is very expensive at the start, although cheaper in the long run as there is less medication required later.

After active treatment is stopped there are regular check-ups with hopefully no reappearance elsewhere within two years, and discharge given usually after 5 or 10 years. This does not mean cancer will not recur; it means that the chances of a re-occurrence are similar to someone who has not had cancer before.

There may be a link between testicular and breast cancer within a wider family group and women with close relatives who have had breast cancer are advised to be particularly vigilant. Cancer charities are campaigning to have more accurate statistics kept. Some doctors previously used different names for the same cancer; some used the same name for differing types; even now some hospitals do not report secondary or recurring cancer as a separate issue ; private hospitals do not always report statistics to the NHS at all. Macmillan and Marie Curie nurses can be helpful but there is no local support group for patients in this area and so they could feel isolated and get fearful. On-line chats are often beneficial but friends and family are very important both as a physical help and a listening ear. Cancer is **not** catching, is **not** the patient's fault, is **not** the result of a bad lifestyle and it is now known mutated cells of some kind are within all of us. **Many thanks to Cheryl Thornett and Liz Roberts** for sharing their experiences with us.

Our next meeting is an illustrated talk by **Christine and David Marlow** about their wonderful holiday cruise from “Singapore to Petra” on Wednesday 8 November 2.15 for 2.30 PM start. Do come along to travel with them on this interesting journey. Advance notice of our **Christmas meal** on 13 December. It will **not** be our usual lunch, following the previous week’s traditional three course cooked meal, but we have planned a “Special Festive High Tea” at 2.30 PM. (The Ritz will be jealous although we don’t have champagne!) **Everyone** is invited whether you are a regular or occasional member or have never been before. Cost is £5 so come along to meet old friends and perhaps make new ones. We will be taking bookings from now!

Lorraine DaCosta

Fish and Chip Supper and Quiz

The 26 people who boarded the train for the Severn Valley Railway quiz on Saturday 7 October kept on track to the end of the line and managed to raise £73 for the Youth and Family Work fund, with which we were very chuffed! Unfortunately we were not able to receive the reduced cost meal as there were fewer people attending than usual and this cut down on profits, but those that did come had a good journey. Congratulations to winners Alix and Sam Lukwago, Anne and Emlyn Evans and Ian Ring.

Thanks to scorer Daniel DaCosta, Raffle Supremo Alan Cotgreave with his band of ticket folders, and all those many folk who helped clear the hall afterwards. A special thank-you goes to Nancy for organising bread and butter and all the drinks as well as helping set out the trays at the beginning. This event is a good social occasion and hopefully more will attend the next one in February so keep your diaries handy! LD

RETIRING COLLECTIONS 2018

We have five commitments during the year to the Benevolent Fund, Corrymeela, Jubilee Debt, the Leprosy Mission and the Youth and Family Worker. This still leaves seven months, including the Christmas collections, to be assigned a charity. As long as we have not given to a particular group in the last two years you are able to nominate any *other* charity of your choice. Over the years we have supported many charities so there is an impressive list of candidates from which to choose, or you may have a particular interest in a new one that you would like to add for some reason. On Sundays 19th/26th November I will be in the Lower Hall collecting suggestions. Please be aware you may be asked to write a short paragraph about, or offer information on, the charity for the newsletter of the month it has been allotted. The Christmas collection 2018 will be for a *local or national charity* as the 2017 collection is for one overseas. LD



Prayer Leaders needed

We have suffered some losses from the list of people who offer to lead the intercessory prayers on Sundays. Please think and pray about whether you could do this. It is perfectly acceptable to use a prayer written by someone else, and there are books of prayers which can be used. If you're not sure about it or not sure about making a regular commitment, try it once or twice. Or have a chat with Alan, Ann, Cheryl or Chris.

Cheryl

An evening in Regensburg

During one of my German wanderings a few years ago, I stayed in Regensburg, a fascinating medieval city on the banks of the Danube on south-eastern Bavaria. Many centuries ago this was the regional capital, rather than Munich and both the political and commercial hub of the lower Danube valley, centre for all the most important trade with Italy and Austria. As the years passed, wars, epidemics and political changes took their toll, and the city lost its importance. Frozen in time, the many magnificent buildings remained unscathed by the passing years.

Wandering around town after dark one evening, I was invited to a service in the little church, part of the Dom, opposite my hotel. This proved delightful. Once every two months a service of contemplative worship takes place with music and meditations. Listening to the music I realised they were using some of the same songs we use in our own local churches, including one of my favourites, "Father God". So I joined in, happily singing along in English while those around me sang in German and no one seemed the least surprised by it.

Talking to one of the monks afterwards I learned that an ancient local annual festival had taken place that day, during which people ceremonially 'lost their sins' in the Danube. This, which sounds like it was originally an ancient pre-Christian event, is now a public holiday, with boat races and other festivities and the church timed their service to coincide with it.

The service, known as 'Wildfire', is very informal and very popular with local students and other young people, taking the form a sort of continuous 'loop' of music and readings which leave the individual worshipper free to come and go as they wish without losing the thread of the service. Both the monk and a nun that I spoke to were delighted that an English visitor could relate to it and, indeed find something of value in it.

Afterwards it struck me that in a very real way this evening's experience really embodied what Christianity is all about. Some people have a very limited vision of the faith, seeing it as a 'western' one or, worse a 'white man's religion'. It's nothing of the sort. True Christianity embraces all peoples; it's for everyone and, as one old hymn put it, 'whosoever will, may come – and no one will be denied.' It is purely an historical accident that it happens to have been centred in Europe for a long while – indeed some people believe that it reached India, via the ministry of Doubting Thomas around the same time it did Rome.

It was simply a wonderful, shared experience. Familiar, favourite modern worship songs being sung lustily in at least two languages (even if, quite possibly mine was the only voice using English), together with readings and prayers which I can speak enough German to understand and recognise. (A friend once said that my knowledge of that language sounded like it had been learned from the pages of the 'Eagle' which is not too far from reality.) And it really showed how our shared faith can, and does transcend the racial and linguistic barriers which, all too often, humankind delights in erecting.

In heaven we will not speak English, German or any other mortal language. All of us will be one, joined in the common purpose of worshipping our Father and Saviour, so it is as well to get into practice here on earth before we get there.

John Davies

WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH PRAYER DIARY

“Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” The Lord Almighty is with us.
Ps 46:10,11

	Church members	Topical prayers
WK 1: 5 -11 Nov	Chris Mayhew Rob McManus, Anna Ostojitsch, Ieuan, Ciaran Margaret Miles	The Cadbury Pastorate that we develop our relationship with God as we seek His will for the future. Those who are not able to get to church now. Those badly affected by severe weather patterns. That world leaders would take serious measures to limit our effect on climate.
WK 2: 12-18 Nov	Deborah Moriaty Brian & Audrey Nganwa, Jonathan, Elizabeth & Michael Nancy Nicholls	
WK 3: 19-25 Nov	Pam Norton Jill Palmer Anita Pickerden	
WK 4: 26Nov-2 Dec	Marilyn Raw Diane Rogers Tony Sames	

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.