

Cadbury Pastorate News

Bournville, Weoley Castle &
Weoley Hill Churches



October 2020

From the Minister's study—

Dear friends,

Sometimes it is good to take a break from all the news about the corona virus pandemic and that is why I would like to write about a church, a church that is perhaps not very well known among us but which has a very interesting history. As 31 October is Reformation Day (although probably better known as Halloween) it is good to remind ourselves that we are part of a large Reformed/Protestant church family of which this church, the Waldensian church in Italy, is part. But let me first tell you how I got to know this church.

Many years ago, when I grew up in Brussels, my mother would every now and again receive a package with a beautifully embroidered tablecloth and napkins in it which she had ordered. The package came from the “Christian Service” Centre in Riesi which was established by a Waldensian minister, Tullio Vinnay, in 1961 to promote literacy, establish a small farm and offer vocational training in this desperately poor and mafia-dominated community in Sicily.

As I was told the story of Riesi, and of the Waldensians in Italy, I have always been fascinated by this very small protestant church community which holds a disproportionately strong influence and positive reputation in Italian society, due in part to its consistently strong sense of social responsibility and active social involvement. And I have had the privilege to accompany Michael a few times as he was invited to visit the church and participate in their meetings. So let me briefly tell you about the Waldensian history and present ministry and perhaps it will also help us to better understand our distinctive “Reformed” identity, which we are sometimes struggling to articulate.

The Waldensian church started as a movement in the 12th century, therefore it predates the Reformation and can pride itself to be the first “Protestant” church! It was an evangelical movement founded by Waldo, a rich merchant from Lyon, who was to inspire St Francis of Assisi: he gave all away to the poor and started preaching the Gospel in the vernacular rather than in Latin, which caused him to get in conflict with the church in Rome. Waldo was summoned to Rome to give up his request for religious freedom, freedom to preach the Bible in common language, and his request that people be educated to read and write. Waldo and his followers were forbidden to preach but they refused to obey and, travelling in pairs, Waldensian itinerant preachers, some of whom were women (!), having learnt the Scriptures by heart, set off to establish communities in different parts of Europe. However, their persecution by the Inquisition drove them into their mountain refuge in the alpine valleys of northwest Italy, where many are still living today in what are called the Waldensian valleys which certainly are worth visiting!

At their Synod in 1532 the Waldensians voted to join the Reformation of Calvin in Geneva, a decision that brought even more persecution for the next few centuries. Their sufferings were recorded in Milton’s famous sonnet “On the late massacre in Piedmont”. While for centuries excluded from cultural, social and political life, their survival down to the present has been a remarkable testament of their faith. The emancipation act of 1848 finally enabled the Waldensian community to establish themselves freely, although they were not granted full religious liberty until 1984! Since the Italian unification in 1860 they had established churches throughout Italy and, following emigration, in the USA, Argentina and Uruguay. In 1979 the Italian Methodist church joined with them and they hold an annual Synod in Torre Pellice, which Michael attended some years ago, representing the URC. The 60

parishes with about 35,000 members are involved in about 120 outreach activities ranging from schools, hospitals, children's and old people's homes, radio stations, and ecumenical community centres, among which the famous Agape Centre, as well as seeking to meet the needs of the most deprived parts of Italy such as Riesi in Sicily and among the new immigrant communities.

The Waldensian church continues to see its mission as proclaiming the gospel, serving the marginalized, promoting [social justice](#), fostering [inter-religious](#) work, and advocating respect for religious diversity and freedom of conscience. And while the Waldensian church remains very small, they are greatly respected for their social engagement and the consistent witness of their faith. As our Waldensian colleagues told us, often non-church members and sometimes even Roman Catholics in Italy decide to divert their "church tax" to the Waldensian church! And the church does not use a penny of this tax for their own maintenance and administration but use it all for their outreach projects.

As you may or may not know, the URC has a longstanding relationship with the Waldensian church through the URC-Waldensian Fellowship. So when we feel disheartened as a small "Reformed" church in the UK, may we be encouraged by the witness of our "Reformed" Waldensian brothers and sisters in Italy and beyond who have never given up their faith and faithfulness and who have made, and continue to make, a real difference in society, preaching and living out their Christian faith in their unique way. And so can we.....and so we must!

With all best wishes,

Leonora

Pastorate News

Bournville news

We inducted Revd Stuart Scott into membership on Sunday 13 September.

October Worship:

4 Stuart Scott—Harvest Sunday, canned food only please.

11 Ian Thomson

18 Stuart Scott

25 Leonora.

We have had two Elders meetings, on 17 August and 7 September, and feel more normal now we have got going. Thank you, everyone, for the on-line service and the service sheet

Weoley Castle news

This is being written just after the latest pronouncements from the Government. Our understanding is that the new precautions against the spread of coronavirus will still allow the activities we have going on in the building, but with the emphasis that people moving about should be wearing masks unless exempted.

We are intending to continue to hold two Sunday services a month in the Sanctuary on the 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month. An amateur choir of up to 5 people is allowed to sing, so we nominate the “choir” on the day and the choir sing with masks on, accompanied by “Joanna” the digital hymnal music system. On other Sundays, we will rely on the online services. All these plans depend on the infection rates going down, so are possibly subject to change.

The next service in October will be at 11 am on Sunday 11th, with an emphasis on “Harvest”. In previous years, we have handed out envelopes for donations to the “Commitment for Life” URC World Development appeal. In view of the severe effect of the virus on developing countries, I hope that people, if their income has not been badly affected by the virus, will donate to this during the month. You can do so by sending a cheque (payable to Weoley Castle Community

Church) to Chris Hopkins, or bringing along your donation in an envelope marked C.f.L. to one of our October services. If you do Gift Aid, please add your name or envelope number. See Chris or Ted for other donation details, which can't be included on the website.

The weekday activities already happening in the building continue to be the Elite Dance group & Karate, and these have recently been joined by a Craft Group for people with Multiple Sclerosis. This has been led for several years at Northfield Quaker Meeting House by Donna Bailey, working for the Birmingham MS Society. That venue is not available at present (and is also rather more difficult to access) and the Society has been forced by lack of funds to lay off workers. The members have really been missing their group during lockdown, so the Elders decided that the Church should “adopt” this group. We recognise the commitment of both Donna & Natalie Baron, who are helping as volunteers; the members are paying subs to cover costs. This group takes place on Tuesdays at 11-1 pm. We are also intending to re-start our Day Centres in October: the Monday DC on 5 October and the Friday one the next week on the 16th. As usual, we have had a meeting of the volunteers to consider how to operate as safely as possible, and the Elders have approved the Risk Assessments.

Margaret & John Morris were very disappointed to miss the first Communion service in early September because she had a cold, but she is slowly getting better. We continue to remember present and absent friends in our prayers.

Ted Forgan

Weoley Hill news

From Sally Wainhouse, Marilyn's daughter:

20 September 2020 Final half marathon completed!

Gail and I completed our final half marathon today, lockdown style once again! Thank you to everyone who has donated and supported us along the way, it's been an awesome journey! And thanks to my mum, and Gail's brother Richard, we will love you always ❤️😔🌈

The Community Garden Group was back at work the first Saturday of September. Kind donations in memory of Marilyn Raw will help improve and extend the garden areas.



*Donations to the **B30 Foodbank** are welcome any Sunday—you don't have to wait for Harvest.*

QR code posters: (those funny black & white blotchy squares). In line with URC recommendations, we have displayed QR codes around the church. We will continue to record who is at church each Sunday, so these are optional extras. Please don't block a doorway if you choose to use them! Groups using the church may use these as well.

Weoley Hill Calendar for October 2020			
Sunday	4	10.30 am:	Communion led by Revd Stuart Scott.
Sunday	11	10.30 am:	Worship led by Alan Cotgreave in place of David Tennant
Wednesday	14	7.30 pm:	Elders meeting
Sunday	18	10.30 am:	Harvest worship led by the minister. Harvest gifts to B30 Foodbank
Tuesday	20	7.30 pm:	F&B budget meeting
Sunday	25	10.30 am:	Worship led by Ann Evans.

Eco matters and extinction

Did you watch the David Attenborough TV programme on the evening of Sunday 13 September?

It was a scary watch. The biodiversity of insects, animals, birds and water creatures has evolved over many, many years and humans are destroying it far too rapidly. So many creatures are on the endangered list and we have lost millions of species already in recent years. It was so sad to see the northern white rhino female looking so frail and when she dies will leave her daughter as the only one of that species.

So much of the natural carbon sinks are being destroyed such as the Amazon rain forest and also oceans, soils and savannas. Removing plants from the earth can cause landslides as there are not root systems to hold the soil in place. The devastating fires in Australia and the Western American states are wiping out trees, animals and the ecosystem and of course the homes and lives of several people.

One new uses of this reclaimed land from deforestation is growing food products for humanity to eat but some of the products are for animal feed such as beef cattle.

What percent of the Earth's land is used for livestock? Twenty-six percent of the planet's ice-free land is used for livestock grazing and 33 percent of croplands are used for livestock feed production. Livestock contribute to seven percent of the total greenhouse gas emissions through enteric fermentation and manure.

All species from insects to us are important and rely on each other directly or indirectly. If insects did not aerate the soil or pollinate the plants, there could be a world food crisis. It is all part of the food chain and dead plants create the natural fertiliser of the next growth.

The growing world population needs food but hopefully there can be better ways of doing this.

The polar ice cap is being melted from underneath; the warmer oceans are undermining the ice cap and it is melting at a faster rate than originally thought.

Some animals such as the Pangolin are being illegally hunted for their scales. They are made of keratin, the same material that makes up fingernails, hair, and horn. Pangolin scales, like rhino horn, have no proven medicinal value, yet they are used in traditional Chinese medicine to help with ailments ranging from lactation difficulties to arthritis.

It is claimed that some animals carry viruses which are harmful to humanity such as SARS and Coronavirus and when animals are stressed, they shed these viruses more rapidly. Let us try to prevent these animals from getting stressed by letting them live in their natural environment without hopefully fires and floods to stress them out.

Politicians in some countries are just not listening to the scientists about what is happening to our planet. They are happy to be rich on the profits taken from burning fossil fuels and the sale of products to poorer countries. The greed of some people is just wrecking our world.

What can we do about all these scary things?

We have voices; let us use them. In the past the Montreal Protocol came into existence on 1 January 1989 which banned the use of CFCs as in fridges and aerosols. This has been revised several times since then. This came about by public demand all over the world as this gas was destroying the ozone layer. Also, when David Attenborough visited the gorillas in Rwanda in 1970s, there were only about 250 left in the wild but as food production has moved away from the area where they live the numbers are now about 1000.

As I have said before we can do things. I will now personally reduce the amount of beef products we eat, take fewer flights – I haven't flown for 2 years as I write but we may do so in October. Of course, during lock down the earth's pollution rates went down as fewer people and goods were being moved around the world. However, it is picking up again and hopefully to more sustainable levels.

A good website which puts things very straightforwardly is <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zwgbpbk/revision/9>. If you want more scientific data and information there are plenty of sites to explore.

David Attenborough's final line in the programme packs a powerful punch: "What happens next", says Sir David, "is up to every one of us."

Ann Evans

WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH PRAYER DIARY

Be strong, be courageous, all you who hope in the Lord.

Ps 31:24

	Church members & local streets	Topical prayers
WK 1: 4th- 10th Oct	Margaret Field John Fletcher John Glen • <i>Witherford Way & Close</i>	For each one at Bournville URC; for their individual needs & for ways of continuing fellowship together.
WK 2: 11th- 17th Oct	Colin Graham Christine Grubb Rosemary Hay • <i>Greenmeadow Rd</i> • <i>Hemyock Rd</i>	For the continuing witness of Weoley Castle URC & the contacts made with those who use the premises.
WK 3: 18th- 24th Oct	Gill Hitchin Norma Johnson • <i>Swarthmore Rd</i> • <i>Presthope Rd</i>	Lebanon in economic catastrophe & hyperinflation. There is hunger, desperation & increased crime & unrest.
WK 4: 25th - 31st Oct	Betty Johnston Sharon Letissier & Hannah • <i>St Denis Rd</i> • <i>Hollybrow</i> • <i>Long Leasow</i>	For control of Covid 19. The native communities of the Amazon that are being wiped out by the disease; the dire effects in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan & Turkmenistan where the authorities tried to hide its extent.

NOTE: As the newsletter is now a pastorate newsletter we will present the prayer diary differently in the future.

The Pastorate Newsletter

The next issue will be available around 1 November.

Contributions are requested, including local photos! Send them to the minister, Leonora Jagessar, or Cheryl Thornett at Weoley Hill. Ideas for improving the newsletter are welcome.

Special thanks to Alan Cotgreave, who has been creating audio-visual presentations for Sunday worship, and to everyone who is helping to distribute worship sheets and newsletters.



The Cadbury Pastorate

Open for Worship

(Government restrictions permitting)

Bournville URC, Beaumont Rd: Worship at 3 PM on 1st Sundays and 10.30 AM on other Sundays.

Weoley Castle Community Church, Quarry Rd: Worship 2nd & 4th Sundays at 11 AM.

Weoley Hill URC, Greenmeadow Rd: Worship at 10.30 AM.

Sunday worship can be still found on the Weoley Hill website as an audio/visual presentation or in print form, and through email and postal distribution on request.

Check with the organisers for news of groups which normally meet in Weoley Hill and Weoley Castle.

Please check the churches' websites for further news and any changes, as well as details of precautions to be observed.

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