

Cadbury Pastorate News

Bournville, Weoley Castle &
Weoley Hill Churches



December 2021

From the Minister's study—

Christmas 2021

Another lockdown over Christmas? “It would be like trying to put the cork back into an open bottle of champagne” according to a French politician. And the UK government has no plans to restrict our movements although we are urged to be very cautious (and to take regular lateral flow tests) as we meet up with family and friends over Christmas. This means that we can be on the move—and that is what we often do at Christmas. Some people travel to holiday destinations abroad while many people travel home for Christmas.

Coming home or getting home is a desire, a longing, many of us share and it is especially powerful at this time of the year. Returning home for Christmas—people may be looking forward to it for weeks, months or perhaps even a whole year. Children who are living away from home, or perhaps even abroad, families separated, loved ones in hospital, army and civilian personnel on foreign assignments, etc. Home is where we try to get to, in time for Christmas!

Living outside of our homeland, already for so many years, and Christmas being a day that we are usually “at work,” Michael and I have had to suppress our urge to “go home” for Christmas, instead celebrating Christmas back home on boxing day or have family and friends come to us for Christmas so that we could be “at home.” Yes, at this time of the year many of us long to go home or come home or have loved ones come home to us—and this also means that for many it may be a time that they are keenly aware that a loved one is no longer coming home or at home with us. It can be a very difficult time, Christmas!

But what is it about home? What is the home at Christmas that we remember, that we are longing for, that we miss, that we go back to or that we make?

In the novel, *Home*, by Marilynne Robinson, Jack has a difficult relationship with his father, a minister, for the whole of his life. He is

the misfit in the family, always in trouble, alienated from his father—a prodigal son. But towards the end of his father’s life Jack comes home. He reflects with his sister, “I just wanted to come home. I wanted to see the place, I wanted to see my father... I was scared to come....” He thinks he might leave again soon but his sister tells him, “If you ever need to come home again, I’ll be there.”

You could say home is in our DNA. Even if you have had a difficult time growing up in your family or have or had a complicated relationship with your parents or siblings, you may still long for home—and really miss it when never having had a proper home.

But not only do we long for a “family” home, we are also searching for “home” in our journey of faith. “O come, o come Immanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here....” As exiles we search for home—a home of a world of peace and goodwill. “Glory to God, on earth be peace, goodwill to all shall never cease.”

But for peace to reign and goodwill never to cease we have the calling, the duty to care for the world and all people. At Christmas many give very generously to charities, among which those that support and bring something of a Christmas “home feel” to the homeless rough sleepers on our streets as well as those that reach out to the asylum seekers and refugees that have had to leave their homes and home country to find safety elsewhere. For the world’s homeless, in the literal and figurative sense, home will be where people experience the real presence of kindness, love and peace.

Yes, we all long to come “home” and while we may not be there yet, we know the way that leads to it.

“I cannot claim that I have found the home that I long for every day of my life, not by a long shot, but I believe in my heart that I have found and maybe have always known, the way that leads to it. I believe that the home I long for and finally belong to is where Christ is. I believe that home is Christ’s kingdom, which exists both within us and among

us as we wind our prodigal ways through the world in search of it”
(Frederick Buechner)

And as we wind our prodigal ways through the world....

“Weary or bitter or bewildered as we may be, God is faithful. He lets us wander so that we will know what it means to come home.” (Marilynne Robinson)

And so it is. At Christmas we remember that we are both wandering in search of home and yet we are also always coming home in the world, the world in which LOVE came down at Christmas. And we are also called to make it a true home for all God’s people and all God’s creatures, great and small, rich and poor, loved and unloved, lost and found, sick and healthy, stranger and estranged. And then all will rejoice and sing, Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

With all best wishes for a peaceful and joyful Christmas!

Leonora



An Advent Message from the Moderator: Are we nearly there yet?

“Are we nearly there yet?” is a cry that probably most parents will remember, from bored children in the back seat of the car.

Are we nearly there yet? It’s something we want to ask about the end of the pandemic. It’s still too early to decide that. As I write, some European countries are entering renewed lockdowns, and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are all increasing restrictions, albeit in a fairly limited way so far. Whether England will move to the Government’s “Plan B” for the winter is yet to be seen.

Are we nearly there yet? Can we start to call ministers to fill vacancies around the Synod. Aha! Some good news here, again even if in a fairly limited way. We are now moving forwards with creating a number of

new posts for Stipendiary Ministers, although we know we will never have a large enough quota to satisfy anyone. We are having to learn how we might lead our churches differently, but at least we are getting nearer to calling some new Ministers to the West Midlands.

Are we nearly there yet? Many—and I think almost all—churches have found that a significant number of people are still reluctant to return to in-person worship and activities. Certainly, every church I’ve spoken with are finding that volunteers to keep the church running and engaging in missional activities are harder to find. Can we get back to “normal”? No. And let’s not try. The old “normal” was already broken before Covid; we do need to embrace a new way of being and doing things in God’s service, not just because of the pandemic, but it has certainly had a major ongoing impact.

Are we nearly there yet? Christmas “celebrations” continue to start earlier. I did see what is very definitely a Christmas tree in a neighbour’s house in the third week of November—not only before Advent but before even Christ the King Sunday. (I know many of my neighbours like to light up their homes for Diwali and other faith festivals; this was very clearly a Christmas tree.) But where, in these early celebrations, is there room for Christ?

The Church is called not to conform to the values of the world (Romans 12) but instead to allow our mind to be renewed. Let us be those open to the renewing Holy Spirit, ready to learn new things about ourselves and, more importantly, God. I don’t believe we will do that through decorations put up ever earlier (and removed on Boxing Day). I do believe we will grow in the waiting, like the prophets, and the searching, like the Magi. I do believe we can find renewed purpose and hope as we set out to welcome anew Christ into our homes and our churches. Will you come with me on this journey?

Steve Faber

November 25, 2021

Prayer page

We pray for all who work to renew the environment, to reverse the years of neglect and abuse and bring hope, love and light to the world. We commit ourselves to play our part in protecting this most precious of gifts and to 'lift up our voices mightily' to call on all to do more to care for creation. Amen.

We pray for all peacemakers, for the mediators and negotiators, for those who challenge aggression and refuse to meet violence with violence. We commit ourselves to the way of peace and to 'lift up our voices mightily' to call on all to live in God's peace. Amen.



We pray for a just economy with equality at its heart, an economy where all may flourish. We pray for those in power to work tirelessly for such a vision. We commit ourselves to 'lift up our voices mightily' as we strive for economic justice for all. Amen.

We pray for a joyful world where the lowly are lifted high and the hungry are fed. We pray for our churches and communities that we may look towards the margins and not always to the centre. We commit ourselves to 'lift up our voices mightily' to challenge a worldview that pushes people to the margins. Amen.

We pray for welcoming, caring and loving communities. May our churches welcome all as Jesus has welcomed us. Help us to work with others in our local community to promote an openness to the stranger. We commit ourselves to 'lift up our voices mightily' to challenge those in our society who are not welcoming of others, and instead to be joyously welcoming to everyone. Amen.

These prayers are taken from the JPIT Advent candle-lighting prayers 2021.

Pastorate News

Friends in the Pastorate: If you plan to come to the Weoley Hill mini-worship on Boxing Day, please let the Weoley Hill secretary, Cheryl Thornett, know so we have an idea of numbers—or lack of interest.

Doorstep Carols

'In 2020, Doorstep Carols was broadcast on 35 local radio stations... It led to amazing scenes of participation'. The idea first came from Katy Pink and Beth Heath in Shrewsbury, Shropshire who persuaded their local radio station to get on board and spread some cheer during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Doorstep Carols returns this year on Wednesday 15 December, 6 – 7 PM. We are inviting people to tune into their local radio, sing in their streets and raise money for charities.

Through music we shall unite people who are separated from their loved ones. "Working with BBC local radio stations and streaming to schools, hospital wards, care-homes and communities around the country, no one need feel isolated this Christmas" Doorstep Carols

It is easy to join in, all BBC local stations and BBC sounds will play the backing tracks to the nations favourite carols and Christmas songs on Wednesday 15th December at 6 PM.'

From Birmingham Churches Together

Reminder—the B30 foodbank accepts gifts of money as well as food and toiletries. This enables them to restock (at low cost) items that are needed but haven't been donated. Information is on the B30 website, where they make it as easy as possible for us to give them money. WH members can see David Marlow or John Fletcher.

A thought: while some of us are in real need of the winter fuel allowance, particularly now when costs are rising, others of us might be able to donate at least part of our allowance to help people who otherwise have to choose between food and heating.

Bournville News

Cindy Edwards

It was with sadness that we learned that Cindy Edwards, a very kind and gentle, faithful, and much-loved member of our church family, had died in the early hours of the 20th of November. Cindy had been struggling with her health and found herself homebound for the last years of a very long and well-lived life (within her family and as a nurse at the QE). While we would regularly visit her, we also would occasionally gather for a worship service in her home, which we very much enjoyed. And when during the pandemic and in the months of lockdown weekly prayers were collected and Cindy would ask us to pray for her and her family, she always impressed us with her wonderful spirit and grace, bearing her pain with fortitude and always expressing gratitude too. And now we express our gratitude, thanking God for Cindy's good and faithful life among us. And while we will miss her, we will treasure the memories we have of Cindy and take heart that she is with God and knows the peace of God that passes all understanding.

Bournville ready for Advent and Christmas



Bournville worship for December		
Sunday	5	The minister
Sunday	12	Dave and Shirley Smith
Sunday	19	Stuart Scott
Christmas Day		Glynis Bate
Sunday	26	No service

Weoley Hill News

Intruder alarm: the new alarm system is disarmed by a key fob. If you are a keyholder and haven't yet received your fob, see David Marlow.

Church meeting agreed that we will sing while wearing masks during Advent and Christmas. We'll make a further decision no later than January, sooner if required. Even though all or most of us have been vaccinated and boosted, please continue to take care: avoid clustering in the aisles and around the hatch at coffee time. Let's keep each other safe.

December retiring collections: The Leprosy Mission

The toy service, in aid of Birmingham Crisis Centre, is Sunday 5 December—just a day before St Nicholas' Day. Please remember not to wrap gifts—separate gift wrap is always helpful—and remember older children as well as babies and toddlers.

Northfield Manor will once again hold their Christmas service here on the last day of term. Leonora is helping to plan the service.

Volunteers are needed for welcome duties (both doors) and reading for the carol service on Saturday the 18th, Christmas Day, and perhaps on Sunday the 26th. We only need a couple of people for door welcome for the Northfield Manor school service on the 17th, and probably only need one or two for the 26th. (If no one else turns up on the 26th, there will just be a Bible reading and prayer. In any case it will be a minimal, short service.)

Personalia

Christine Marlow is recovering from a broken hip at Heartlands Hospital.

A message from Michael Walpole: This year I have decided not to send individual greetings to those friends whom I meet regularly throughout the year. Instead, I am sending an extra donation to the Food Bank. So let me take this opportunity to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas, a Peaceful New Year, and to thank most sincerely all those church friends who have helped me with transport this year.

Thanksgiving Service A service in memory of Mo Chamanbaz was held at Holy Trinity Platt, Manchester, on 27 November. John Fletcher attended on our behalf.



Advent candles This year we are using part of an Advent liturgy, written by Michael Jagessar for Canadian churches, which uses candles, but not in a traditional wreath. Following Leonora's suggestion of reflecting people in different parts of the world and the recent environmental focus, we hope the candles will bring different environments and the people who live and work in them to mind, as well as the traditional symbolism. **Green** for temperate grasslands and forests; **blue** for lakes, rivers, seas, shorelands and islands; **purple** for mountains and cold regions, **rose** for the hot zones of desert, savannah and jungle. *The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Psalm 24.*



Weoley Hill Calendar

Wednesdays 10 AM-12: Art Club. £1 All welcome
 Fridays 6.45 PM: Community Choir All welcome

December		
Sunday	5	10.30 AM: Advent 2 & Communion Service led by the minister. Toy service.
Wednesday	8	7.30 PM: Elders' meeting tbc
Sunday	12	10.30 AM: Advent 3 worship led by Ann Evans.
Wednesday	15	10 AM-12: Art Club. £1
Friday	17	9.00 AM: Northfield Manor Christmas service
Saturday	18	4 PM: Carol service
Sunday	19	10.30 AM: Advent 4 worship led by the minister.
Friday	24	4 PM: Christmas Eve family worship led by Alan Cotgreave
Saturday	25	11.00 AM: Christmas Day family worship led by Alan Cotgreave
Sunday	26	10.30 AM: Short, informal worship. All welcome.

Saturday 1 January 2.30 PM: New Year's Day walk
Sunday 2 January *In our first worship of the new year we will remember and give thanks for the lives of Deb Moriarty, Mo Chamanbaz, Mary Bevin and Jim Brackley. Please let Alan or Ann know if you would like to say a few words about one of these people.*

The next issue of the pastorate news will be available around 1 January. Contributions are requested! Send them to the minister, Leonora Jagessar, or Cheryl Thornett at Weoley Hill.

Weoley Castle News

Remembrance Day - Children from all years of Princethorpe School had their Remembrance Day work exhibited all around the Sanctuary, and parents came along after school on Thursday 11th to view it. They could also see the poppy displays prepared as one of the activities of the Day Centres – so some 90 years age range of the artists!

Bill Hopkins is distributing the Christmas Good News paper around the Weoley Castle estate.



Sunday Services – at 11 AM except on Christmas Day

5th December will be our “Toys & Gifts” service, led by Chris Miles: please bring presents to go to less well-off families.

12th December: led by Leonora with Communion.

19th December: Carol Service – led by Ted Forgan. Let him know beforehand if you have a favourite carol

25th December: Christmas Day at 10 AM – led by Peter Cruchley

26th December – no service at Weoley Castle

2nd January: New Year Service – led by Chris Miles

In the winter months of 2022, we intend to revert to just two “in person” services per month – on the 2nd & 4th Sundays





Day Centre News – contact Chris Hopkins for more information

Friday 17th December: **Christmas party** for Monday & Friday groups

The Day Centres recently received £200 from the ASDA “green voucher” scheme.

Parent & Toddler Group: Christmas Party Wednesday 15 December

Christmas Breaks. Both these activities will break for Christmas after 17 December, restarting from Monday 10th January. **The Elite Dance Group** will have their last class on Saturday 18th December, restarting on Wednesday 5th January. **The Karate Group** will have their last class on Thursday 16th December, restarting on Monday 3rd January.

Incredible Surplus will be closed on Christmas Eve & New Year’s Eve and open again on Friday 7th January.

Weoley Castle Calendar for December		
Sunday	5	11 AM: Toys & Gifts” service led by Chris Miles
Sunday	12	11 AM: Communion, led by Leonora
Wednesday	15	Parent & Toddler Group Christmas Party
Friday	17	Christmas party for Monday & Friday Day Centre groups
Sunday	19	11 AM: Carol Service led by Ted Forgan
Saturday	25	10 AM: Christmas Day worship led by Peter Cruchley
Sunday	26	NO WORSHIP
		January 2022
Sunday	02	11 AM: New Year Service – led by Chris Miles

Christmas Quiz

- A. Why are Christmas trees bad at knitting?
- B. What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?
- C. What do you call an old snowman?
- D. What's a dog's favourite carol?
- E. What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?
- F. Why has Santa been banned from sooty chimneys?
- G. Why is it getting harder to buy Advent calendars?
- H. What does the Queen call her Christmas Broadcast?
- I. What did the psychiatrist say to an unhappy Father Christmas?



A. Because they always drop their needles!
B. Tinselitis!
C. Water
D. Bark, the herald angels sing
E. A Christmas Quacker!
F. His Carbon footprint
G. Because their days are numbered!
H. The One Show
I. "Don't worry what grown-ups say: just try to believe in yourself!"

The Cadbury Pastorate

Open for Worship

(In line with Government guidelines.)

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 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 in print form, and through email 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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BOURNVILLE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Secretary: Maureen Peart 605 3540

