

Cadbury Pastorate News

Bournville, Weoley Castle &
Weoley Hill Churches



March 2021

From the Minister's study—

Dear Friends,

As I write a few of us have met for the first session of our Lent course called #Live Lent. God's Story. Our Story. The Lent course challenges us to think about evangelism, about how we participate in God's story and how we share the story of God's love with others. We are reminded how Jesus told stories to explain the Kingdom of God, a re-imagined world of justice and peace, the world as God holds for us. We are invited into that new way of life and to point others to God's kingdom whether by telling the story of God's love, by living it out in our lives, or by listening to and finding points of connection between the stories of people and the "good news" of a loving God who reaches out to us.

So far so good. Many of us have been brought up with the stories of our faith, it made sense in our lives, in our "Christian" society, we were listened to.....but, no more! Our society is very different today. It is pluralistic, scientific/technological and mainly secular. Many people may not have any sense of the sacred, of God, and certainly not as a supernatural being. On the other hand, many people have a sense of wonder, of awe, a spiritual yearning.... So how to share the story of God's love in this context?

First of all, I think it is important that we recognize that God's story is not only the Christian story. God's story is the story of God's love for all people. God or the Divine, is bigger than any religion; God transcends all religions/faiths. God is ultimate mystery, but as Christians we see God's love incarnate in Jesus. For us, Jesus is the way to God, but for people of other faiths there are different ways. (When Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except by me" (John 14.6), he was not speaking about interfaith relations but he was speaking to the disciples around the Last Supper table to reassure them that even when he would be

arrested and be put to death, they had made the right choice following him. For them Jesus is the way, the truth and the way to God) None of us possess the whole truth. And so we have to respect each other, be respectful of other people's faith and we should be open to learn from each other's stories about God's love and how it is lived out in faith practises and in daily life. It may also be very revealing to us to see our Christian faith through the eyes of people of other faiths. It would be helpful for us to learn how we as Christians come across and whether we are really living the story of God's love in our lives and if we can share that story faithfully and truthfully.

“Let us think of the bulk of your people who preach the gospel” Gandhi once said to an Indian missionary. “Do they spread the perfume of their lives? That is to me the sole criterion. All I want them to do is to live Christian lives, not to annotate them.” Barbara Brown Taylor in “Holy Envy” continues to write, “As a convert myself, I get that. I endured torrents of words, landslides of words...from earnest Christians eager to save me.... All in all, their pursuit of me did not seem to have much to do with me. They were fulfilling a spiritual need of their own.... In retrospect, the deeper problem was that they did not spread the perfume of their lives. There was nothing about them that made me want to be like them.... The people who eventually drew me to Christ never said a word about it.... None of them ever spoke to me about becoming Christian. I made that decision on my own, once I had been attracted by the fragrance of their faith. (pp 151-152)

And I continue to read in “Holy Envy”: I understand the anxiety of mainline Christians who are watching congregations age... especially since I am one of them. It is hard to watch the well from which you drew living water dry up. It is awful to watch people go away, leaving the dead to bury the dead—so awful that it is natural

to try and find something else to blame. Blame the culture for shallowing the human mind. Blame the megachurches for peddling prosperity. Blame the world for leaving the church behind. There is some truth to all of these charges.... At the same time they obscure the last truth any of us wants to confront, which is that our mainline Christian lives are not particularly compelling these days.... Our rose has lost its fragrance. (pp 156-157)

Perhaps we have forgotten that central to our faith, and to evangelism, is the simple truth: God loves. Our lives should spread the fragrance of God's love. And God's love is not only expressed through the church, and sometimes even anywhere but the church which has too often regulated and restricted God's love!

Yes, let us consider evangelism that finds its motivation not in the crisis of a church in decline that needs to act in order to prevent its extinction. Evangelism is always and ever because God is love. And how God's love finds expression in our lives is what matters. What matters is how we live out God's love in our relationships, how we treat others, especially "the poor, the widow, the stranger." That is all that is required of us: What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6: 8

With all best wishes, Leonora

PS If anyone who hasn't signed up yet is interested in joining the Lent group on Zoom on the Tuesday afternoon at 2.30 pm, let me know!

Pastorate prayers

As we give thanks for vaccination and an eventual 'return to normal', we recognise that 'normal' isn't completely good and falls far short of the Kingdom of God.

As we celebrate our 1st and 2nd doses, we pray for the people who are last in the world queue, just as they are always last in health matters.

As children and teachers return to school, we remember that our education system is far from ideal and pray the disruption leads to real improvements. We pray for the children of the world who have no schools because of war, disease or poverty.

As we see friends and family again, we pray for people who are isolated by illness or circumstances and for everyone who is mourning, especially people who couldn't be with a loved one at the end.

As we look forward to celebrating Easter together and worshipping together in church again, we pray for Christians who risk their freedom and their lives when they worship. We pray for people of other faiths who are also persecuted for their faith.

As we return to shops, hairdressers, restaurants, sports and entertainment, we remember the businesses that failed and workers who have lost wages and employment. We remember the families who rely on foodbanks to feed their families, even when they are in work. We remember that working conditions are often poor, rewards are not fairly shared, and pray for greater equity of work and income.

As we return to holidays and travel, we remember both the people who depend on travel and tourism for their livelihoods and the damage travel and tourism do to the environment and to social structures, and we pray that we may learn less harmful habits and better appreciation of God's world and our brothers and sisters who share it with us.

CT—see Glynis's expression of thanks on next page

Pastorate News

Bournville

Landline—Lockdown Lifeline

Every day we hear about the problems of lockdown: how much longer? When will we be able to share a meal with friends? When will we be able to meet in church, greet each other without masks and sing joyfully?

What we don't hear about is the positives that have happened in our church life through lockdown.

Many of us at Bournville have really appreciated the benefits of being in a pastorate through recorded services and hearing news from other churches. We enjoy the shared pastorate news, Lorraine's Christmas quiz and hearing others' voices on the weekly services.

One big positive is our weekly telephone call round to collect everybody's prayer requests.

It's a chance to catch up on the joys and sorrows of everyone's lives or just to chitchat about the mundane. The landline has been our lifeline and so valuable for all those living alone who are interested in us. Our fellowship although small in number has grown in quality through our catchup and I have certainly valued it. I have learnt so much more about everyone.

Let us remember to thank God for all the positives that we have experienced in our enforced imprisonment and remember to keep talking with each other even when the lockdown ends.

Glynis

Bournville Elders meeting on 9 March at 10.30 am.

Weoley Hill

We hope to hold **outdoor worship on Easter Sunday**; just the 10.30 service and without communion—no Easter breakfast, either. We hope we can sing, and at least we can place flowers on the **Easter Cross**. There is a fall-back plan in case of severe weather. The Elders will consider whether we can resume worship in church after Easter as advice is updated.

The funeral of Daniel Kyereh takes place at the church on 23 March. Given ongoing restrictions on numbers, please don't plan to attend unless invited. Please remember Vida, Carys, Dora and other members of Daniel's family.

Prayers: We hope and pray that there are no further delays to Mo's chemotherapy. Please remember all our members and friends who are unwell, undergoing treatment, awaiting treatment or recovering. We look forward to the day when we can see you all again.

Weoley Hill Village Council has invited us to be part of a **centenary celebration of Weoley Hill** as part of Bournville Heritage Week in September—and now we can hope it will take place as planned. Rosemary and I will take part in a virtual planning meeting this month, and there will no doubt be many more meetings and plenty of tasks to be shared around. Our main projected role will be in hosting at least part of a display of photographs and memorabilia from the past 100 years, opening the church to visitors (and perhaps selling them tea and cake?), but if you have further ideas, do pass them on. Or do you have photos of notable events or changes?

And speaking of centenaries, **our own centenary** as a recognised church (Presbyterian) is in July 2022, so we can use this as a

warm-up. Ideas, please! Photos, please! And especially, names and contact details from former members or friends of the church.

WCCC News



Carol & Thomas have continued their stall on Fridays in the Quarry Road entrance to the building, and it is getting more widely known. People have come in to buy: “Pay what you feel” and to donate, and home deliveries have been made in response to requests from the area. More information on this Birmingham initiative to avoid waste, particularly

of good food, on their website:

<https://incrediblesurplus.org/>

Roadmap?

All the Day Centre ladies have had their first Covid vaccination, but the general feeling among their families is that we should wait till their second jab before re-opening this Support Group, which puts it back to the end of April at the earliest.

We will have to decide nearer the time whether we should celebrate Easter in Church: that would be on April 4th.

It is not clear about the Elite and Karate groups: the earliest they could possibly start according to the roadmap is 12th April for children.

Will we be able to have a Summer Activity Week or possibly Family Fun Tuesdays in August to celebrate meeting together again? The children might have to be doing Summer Catch-Up School instead!

We shall have an Elders' meeting on March 10th.

Electrical work in the Church building

A recent survey revealed some hidden faults in the electrical wiring at Church, and also that some the power circuits need to be upgraded to present regulations, which requires earth leakage protection on all sockets. This and the survey are costing some thousands of pounds. The refurbishment will take place in the next couple of weeks, while the building is largely empty. If you wish to make a special donation towards this work, or if you know of Trusts that can make grants towards the upkeep of the building, the Elders would be glad to hear from you!

News of the Fellowship

Margaret Wetherall recovered well from her fall; the staff at Castle Croft were very happy to welcome her back from hospital a few weeks ago.

Bruce Harvey reports that he is still alive after suddenly losing 5 units of blood due to a stomach ulcer. He is recovering in hospital and hopes to be home again in a few weeks. He says that **Fay** is happily settled in at Gracewell Nursing Home.

Madge Finch has recently had her second cataract operation and her vision is slowly settling down after that.

We remember them and others in our prayers of hope and thanks.

An invitation from Selly Oak Methodist

Virtual Lent Lunch Saturday 6th March



Please join us on zoom at 12 noon bringing your own soup to hear Kate Ormerod, from Christian Aid, will talk about 'Christian Aid Week 2021, Kenya'. There will be opportunities to discuss ways of fund raising as we emerge from the pandemic.

SOMC are hosting this ecumenical Lenten event, and we hope that using the registration system will make it easier for people from other local churches to join with us. If you are intending to join us to register using the form on the following link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZEuCeCvpz4rGtCKM15vipww9UlahMka7vQP>

March preaching schedule

- 07-March- Leonora
- 14- March *Mothering Sunday* -Ann Evans
- 21- March - Leonora
- 28- March *Palm Sunday* - Steve Faber

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

Stir-crazy Lockdown Knock-knock Jokes

Knock knock.... Who's there?
Luke.... Luke who?
Luke through the keyhole and you'll find out!

Knock knock.... Who's there?
Olivia.... Olivia who?
Olivia, but I've lost my key!

Knock knock.... Who's there?
Howard.... Howard who?
Howard you like to wait outside knocking?

Knock knock.... Who's there?
Bella.... Bella who?
Bella not worka: that's why I knocka!

Knock knock.... Who's there?
Ivan.... Ivan who?
Ivan to come in!

Knock knock.... Who's there?
Boo.... Boo who?
Don't cry: it's only a joke!



The Cadbury Pastorate

Covid-19 cancellations:

All worship has been suspended in our churches for the time being, but Sunday worship can be found on the Weoley Hill website as an audio/visual presentation or in print form, and through email and postal distribution. Recorded worship is also available via the URC Daily Devotions.

Groups which normally meet in the churches have ceased meeting, except for *Incredible Surplus* at Weoley Castle Fridays 10.30 AM -12. (See article for details.)

Please check the churches' websites for further news and any changes.

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