

Weoley Hill & Weoley Castle Church News



March 2025

From Alan Cotgreave—

It's 8:50 on Saturday morning and there are a large group of people listening as information about the week ahead is shared, new people welcomed and there's a brief explanation of what's about to happen.

It's 10:30 on Saturday morning and a group of those same people are sitting drinking coffee and talking about the events of the morning and catching up with each other over events in their lives over the previous week.

Does this sound familiar? This is pretty much how I spend most Saturday mornings at parkrun but it seems to have a great deal of parallels with how many of us spend our Sunday mornings! There is a great deal of commonality about the form of these meetings and there is no doubt that on this superficial level parkrun on a Saturday morning and church on a Sunday morning would appear to be the same thing.

However there is one very big difference between the two and that is the motivation which brings us together. I'm trying to get fitter as I run. I enjoy spending time with the people I have got to know through our common interest and I enjoy taking in the views as well as the fresh air. It's also true that when I go a different venue, as I was able to during half term week, I am confident of what will happen; I know there will be people who will talk to me and I am comfortable with the format of the morning.

Is that why we come to church? To catch up with those we have met there? To enjoy the social time? To feel comfortable with the routines?

What does it mean for us to be church? That is a question we need to be continually asking ourselves, but especially at this time as we prepare to consider what we want from our new minister.

I have recently been reading about Rev Mick Flemming. Mick is the pastor of Church on the Streets (COTS) in Burnley. COTS is, as its name suggests, very active on the streets on Burnley. They meet people where they are and in their need. They provide the everyday essentials that families need, they are there for people to talk to and they provide warm spaces for citizens of Burnley. During Covid times Mick was seen delivering food parcels to families; he was their lifeline.

Mick himself did not come to faith in a traditional way. He was raped as a child and just when he got the courage to tell his parents what had happened his sister, herself only a child, died suddenly of a heart attack and so he felt unable to share his story.

His life descended into chaos, crime and addiction and it was only after a sudden vision that he came to God and dedicated his life to spreading the good news of Jesus' love in the best way he could.

Spreading Jesus' love in the best way he could. That's what being church is about. That is what we, as Christians, are called to do. So how can we do that?

At our recent church meeting we began to discuss the question "What is our mission?" and this is the question we need to keep coming back to again and again. What do we need to do to spread God's love in our neighbourhood?

I'm not claiming to have any of the answers, it's God who knows that, but what we have to do is look out for the signs, and they

may not be dramatic but small green shoots beginning to develop. We can celebrate with the Lacey family as Theo took the big step, by himself at the age of 7, to be baptised and become a part of our family rather than worry about the fact that our congregation is much smaller, and older, than it used to be. We can celebrate that we now have a connection with Oakview Residential Home with the once a month services (and consider helping—I know Ann would value some support with this) and the fact that Northfield Manor School want to spend time in our building celebrating the major Christian festivals.

Our uniformed organisations are, once again, wanting to take part in parade services and so we are reaching out there. But is there more we can be doing?

One thing we can do is to continue to pray and to listen and to look out for the signs of new growth. We can't wait for a new minister to have the answers, they don't, it's God that has those, we just need to listen and remember that we he will equip us to do whatever he calls us to do.

In the meantime, I am going to continue to catch up with my friends on a Saturday at parkrun after I have completed my 5k run and on a Sunday in church after we have heard the word of God.

May God bless us all as we try to find our way forward in his name.

Alan



Prayer page

Lord, as we enter Lent help us to draw near to you in praise, stripping away all that distracts us from worship. May Lent be a time of inward searching that makes us more able to look with compassion at the needs of the world. **Amen**

We pray for

- ❖ The international situation, especially in Ukraine, Gaza, Congo, Somalia and Sudan
- ❖ Better care for all creation, and a stronger will to make the changes needed to preserve it
- ❖ Our brothers and sisters, known and unknown, who suffer from illness, injury, poverty, injustice, violence, insecure lives

We give thanks for

- ❖ The life and good works of Christine Miles
- ❖ New members and church friends
- ❖ The people who give time and effort as Elders and church officers to keep everything going, and the people who make our churches friendly places to be
- ❖ The people who give time, effort or money to relieve the suffering of others, and who do the work of the Kingdom



Pastorate News

The pastorate committee continues to make progress; the profiles and summary page are getting final checks and will go to Synod and the Moderators soon. Practical details for working together as a Pastorate are coming together.

Weoley Castle News

Services: 11 AM on Sundays

Mar 2nd: Café style Bible study, led by Sam

Mar 9th: led by Phil Seadon—including Communion

Mar 16th: led by Ted

Mar 23rd: led by Ian Thornley

Mar 30th: (Mothering Sunday) led by Barbara Calvert—joint with Weoley Hill at Weoley Castle

Apr 6th: led by Melanie Smith—ordination and induction of new Elders

Sunday afternoons at 4 PM:

Informal, family-friendly services with food—led by Sam, Katie, Susie & Jonah.



More than 90 children came with parents to our half-term **Family Fun Day** on 18th February. The ‘organised chaos’ included craft activities, games, lunch, and concluded with a toy “swap shop”, where youngsters could carry away free donated pre-loved toys. See the pictures of some of the swap shop stock and the results of mask-making.

We are in the voting stage of an **Elders election**, and the ordination/induction of new Elders is planned for 6th April.

It has been decided to try moving Debbie Flynn's '**Swap Shop**' to Monday mornings. There, she and Hope offer free items of donated school uniform, clothing, books etc., together with hot drinks and snacks from 10 AM till 12 NOON.

'**Warm Welcome**' will be less hectic as it continues to live up to its name on Fridays from 10 AM till 3 PM, with **café** serving free hot drinks, biscuits, garlic toast and conversation, **Andy's advice corner** and the '**Incredible Surplus**' food pantry—all in the morning—and a free light lunch at 1.30 PM.

News of the Fellowship

On Thursday 27th February, the mortal remains of **Christine Miles** were 'planted' near to those of Miles at the Natural Burial Ground, Westall Park. At the memorial service following at WCCC, we heard of their many years' work with disabled people in Pakistan, sponsored by C.M.S. After returning to the U.K., Christine was a member of WCCC for close on 30 years, and we celebrated her work with children and young people, her wise service as Elder, Treasurer and Church Secretary, and her contributions to worship, both with a beautiful singing voice and in leading services. The picture shows Christine on a final visit to her native Wales in early December.



We hear that **Peter Cruchley** (now with the WCC in Geneva) has recently been diagnosed with colon cancer. He is receiving chemotherapy prior to surgery. He and family will appreciate your prayers. Please also remember **Keith Twamley** as he tries a new treatment.



Weoley Hill News

The retiring collection for March is Brushstrokes

Brushstrokes Community Project

Established in 1999 Brushstrokes provides a range of services and activities in Sandwell, West Birmingham and Dudley. The charity focuses on supporting and integrating vulnerable and marginalised individuals as they settle into life in the UK. The vision is for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to feel safe, avoid poverty and build fulfilling lives in the UK.

The charity provides urgently needed food and clothing, English lessons, activities and specialist advice to support people in need and helping them to feel part of the local community

Brushstrokes serves the whole community with kindness and respect, to affirm the rights and dignities of vulnerable people across Sandwell, West Birmingham and the Black Country. Brushstrokes now welcomes people from over 100 countries.



Lent Groups

LENT STUDY GROUPS

you are welcome to join

ecumenical discussion groups at

Weoley Hill Church, Green Meadow Rd, B29 4DE

2 PM Tuesdays, starting 18th March

using Bible Society material *Alive*

—let Ann know if you wish to come

St Mary's, Bristol Rd, B29 6ND

10.30 AM & 7.30 PM Thursdays, starting 13th March

Using the film *The Chosen* as a discussion starter

Message 07584 894687 to indicate interest

This year for our Ecumenical Lent groups the participating churches of St Mary's, Selly Oak Methodist and Weoley Hill have decided to make our own choices as to what to study. The information above is what we have to date. There is no information from the Methodist church yet.

Please choose which group appeals to you. The group information will be shared with the other churches and also the Friends.

Weoley Hill: *See the notice above.* Each session has a film followed by points for discussion. The first session will be included in the worship on Sunday 9 March. The remaining sessions will take place as above, starting with the second session. The films tell the stories of people who encountered Jesus after his resurrection, addressing human needs and showing how he still meets those needs today.

The topics are: *Transformed by Love, Surprised by hope, Filled with peace, Living in freedom. Fulfilling our purpose.*

You are all invited to attend.

Ann

Weoley Hill Calendar for March 2025

Sunday	2	10.30 AM: Worship & communion led by Rev Melanie Smith. Reception of new member.
Wednesday	5	Ash Wednesday
Friday	7	10.30 AM: World Day of Prayer service
Sunday	9	10.30 AM: Worship led by Ann Evans.
Wednesday	12	7.30 PM: Elders
Thursday	13	10.30 AM: Lent group at St Marys 7.30 PM: Lent group at St Marys
Sunday	16	10.30 AM: Worship led by Annette Sampson.
Tuesday	18	2 PM: Lent Group
Thursday	20	10.30 AM: Lent group at St Marys 7.30 PM: Lent group at St Marys
Sunday	23	10.30 AM: Worship led by Alan Cotgreave. 12 noon: Church AGM after worship
Tuesday	25	2 PM: Lent Group
Thursday	27	10.30 AM: Lent group at St Marys 7.30 PM: Lent group at St Marys
Sunday	30	10.30 AM: Mothering Sunday joint worship at Weoley Castle led by Barbara Calvert

1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 10.30 AM: Tuesday Fellowship, usually at Sue's house, all welcome. (May suspend for Lent Study)

Wednesdays at 10 AM: Art Club, all welcome.

Fridays at 6.45 PM. Community Choir, all welcome.

The next issue will be available in early April. Contributions are requested! Send them to Ted Forgan at Weoley Castle or Cheryl Thornett at Weoley Hill.

Is Chemistry funny?

- see if you get a reaction...

1. If H_2O is the formula for water, what is the formula for ice?
2. What crime is committed if someone throws sodium chloride at you?
3. What element is like a stupid jailbird?
4. What is a pirate's favourite gas?
5. Why are the elements helium, curium and barium important in medicine?
6. Why can't you trust atoms to tell the truth?
7. Given that H_2O is water, what is H_2O_4 ?
8. Why is hamburger lower energy meat than steak?
9. Do you know a good chemistry joke about nitrogen and oxygen?
10. What is copper nitrate?

1. H_2O cubed.
2. A salt.
3. Silicon.
4. Aaar-gon.
5. If you can't helium or curium, you may have to barium.
6. They make up everything.
7. Drinking, washing, swimming etc.
8. Because it's in a ground state.
9. NO
10. Overtime pay for police.

Weoley Castle & Weoley Hill Churches

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 in outline or in complete form.

THE PASTORATE IS CURRENTLY IN VACANCY

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