

# Roundabout



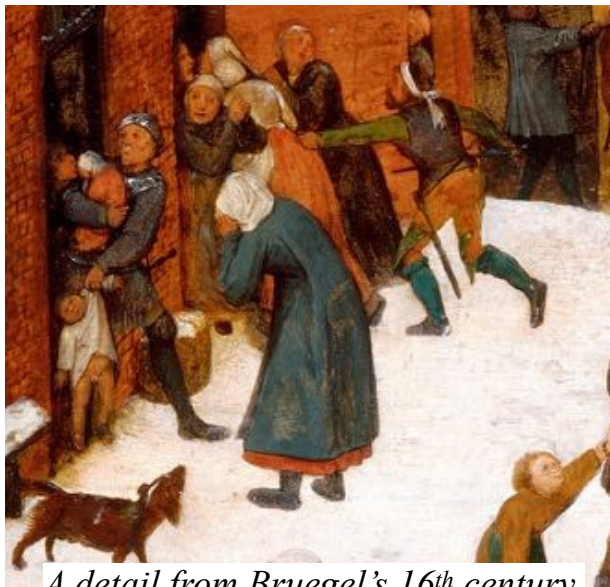
**The Cotteridge Church  
Witnessing at the Heart of the Community**

**January 2025**

## Message from our Minister

In the cold, snowy countries of Scandinavia it is a Christmas tradition to celebrate St Lucy. It is done by a choir dressed all in white, one member chosen to be St Lucy. Each choir member holds a glowing, lit candle. Apart from the candles it is completely dark to symbolise the message of light in the darkness. But there is one more thing. St Lucy always wears a red ribbon round her waist, as it was a sword that killed the saint. The red ribbon speaks about suffering and pain.

As we look back on the year just passed, we grieve for the suffering of the world. As of December 2024, there are over 50 armed conflicts worldwide, marking the highest number since World War Two. Many of these conflicts are all too familiar with over 45,000 Palestinian deaths, with more than half being women and children. In fact, Oxfam notes that over 6,000 women and 11,000 children have been killed in Gaza over the past year, marking one of the highest civilian death tolls in recent conflicts. Children, infants, babies...killed and maimed by human made bombs.



A detail from Bruegel's 16<sup>th</sup> century painting of  
*The Massacre of the Innocents.*

The Massacre of the Innocents, as recorded in Matthew's gospel, is ordered by King Herod. He is afraid. Afraid for his future when the wisemen from the East consulted him, asking 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?' Herod is afraid of a newborn child. And so, he orders all the children in and around Bethlehem two years old or under to be killed.

*'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children, she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'* (Matt 2.18)

We are rightly horrified by this story in Matthew coming just after the manger scene with "Little Jesus, sweetly sleep, do not stir, we will lend a coat of fur".

Jesus was born impoverished into a violent world. And shortly after his birth a 'Ramah-cry' echoed around the streets of Bethlehem as it does today in our lives and in our world.

And yet the light shines in the darkness. We will not snuff the candle by thinking there is nothing we can do. We are all called to be the light of Christ in the world and as this new year begins, we will commit ourselves again as a church community to challenge injustice locally, nationally and globally. Our Community Services Committee has agreed a social justice strategy for the year ahead as we seek together with all those who share our values to redouble our efforts and commit ourselves to Church Action on Poverty's campaign- Let's End Poverty. In Lent we are planning to engage as many people as possible with Christian Aid's new Lent course 'Act on Poverty'. So many ways we can make a difference.



**LET'S END POVERTY  
IN THE UK AND GLOBALLY**



In our Advent service 1<sup>st</sup> December we were each given a white angel knitted by our Knit and Natter group to hang on our Christmas tree as a symbol of love and peace. As we take down our decorations imagine the white angel with a red ribbon around her waist and pray for the peace of the world.

Revd Barbara Calvert

### St Lucy - 13th December

Saint Lucy's Day or the Feast of St. Lucy is marked by Catholics and Orthodox Christians and by the Lutheran Church.

She is remembered in the USA and Europe, especially Scandinavia.

Lucy, whose name means 'light', is the patron saint of the blind.

Lucy was born in 283 AD in Syracuse, Sicily, and was killed there in 303 AD during Roman persecution under the Emperor Diocletian.

**The legend of Lucy** Lucy is said to have been the daughter of a rich nobleman who died when she was young. Her mother, not a Christian, wanted to arrange a marriage between Lucy and a rich Pagan man. Lucy had committed her life to Christ and pledged to remain a virgin. She wished to spend the money intended for her dowry on alms for the poor. Lucy travelled with her mother to the tomb of Saint Agatha. As they prayed at the tomb, Lucy saw a vision of Saint Agatha and her mother's longstanding illness was miraculously cured as Lucy had hoped it would be. Lucy's mother converted to Christianity. Lucy was then able to spend her money helping the poor, but her intended bridegroom was not pleased and denounced her to the Roman governor as a Christian.



St Mary's Basilica,  
Phoenix, Arizona

The governor first ordered Lucy to make sacrifices to his idols, but she refused and said she would only sacrifice to Christ through her good works. Hearing this, the governor sentenced Lucy to forced prostitution as an intensely degrading punishment, but she claimed that her soul would remain pure no matter what was done to her against her will. When the guards came to carry her out, the Holy Spirit made her body heavy and immobile, impossible to lift.

Lucy was put to death after suffering various tortures. She was burned alive but miraculously unharmed. Despite being stabbed through the neck with a dagger she continued to prophesy the downfall of the governor, the emperor and his co-regent, all of which happened after her death. In some accounts, her eyes were torn out, but healed by God, which supports her association with the blind and explains why she is often pictured holding two eyes on a dish. [as in the stained glass above]. The sword around her waist depicts the weapon used to kill her, and the palm frond that she was a martyr.

Celia Lester. [Written after reading the Minister's address.]

## Friends and Family

First of all - Very best wishes for 2025. Let us pray that we and our families and friends have a peaceful and enjoyable year.

Also, of course, let us pray for all those less fortunate than ourselves. At the moment our world is torn apart by wars, thousands of people have been killed, thousands have had their lives turned upside down by acts of violence. The Middle East and Ukraine feature most frequently in our news, but there are many other conflicts in many other areas. Let us pray for these, and do all we can to stop the conflicts, and ease their suffering.

We were sad to hear of the death of Dorothy Hodge, and send our prayers and condolences to her family and friends. Her funeral will be held on 7th January. We send congratulations to Sandra's mother, who celebrated her 99th birthday on the 12th December.

Following Shirley's retirement, Tina has been working really hard, and everyone is delighted with her food. Her roast dinners are proving very popular.

**Tuesday Fellowship** is a group which is open to all. We meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 2.00pm in the Cotswold Room and below is a list of dates with the speakers /activities. Please feel free to come and join us.

Welcome to our 2025 meetings. Thank you. Linda Mann

### **TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP DATES - November - December 2024**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>OPENER</u>
January 14th	A.G.M. Cheese & biscuits	L.M.
January 28th	Roger on his travels	R.C.
February 11th	Hobbies past & Present	H.P.
February 25th	Rita - I'm just wild about Harry	S.B.

### **Services in January and February 2025**

	<b>5th January</b>	<b>12th January</b>	<b>19th January</b>	<b>26th January</b>
<b>10:30 am</b>	Lynn Weaver All age Worship	Revd R. Collins HC	John Cooper	Revd Steve Faber HC
<b>6:30 pm</b>	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>
	<b>2nd February</b>	<b>9th February</b>	<b>16th February</b>	<b>23rd February</b>
<b>10:30 am</b>	Revd B. Calvert All age Worship	Revd Jenny Tomlinson HC	Revd Melanie Smith Morning Worship	Revd R. Collins HC
<b>6:30 pm</b>	<i>LA</i>	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>

Lynne Weaver is a lay chaplain for Methodist Homes for the Aged.

Revd Steve Faber is Moderator of the West Midlands Synod of the URC.

Revd Jenny Tomlinson is Archdeacon of Birmingham.

Revd Melanie Smith is a URC minister

Please note that the wine served at Communion on the second Sunday of the month will be alcoholic. The Communion elements will continue to be brought to the congregation in their seats.

Tuesdays: 10.00 am: There will be a short service of Holy Communion at the Church.

Wednesdays at 7.30 pm: There will be no online worship on Zoom.

## Behind the Scenes in our Church!



Property & Management is the committee that looks after the building. A small team does jobs within our capability, often directed by Sarah our administrator. Volunteers such as Tony Dyer turn up most Friday mornings and give a few hours of their time. Tony & I start by testing the fire alarm system. We trigger one of the nine 'break glass' points found at all the exits. Once a month we run the taps to take the temperature of the hot and cold water systems, making sure that legionella bacteria is being kept at a low level. Sometimes we get the ladders out, buy some paint, and freshen up a room with emulsion. The Clee room, formerly the Day Centre main sitting room, was recently given a tidy up, with a more modern coat of paint ready for different groups to hire. The Cotswold room was next on our list. A cracked window had let water drip on to some wallpaper. We stopped the leak then tried painting over the stain but it bled through. In that area we stripped off the old wallpaper and added some new sections then painted on top of that. The ceiling paper also

needed some repair so while the paste table was out we took out the older paper and repaired some sections; then painted on top. Now the paint has been put away we plan to lay new carpet tiles.

Steve & Dorothy keep busy making sure the boilers run as efficiently as possible, and continuously change lightbulbs when they fail, usually upgrading them to LED units. Steve goes around testing the emergency lighting so that in the event of a fire the exit signs stay bright. Steve and Dorothy also keep an eye on the electrical safety of portable devices by running a 'PAT' check on them every few months.

Once a year the Methodist circuit asks for a building statement, asking us to certify that basic things like the gutters are clear to shed water and are in good repair. This means getting up onto flat roof areas for an inspection. Mike Ravenhill and myself did two trips after Sunday services certifying the roof and guttering, and noting any slipped slates. In short we do our best giving a few hours each week keeping a 100 year old building running and useable, and we turn our hand to many different tasks and skills. My thanks to all involved.



Peter Childs.



## Your support helped Kokebe return home happily



Going home is a momentous occasion for women who have undergone treatment for obstetric fistula. Kokebe lived unhappily for over a decade with incontinence after her baby's stillbirth.



But thanks to your support, the Hamlin Patient Identification Team was able to transport her to the Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa for treatment.

At first, Kokebe couldn't believe that a different life was possible. But when she saw other patients being treated for their injuries, she began to hope that she too might be cured. 'They [the staff] treated us nicely. They gave us soap, pyjamas and blankets and served nice foods.'



"Now I am about to go home, I feel excited. Alhamdulillah [praise be to God], I am cured and ready to go home with happiness."

Our Knit and Natter group had a busy 2024. Our many projects included knitted Easter chicks (about 100 sold from the café), knitted snowmen, Santas and other Christmas novelties sold at the Christmas fair, and a host of little knitted angels given to everyone at the Advent service 1<sup>st</sup> December. A reminder through Advent to 'Hush the noise and hear the angels sing'

But perhaps most importantly we completed three knitted blankets. These were sent to the Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia bringing comfort to women who had suffered very difficult child births leaving them in need of corrective surgery.

Barbara Calvert





The Cotteridge Church  
**Joint Church Council**  
**Summary of Proceedings 20th November 2024**

**Present:** Roger C., Jane S., Dorothy A., Stephen A., Mike R., Alison S., Chris P., Mike M., and Phil A., / Sandra W., and Chris P., attended via zoom.

**Apologies:** Pam W.,

The meeting opened with a short prayer.

**Minutes** of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

All **ACTIONS** from the previous meeting were noted as having been completed.

The new cleaner has begun working / There's a new named contact for the Charity Commission / SP. has retired / A Lunch Club has begun / The 'Coming Together' was successful / URC Pastorate profiles are being compiled / Barn Dance was a success / The lunch and final service for Mike and Susan went well / Christmas Fair plans are coming together / Christmas Trees are on order for delivery / We still require two members to take the Safeguarding Leadership Training / Security of the garden remains an ongoing issue to be dealt with.

**Safeguarding:** No safeguarding issues have been raised.

**Reports:**

**Community Services Committee** report was presented to the meeting:

Main points raised were: The new catering menu / the success of the C2U coffee morning / the new Saplings provision / church activities – Barn Dance etc. the running of these events is dependent on availability of willing volunteers. / success of the recent Eastbourne Trip / update on how the committee is working towards meeting the Strategy Actions / Social issues – draft proposals for supporting Christian Aid and Church Action on Poverty going forward / Website issues and use of Social Media – Website is updated by two members as far as possible – one member updates FaceBook for the church.

**Worship & Pastoral Committee** report was presented to the meeting:

Main points raised were: The success of the Coming Together – with a request for this to be repeated / the difficulty for some members of reading the Christian Aid material on the screen during the Harvest service / Concern the building was not open for prayer following the recent fatal road accident in the area – it was noted that the building is open for a large part of the day for visitors to come in for private prayer should they wish / Proposed ministry provision discussed and now known by wider community / A discussion on using the Common Cup was had and deferred for a future date / The Anglican vacancy has been advertised, with interviews due on 12<sup>th</sup> December / The AV system proposals were received for discussion at JCC / A community lunch has been suggested / A service of light has been suggested and is to be looked at for holding for Advent 2025.

**Property & Management Committee** report was presented to the meeting:

Main points raised: Decoration of church rooms is being undertaken / work on the plaster work in Malvern room is to go ahead shortly /the Groundwork bid for



funding was not successful – thanks expressed to Sandra W., for her work on the application / the roof has been checked for slipped slates and gutters cleared.

**Administrator:** No report though Administrator is in regular contact with Trustees.

**CTB30:** Minutes of the latest meeting to be available on church notice board shortly.

**Finance:** Finances are stable. Funding to the CofE has been reduced for the remainder of the year, this will increase once future ministers are appointed.

**Matters for discussion:**

The AV system proposal were discussed and moving forward further discussion with the chosen company is required – JCC expressed their thanks to John Co., for the work he has undertaken on behalf of the church.

**Policies:** Outstanding policy reviews were discussed and approved as appropriate. These will now be updated and filed.

**Membership** now stands at 71.

**Events:** Christmas Fair-30<sup>th</sup> November

There were no denominational items, other than the next meeting for the URC pastorate is taking place on 26<sup>th</sup> November.


**AOB:** The suggestion concerning Evac chairs is to be sent to P&M for a future meeting.

**Future meeting dates** for 2025: 15/01, 12/03, 14/05, 16/07, 17/09, 12/11 with the AGM hopefully on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

The meeting closed at 21:02 with the saying of The Grace.

JCC Chair November 2024

## Thoughts after Christmas

A night sky with a bright star and silhouettes of the Nativity scene. The text is overlaid on the image.

O little town of Bethlehem we still do see thee lie,  
But now in dark and dismal streets your young men sometimes die.  
Our ears can hear the bullets but yet above the din  
Where people will receive him, still our dear Lord enters in.  
O Holy Child of Bethlehem look down upon their fate  
And make the world do something before it is too late.  
O help the fight for justice to change this living hell  
O come to them, abide with them, our dear Immanuel.

Rita Sutton



# Boys' Brigade



At the Church Christmas Fair the BB, as usual, ran the tombola stall. Many thanks to everybody who supported us and we raised over £120.



The session finished with our Christmas party. Thanks to everybody who helped in any way. All the lads had a great time with plenty of food.

The new session starts on the 10<sup>th</sup> January when any new boys would be most welcome.

Bob Hotchkiss



## ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

I have stopped fishing in Rowheath Park Pool this year due to a huge number of cormorants moving inland and eating most of the fish!



Instead, a short distance down the road, an idyllic spot on the canal has been my fishing venue. I've sheltered under an overhanging willow tree, observed a kingfisher and long tailed tits and caught many fish.



That was until workers from the Canal & River Trust (formerly British Waterways) arrived in a large barge and converted the tree into woodchip in two minutes' flat. The fish moved away and the canal is now a race track for speedy canal boats - so no more fishing for a while.



But...nature is resilient, the tree will re-grow and we must all continue to plant trees and set examples with our 'green' programmes.  
Bob Burton



What we do , however small, will make a difference in 2025.

Happy new year everyone...

You know from all the statements on the TV and Radio that it is more important than ever to make changes in our lifestyle in 2025. We heard the message from the Head of United Nations yesterday about this last 10 years being the warmest for our planet and that in itself is frightening, particularly for those low lying countries who fear the rise in the ocean temperature will bring about more extreme weather, and thus flooding.

It's difficult, I know, to think what we do is making a difference - but it is!

At The Cotteridge Church we are always looking at ways we can support reducing our carbon footprint. We have changed lights to LEDs. Re-cycled our paper, cardboard and plastics through a company called First Mile which collects the white bags you often see outside the church. Rooms have been upgraded and made more efficient for use. We are looking at ways to insulate the building...a future challenge. Our wonderful kitchen has found ways to reduce wastage and have a menu that reflects the need for reducing our meat intake...so many good things that we need to celebrate and then in 2025 look to further ideas and ways to reduce energy and reduce our carbon footprint.

So individually we can also make those changes and at the beginning of a New Year is the time to consider what they may be...

Will it be making sure all light bulbs are energy efficient?

Will it be turning down the thermostat just a degree?

Will it be buying a warm jumper or fleece to put on rather than the heating in the day?

Will it be planning to grow more veggies in the garden - a good excuse to look at seed catalogues?

Will it be planning 2 meat free meals a week ?

Will it be trying to reduce waste by freezing food..planning a weekly menu ?

Will it be by thinking of ways to insulate your home as economically as possible?

There are so many ideas - programmes to watch, ideas to listen to, books and articles to read.

Whatever it is that you can do ...PLEASE make it a PRIORITY for 2025.

You know that everything we do does make a difference...so let's do this together and support all the efforts we can to make 2025 a year when action is taken and Climate Change is being addressed.

Thank you and a really Happy Eco. year 2025

Sandra Walton

## Thank you to all our Volunteers

The Cotteridge Church could not operate as a building or a hub for community activity and services without a substantial band of volunteers working alongside our employees. They help on the coffee bar, with garden and building maintenance, run activities like Saplings, the Sale Room, arrange flowers, run events, run the Book Centre and more. Tasks are many and varied to suit skills and interests. Some volunteers are church members,



but many are not. Some are here weekly or more, some occasionally, but we are very grateful to all who put time and effort into making The Cotteridge Church a seven-day-a-week church that serves its local community.

As a small token of our thanks, the Community Services Committee invited volunteers to join a Christmas lunch on 18<sup>th</sup> December. All who wished to and were able to attend enjoyed the delicious food and the opportunity to chat and share Christmas cracker jokes! Thanks to Tina and Sonia for their expert cooking and to Sarah and Linda W for assisting with service, and to everyone making this a lovely event.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Cotteridge Church - and we always need more help – please contact our Administrator, Sarah who will explain the opportunities and take you through our safer recruitment process. It could be you at the thank you Christmas meal next year!

Pam Waddell

## Our Church Garden.



It's the start of 2025, & already there are signs of new life in our gardens - bulbs appearing - & now is the time to think about sowing plant & vegetable seeds.

There is a large greenhouse (unheated) which could house your seeds too if you wish - just see Chris P. or Bob B.

We always need help - cutting down, watering, tidying & generally keeping front & back gardens in a fit state.

Thanks.

Chris P.





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Large print issue is available to download from our web site.

Your Editor from January 2017 is Celia Lester

Please send copy for the March 2025 edition by 21st February 2025 to  
[roundabout@thecotteridgechurch.org.uk](mailto:roundabout@thecotteridgechurch.org.uk)

The Cotteridge Church, Pershore Road South, Birmingham B30 3EJ

Tel: 0121 433 5518 Fax: 0121 459 6909

Email: [administrator@thecotteridgechurch.org.uk](mailto:administrator@thecotteridgechurch.org.uk)

Website: [www.thecotteridgechurch.org.uk](http://www.thecotteridgechurch.org.uk)

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