



Weoley Hill Church News

May 2016



The Lark Ascending

According to legend, the skylark only sings as it flies upward towards God.

Letter from Dan

Dear Friends

In the letter to the Hebrews chapter 10 and verses 19 to 25 we read.

“We have, then, my friends, complete freedom to go into the Most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. He opened for us a new way, a living way, through the curtain—that is, through his own body. We have a great priest in charge of the house of God. So let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, with hearts that have been purified from a guilty conscience and with bodies washed with clean water. Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise. Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.”

Dating from the early 60's AD, just 30 years after Jesus death, resurrection and ascension, it is written at a time when opposition to Christianity was increasing and people were falling away from the faith. In this section, which continues to chapter 13 verse 17, the author was concerned that hope was being squeezed out by negativity. This is still a very real danger today. During this month we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ and the giving of the Holy Spirit to all believers. Neither of these are conditional, they are not time limited or for some people only. Jesus is Lord of all for all time and the Holy Spirit is given to all Christians for all time. Of course whether we acknowledge the Lordship of Christ or use the Holy Spirit is a

personal choice, but to reject either or both is to diminish both our well-being and our effectiveness in God's world.

So what is it about the Lordship of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit that gives us such great hope? First of all it is not just hope for the future but hope for today that underpins everything we do. The future hope is that because Jesus has overcome death and risen again then his promise that all who believe in him will share eternity with him is guaranteed to happen. Therefore we have no need to worry about what will happen after death, equally we do not need to score good marks on earth in order to get into heaven. We can sit back contented, knowing that whatever else happens we will be with God for the whole of eternity.

That may be great but it is the present hope that is the most beneficial for us whilst we are on earth. If a Christian is alive then God has work for them to do, our job is not finished until God calls us home. If Jesus is Lord and the Holy Spirit has been given to us then hope abounds. We no longer make our own decisions, practical, ethical or moral. We are servants of God, the body of Christ so we simply turn to the head, Jesus, and ask him what we do. When we feel the God given task is beyond us, when our knowledge, skill or wisdom is not equal to the task, when our human desires go against the will of God we simply call upon the Holy Spirit to enable us to do what we find humanly impossible. This wonderful hope means that we are not left alone to struggle but that we always have God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit to help us.

Dan

Personalia

Please continue to remember Grace Carter, Roger & Val Cotgreave, Sam Evans, Mary Fletcher, Colin Graham, Anna Ostojitsch, the Uptons, and the Cope, Felderhof and Mayhew families.

Zim Roshni Chatry is about to sit her university finals.



Advance Notice

The Church Secretary will be away from **7 to 29 June**. Chris Marlow will stand in during that time.

In memoriam

We collected £130 for Auditory Verbal UK in memory of Charlotte Felderhof. Chris has paid this amount to Just Giving, saying 'Love and prayers for all the family from the congregation of Weoley Hill Church'.

Chris Marlow

Neighbourhood News

News and events from other local churches:

St David's has a coffee morning and plant sale on Saturday 7 May, 10 AM to NOON. They collect old mobile phones and printer ink cartridges to recycle for CCHG orphans in India. They also have a recycling bin for clothing and shoes.

Selly Oak Methodist Church 50th Anniversary Celebration: Talents and Art and Craft exhibition on Saturday 7 May 10 AM to 1 PM, admission £2. Refreshments available

St Laurence Church in Northfield has worship for those who have difficulty remembering or concentrating and their carers on these Sundays at 3 PM: 5 June, 16 October, 27 November.

See below for further details:

Christian Aid Week event at **Acocks Green Methodist**, 9 May.

Live Psalms event at **St Barnabas, Erdington**, 13 May.

Christian Mindfulness Workshop at **The Ark, Alvechurch**, 14 May.

This month's retiring collection is for Corrymeela.

Christian Aid Week Love Every Neighbour event

Kate Ormerod, the Regional Co-ordinator for Birmingham and Shropshire, will be speaking at **Acocks Green Methodist Church** on **Monday 9th May at 8.00 PM**. ALL ARE WELCOME

Come and hear how the lives of those threatened by repeated flooding overseas can be transformed. Refreshments afterwards and donations will be invited for the work of Christian Aid.

Any queries ring 0121 711 2362.

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Many thanks to Deb for arranging transport and numbers, and also the lovely sunshine, for our very successful visit to Notcutt's garden centre on Wednesday 13 April. It was easy to walk round and also to see the wide selection of goods on offer. You could buy:

Four candles or fork handles; home-made cakes or garden rakes; hollyhocks or garden clocks; vegetable or patio tables; fences, pots and sheds or plants for summer beds; herbs and roses, flowers for posies; apple trees and huts for bees; cards and books or things for cooks; lots of seeds, stuff to kill weeds; all size water features, plants to attract creatures; 'Cotton Traders', pond waders; plants for bogs, garden clogs; climbers tall, alpines small; japonica, veronica; barbeques and gardening news; pickles, jams and honey. We all spent money; Oh and you could also eat well at the restaurant!

Our next meeting is on **Wednesday 11 May** which will be our annual **Bring-and-Buy for Christian Aid**. EVERYONE is welcome, not just the usual members, to our **Afternoon Tea at 2.30pm**. We are asking for donations of books, plants, handicrafts, cakes and bric-a-brac to sell and there will be the usual tea or coffee, (and cake) to refresh you whilst spending. All donations of cash or kind are welcome to this good cause.

We will also be asking for numbers for the day **trip to Packwood House on 8 June** so that we can book our entrance times and notify them of those who are National Trust members or not. Contact Deb on 477 9063 if you would like to come. Transport will be arranged.

Lorraine DaCosta

God in the Shadows

Following the terrorist attack in Paris last December I suggested that we should pray for the young men and women fighting for Isis and their related organisations, asking that God would reveal himself to them and give them the gift of repentance. Since then I've heard various stories, not least from our waterways pastor, suggesting that this is indeed happening and on a quite wide scale.

As hard as it to do sometimes we need to remember that these young soldiers are people, little or no different from ourselves, who God loves no matter what they may do. The tabloid media would deny them (or anyone else they dislike) their humanity and as Christians we have to resist that at every cost, otherwise we play the same devil's game. Hating the sin but loving the sinner is a very difficult thing to do at times, but we must do so at all costs.

Quoting from 'Share', the magazine of the Christian charity Stewardship Services (UKET), a great many things are happening in the Middle East which the press don't pick up. One Arabic evangelist reports, in his own words, that something truly remarkable is happening. He believes that in the last 25 years more Muslim people have become Christians than has happened in the previous fourteen centuries. He sees three reasons for this, firstly that more people are praying for the Muslim world than ever before, that a great many Muslims are becoming very disillusioned with the extremists and, most importantly, that there are clearly times in Scripture when God remembers a nation or peoples and moves to draw them to himself.

Many instances have been reported of God speaking directly to individuals through dreams or visions, which the Bible suggests is more common in the Middle Eastern culture than ours. One lovely example concerns a Muslim lady who first saw Jesus, sitting on the stairs in her house to talk to her. This and subsequent encounters led to her asking him into her life. Not an easy choice perhaps when her brother in law was an al-Qaeda soldier. It eventually led to her

becoming a refugee, with all its problems but she still retains the assurance of God's hand being upon her life.

A Jordanian lady runs a charity which began when she learned of the appallingly high rate of sexual abuse in Jordanian orphanages. As a Christian she felt she must do something about it, and with the experience gained and the organisation she created, was in a position to help Syrian refugees arriving in her country, fleeing from Isis. Many of them feel utter failures, leading to serious depression and a high suicide rate, making their emotional support even more vital. The lady's group has united Christians of all denominations, and the Jordanian authorities, to work in their support. She says she feels she has a right, the right of Jesus himself, to stand up for others.

Another family who fled to Jordan report that their two best friends were tortured and killed by Isis troops, who sent them pictures of the bodies with the message that they'd be next. Through the support of a Jordanian church they have learned about Jesus and forgiveness, and say they pray for the killers, asking that Jesus will let them know who he is and lead them to his love.

I have heard similar stories, too many to repeat here, of people, including Isis soldiers, having spiritual encounters with Jesus which challenge them to change their ways and find out more about him. Clearly there is a spiritual side to all of these events, and a major battle to be fought and won if the darkness is to be driven back. And we, if we continue to pray for these issues, are playing our part in that fight, 'for the weapons of our warfare are not material ones' and we 'go not forth alone against the foe.'

This morning's news (27/4/16) contained a report that Isis is running out of funds, and that a great many of their troops are deserting in disillusionment. I see that as an ongoing, ever increasing answer to my own prayers and, I believe, of very many others. Keep praying!

John Davies

Sean Dayton: a live psalms event

7:30PM, Friday 13 May

St Barnabas Church, Erdington High Street, Erdington, B23 6SY

Cost: £10. Tickets Available from 0121 306 4820 or

www.stbarnabaserdington.org.uk

Christian Mindfulness Workshop

Saturday 14th May 2016, 9.30am to 4pm

The Ark, adjoining St Laurence Parish Church, School Lane, Alvechurch, Worcestershire, B48 7SB.

This three session workshop explores mindfulness from a Christian perspective and includes presentations, video clips and small group discussion. There will also be a variety of self-awareness and God-awareness meditations throughout the day.

<http://www.christianmindfulness.co.uk/alvechurch.html>

A first step towards understanding Islam

An evening with Dr Chris Hewer, chaired by Sr. Margaret Walsh IJS

Friday 20 May, 7.30 PM – 9.15 PM (doors open 7.15 PM)

St Mary's Priory, Vivian Road, Harborne B17 0DN

Refreshments available. Donations welcome.

- find out more about Islam
- gain some background knowledge that may help you make more sense of the news
- explore ways of building bridges of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance
- ask questions

Dr Chris Hewer worked at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian Relations in Selly Oak 1986-1999 & 1999-2005 as Adviser on Inter-Faith Relations to the Bishop of Birmingham:

www.chrishewer.org

WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH PRAYER DIARY

“O my people, trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart to Him, for God is our refuge” Ps 62:8

MAY	CHURCH MEMBERS	WE PRAY FOR*:
WK 1: 2 - 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bob Mundell • Brian, Audrey, Jonathan and Elizabeth Nganwa 	... wholeness in all our conversations. That where there is difference of opinion we will not be led into conflict.
WK 2: 9 - 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nancy Nicholls • Pam Norton 	... opportunities to encourage others.
WK 3: 16 - 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jill Palmer • Anita Pickerden 	... security in our identity – an identity rooted in God.
WK 4: 23 - 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phil, Marilyn and the Raw family • Tony Sames 	... patience, grace and peace when going through difficult situations.

* Based on prayers in the United Christian Broadcasters' 'Word for Today'.

NOTE: As always, please feel free to send any feedback on the 'Prayer Diary' and specific prayer requests that you would like to include in future lists to Audrey and Brian at abnganwa12@gmail.com