

Cadbury Pastorate News

Bournville, Weoley Castle &
Weoley Hill Churches



Can you help provide a Christmas hamper? See inside.

November 2020

From the Minister's study—

Dear Friends,

For the All Saints service on the 1st of November I asked the Weoley Hill congregation to write down on a greeting card who or what they had *lost* over the past year as well as what they may have *found*. In telling and sharing the stories of how we have lived, and continue to live, through these challenging times we recognize that while our experiences may differ we are united in empathy, faith and love, journeying together with hope that God is present with us and will lead us to a new day—and new stories!

There are some things that I have “lost” or that I have missed (some trivial, no doubt) as well as many good things that I have found or discovered. But let me tell you that one of the church activities I have particularly missed is the monthly discussion meeting at the Manse. Reading articles together on current political, social, religious, ethical etc issues and sharing our thoughts and stories I find hugely inspiring. Especially when discussing ethical issues and we come with our different experiences and perspectives, the conversation can be very interesting and thought-provoking.

As it does not seem likely that we can meet anytime soon, I have a collection of articles from newspapers and magazines that I keep, hoping that when we do meet again they may still be relevant. One of the articles is an interview with Rutger Bregman (a Dutch historian) in *Positive News* (July-Sept 2020). In his new book, *Humankind. A Hopeful History*, he argues that far from being self-serving, humans are kind and cooperative by nature. And his response to one question particularly caught my attention. He is asked “What is the result of our institutions being designed around how we view human nature?” And his response is: “I think our view of human nature tends to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.... Throughout history, a cynical view of human nature has always been a legitimisation of power. Because if people can’t trust each other, then they need powerful people to look over

them. But if we can trust each other, we can live in a much more egalitarian, genuinely democratic society.” And further along in the interview he says that “most people are pretty decent, but power corrupts.”

This made me think of the church as an institution and how, since the Middle Ages—since Augustine taught the doctrine of original sin—the sinful nature of humanity has been dominant in church teaching. And this has given the church power as pronouncing humanity sinful (from birth, not choice) it claimed a monopoly on salvation. “*The doctrine of original sin gives the church a permanent clientele in a salvation enterprise, with no competition.*” * And we know what this can lead to!

I also think the language in our church liturgies and hymns, which constantly reinforces guilt and shame by reminding us that we are sinners, is not helpful. Of course, we do *sin* (Greek = *hamartia* which means “missing the mark”) but we are not inherently sinful. “*The emphasis on sin has meant that Christianity has come to be seen as life-denying rather than life-enhancing...perhaps the most negative view of human nature of any religion.*” †Yes, there are countless examples of people who are selfish and cruel, doing all kinds of terrible things, but I am sure, and agree with Bregman, that it is far more common that people are decent and kind, and sometimes even heroic. Some of them we revere as saints, but I think it is far better to say that we are *all* saints and sinners.

And what does “salvation” mean, if we have a more positive view of humanity and its potential to do good, recognizing that sin is not the be-all and end-all of our human condition? Well, that is a question that cannot be answered in one sentence but what I can say is that in the New Testament salvation is about transformation in our individual and collective life, repentance of sin being following the way of Jesus, responding to the message of the kingdom of God. May it be so!

And on another note: I write this while in a weeks’ time an important question will be answered: who will be the next president in the United

States? Why is it so important? Because the result of the election will not only determine the future of the United States but it will have an impact on the whole world and many of the global issues we are facing. Never has the choice been so stark between the two candidates, never has the country seemed so divided, and perhaps never have the stakes been so high, so we will await the result with some fear and trembling!

I am reminded of a reading in the Siddur Lev Chadash (the prayerbook of Liberal Judaism) which is relevant as we are part of a world community; we are not independent but interdependent. *Suppose there are several people in a boat, and one of them takes a drill, and starts to bore a hole, and the others protest: "What are you doing?" If the one drilling answers: "What business is it of yours? Am I not boring under myself?", surely they will retort: "But it is our business, because when the water comes in, it will sink the boat with all of us in it!"*

Please keep the US election and its (hopefully peaceful) aftermath in your prayers!

With all best wishes, Leonora

*Revd Robin Meyers, *Saving Jesus from the church*

†Revd Tony Windross, *The thoughtful guide to faith*



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

In line with government restrictions, we will not meet for worship during the remainder of November.

Can you sponsor a hamper?

Christmas hampers for local families

Gini Tambyraja is going to put together some simple hampers for families who may be struggling this year. They will contain Christmas treats, fruit, stocking filler-type toys, a card, letter from Leonora and list of our services and a booklet about Christmas (URC or C of E). Gini estimates that each hamper will cost about £12 pounds, based on an assumed family of 2 adults and 3 children. Names will be recommended by people working through WCCC with Weoley Castle families.



If you would like to contribute to the cost, or sponsor a hamper, please see Nancy or Cheryl soon. There will be an envelope or collection box. This is separate from the gifts being distributed through the Lunch Club.

FWO—CLAIMING TAX

Just a reminder that if you are giving to church via FWO , and your tax status changes , it is important to inform David Marlow or Emlyn Evans. (Bournville & Weoley Castle contributors, inform your own treasurer.) For taxpayers, the church is able to claim an extra 25p for every £, but if you cease to be a taxpayer, we need to change your claim status on the FWO system.

GASDS

For FWO giving for non-taxpayers, and for all cash just placed directly on the offering plate, we can also claim tax back under the GASDS scheme, as long as the amount given is £30 or less.

It also applies to contactless card transactions, but we cannot claim tax for cheque payments under the GASDS system.

If you have any queries about this, please talk to David Marlow or Emlyn Evans.

Pastorate News

Bournville:



The interior of Bournville URC with the front of the sanctuary having received a fresh coat of paint, thanks to David Smith.

Astrid has had a hip operation and is doing well; the rest of us are o.k.
Stuart did our Harvest service, in aid of the foodbank.

A prayer by Joy Rice (From *Ecstatic Puddings*. Reprinted by permission)

May the clouds of yesterday disappear in the sunshine of today
May your days be full of sunbeams instead of hazy grey .
May God keep you and bless you and take away your fears .
May God comfort and embrace you and wipe away tears
May your heart be filled with courage instead of bleak despair .
Remember God is there at the end of each and every Prayer.
Joy is a member of Christian Women's Fellowship

We are not going to the CWF conference in Swanwick in February.

Weoley Castle

Our Monday and Friday Day Centres for housebound senior citizens started as planned in October. The activities are taking place in the Sanctuary to allow people to be sufficiently far apart, which was impossible in the Lounge. The lunches are served in the Hall but with well-separated tables. Despite these changes, those who come are very happy to be back and the users are prepared to pay a slightly increased subs to cover the cost of transport by Shencare, who cannot of course fill their minibuses to capacity. Elite Dance & Karate continue, but we cannot see safe ways of re-starting the other weekday activities. With case numbers continuing to increase, it seems more likely that further restrictions will come in.



A side effect of the change of location of the Day Centres, is that comfy D.C. armchairs are available for some of the congregation on Sundays! We continue to plan for services in person at 11 AM at WCCC on the 2nd (Communion) & 4th Sundays of the month. Nov 8th will be a Remembrance Sunday service, led by Chris Miles & Leonora, and on the 22nd Frank Challenor will lead our service. The 29th is a joint Pastorate service at 10.30 at Weoley Hill, led by one of the Moderators of the URC General Assembly Mr Peter Pay. For other Sundays, we rely on the online services. In the past couple of months, we have had two lively services led in person by Rev. Peter Cruchley.

Members' News: Madge Finch has had to isolate for a minor operation, which has now happened, and she is looking forward to getting back to sterilising everything in sight, while she is helping at the Day Centres! Fay Harvey has had severe balance problems recently and had a period in the QE. She is currently in a residential care home near the airport in Sheldon (Anne Marie Howes Centre), which is rather far from Bruce, who remains at home—but with help coming in every afternoon. We have heard from Margaret Wozencroft, who cannot get to us from the retirement village on the Hagley Rd, but takes a lively interest.



Weoley Castle Harvest Sunday



Weoley Hill



Weoley Hill Harvest Sunday

Harvest Sunday: 100 kilos of staples were delivered to the B30 Foodbank, plus fresh food taken to the Salvation Army Citadel to be used in their food parcel deliveries. The flowers and pot plants were shared with those who can't join us for worship just yet.

Proposals and plans: Ann Evans mentioned an idea from Elders when she last led worship, that besides phoning one another, we arrange to walk (socially distanced) with people who are on their own and provide health benefits as well as company. We hope to set up the Easter Cross for Remembrance Sunday through Remembrance Day itself. You are invited to add a felt poppy or a flower during this period. Looking further ahead, we hope to have an outdoor carol service on 23 December (torches recommended) so that more can attend safely, and the Crib Service on the 24th will be outdoors, weather permitting. *Do you have a garden gazebo we can borrow for these?* Please let Alan know.

JKH floor: The hole has been filled in, but more cracks that were discovered when the blocks were lifted still need to be dealt with. The existing bitumen is difficult to remove so further work needs to be done to seal and apply screed to the floor using the chemicals that do not react with the bitumen. There is a suggestion by the insurers that the crack in the floor is caused by trees close to the hall, but we do not think so. Synod has approved our application for a 25% grant towards the cost but it will be higher because of the extra work. We hope synod will give us the extra grant when the total costing is determined.

| Weoley Hill Calendar for November 2020 | | |
|---|----|--|
| Sunday | 1 | 10.30 AM: Communion led by the minister. |
| Sunday | 8 | 10.30 AM: Remembrance worship led by the minister. |
| Wednesday | 11 | 7.30 PM: Elders budget meeting |
| Sunday | 15 | 10.30 AM: Worship led by the minister. |
| Sunday | 22 | 10.30 AM: Worship led by Alan Cotgreave. POSTPONED: Church budget meeting |
| Sunday | 29 | 10.30 AM: Advent 1. Joint Worship led by [lay] URC Co-Moderator, Peter Pay. |

Special thanks to Alan Cotgreave, who has been creating audio-visual presentations for Sunday worship, and to everyone who is helping to distribute worship sheets and newsletters.

WEOLEY HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH PRAYER DIARY

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.
Hebrews 10:23

| | Church members | |
|--|---|--|
| WK 1: 1 st -7 th Nov | Doreen Longman Sam & Alex Lukwago • <i>Weoley Park Rd</i> • <i>Tillyard Croft</i> | During this month of remembrance let us remember those who have passed away from our congregations, our families and our friends and to uphold those who mourn. Let us also remember those whose lives have been impacted severely by the Corona virus; through loneliness, loss of income, delayed medical treatment, not being with those they love. May our prayers prompt us to seek ways to help or cheer others. |
| WK 2: 8 th -14 th Nov | David & Christine Marlow Jose Marsland Rob McManus, Anna Ostojitsch, Ieuan, Ciaran • <i>Weoley Hill</i> • <i>Fox Hill</i> | |
| WK 3: 15 th - 21 st Nov | Deborah Moriaty Nancy Nicholls <i>Middle Park Rd</i> • <i>Middle Park Close</i> | |
| WK 4: 22 nd - 28 th Nov | Brian & Audrey Nganwa, Jonathan, Elizabeth & Michael Tony Sames <i>Bristol Rd</i> • <i>Head Injury Centre</i> | |
| Wk 5: 29 th -5 th Dec | Margaret Shiner Vida Southall & Carys <i>Bryony Rd</i> • <i>Mimosa & Tamarisk Closes</i> | |

We are still looking for a new way to present both 'diary' and special prayer concerns—suggestions, please!

The Cadbury Pastorate

Covid-19 cancellations:

All worship has been suspended for the remainder of November, but worship materials and prayers are being circulated by email or printed sheet. Notify the minister if you wish to be included.

Recorded worship is also available via the URC Daily Devotions or YouTube.

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.

PASTORATE MINISTER: the Revd Leonora Jagessar

WEOLEY HILL CHURCH Office: 244 6711

Secretary: Cheryl Thornett 475 6338

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WEOLEY CASTLE COMMUNITY CHURCH: 475 3841

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BOURNVILLE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Secretary: Maureen Peart 605 3540

