

# Weoley Hill & Weoley Castle Church News



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*April 2026*

## *From Rev'd Naomi Sakala —*

My name is Rev'd Naomi Sakala, and it is a joy and a privilege to introduce myself to you. I am married to my husband, Gideon, and together we are blessed with two sons, Nathan and Ethan. As a family, we have known God's faithfulness in many seasons of life, and it is from that place of gratitude that I come to share in ministry with you.

I was raised in a Christian home where faith was part of everyday life through prayer, worship, and the reading of Scripture. Over time, I began to sense that God was calling me not only to believe, but to serve. One of my earliest steps into that calling began in a simple but meaningful way, gathering a few children in our home to share Bible stories and songs when they were unable to get to church. What began as a small group soon grew, and in those moments I began to understand the joy of walking alongside others in faith.

Like many journeys of faith, mine has not always been straightforward. There were moments of uncertainty, yet God, in His grace, continued to guide me. In time, I responded fully to His call and went on to study theology. Over the past twelve years, I have had the privilege of serving in different communities, each one shaping me and deepening my understanding of God's love and His people.

At the heart of my ministry is a desire to walk alongside others, to listen, to encourage, and to share in both the joys and challenges of life. I value deeply the wisdom of older generations, the energy of young people and children, and the everyday stories that make each community unique. I believe that each one of us has a place within the body of Christ, and that together we grow as we support and care for one another.

As we journey through the Lenten season towards Easter, I am reminded of the richness and diversity of how we experience this sacred time. In Zambia, where I have lived and ministered, the climax of Lent is the Easter weekend, a time that is vibrant, joyful, and deeply spiritual. It is often marked by what we call revival prayers, where

congregations gather with great expectation. Churches invite guest preachers who bring fresh insight and new perspectives on a shared theme, and sometimes several preachers are scheduled across the weekend.

Choirs, whether for youth, women, or men, prepare songs that carry the message of the season, filling the gatherings with joyful and powerful worship. The services are unhurried and immersive. On Good Friday, we gather in the morning for several hours of worship, take a short break, and then return again in the afternoon for continued prayer, preaching, and song. It is a time of deep spiritual renewal and strong community connection.

On Saturday, many come dressed in their fellowship uniforms, a beautiful expression of identity, unity, and belonging. In Zambia, these uniforms are unique to each group and are greatly treasured. The youths often wear white and black, with a blue scarf/necktie bearing the church logo, and include groups such as the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade. The women's fellowship typically wears white and black with a black headband, while the men's fellowship is often dressed in black suits, white shirts, and a black necktie with a church logo. These colourful expressions add joy to the gathering and reflect the shared commitment of each group within the church family.

The day continues with worship and important moments in the life of the church, including confirmations, welcoming those beginning their journey in Bible study, and preparation for Holy Communion.

Then comes Easter Sunday, the great celebration of the resurrection. It is a joyful and full service, often including Holy Communion, confirmations, and baptisms for both infants and adults. The celebration continues beyond the service as people gather in fellowship, sometimes sharing a traditional drink known as thobwa, celebrating not only Christ's victory over death, but also life together as a community of faith.

Here in Seychelles, I have experienced Easter in a different, yet equally meaningful way. Good Friday is observed with a more reflective tone, with services that allow space for prayer and contemplation. On Saturday, there is often a quieter rhythm, sometimes including online prayers, creating a sense of connection even when gathered in different places. Then on Sunday, we come together in joyful celebration of the resurrection, sharing in worship and fellowship as a community.

Experiencing these different traditions has been a gift. They remind me that while our ways of worship may differ, we are united in the same hope and the same risen Christ.

As I look ahead to this new chapter of ministry in the United Kingdom, I do so with hope and openness. I look forward to journeying together with the communities of Weoley Castle, Weoley Hill, Cotteridge, and Carrs Lane, getting to know one another, sharing in worship, and discovering how God is at work among us.

The message of Easter reminds us that God is always bringing new life, even in unexpected places. As Scripture reminds us, "He is not here; he has risen!" (Luke 24:6). This good news encourages us to live as people of hope, trusting in God's power to renew, restore, and transform our lives and our communities.

My prayer is that we may walk together in faith, hope, and love, encouraging one another and shining the light of Christ in our communities.

May God bless us all as we journey together.  
Amen.



## Prayer page

*We come to you, Lord, from a broken world of broken lives, praying in the despair of our Saviour's death and the hope of his resurrection.*

We pray for an end to wars and for just peace: in the Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan, and places that don't make the headlines. We give thanks for peacemakers and pray that they are supported and strengthened. Help us to help them.

We pray for the world around us and for our better stewardship of its beauty and all that is life-sustaining. We pray especially for people who are harmed by pollution, erosion, drought, rising sea levels and other global harms. Help us to understand our part in the harm and our part in reducing it. Thank you for the people who learn and campaign. Convict our hearts and strengthen our willingness to do better for the earth and all our brothers and sisters in it.

We pray for more accountability, more responsibility, more responsiveness in the people with power, whether political, financial or social. We pray for repentance on the part of people who use their power to benefit themselves at the expense of others. We thank you for the people who speak up despite the risk. Convict our hearts and strengthen our willingness to stand beside them and to speak up not just for ourselves but for all our brothers and sisters in this world.

We pray for everyone who is sick in body, mind or spirit, people known to us and people unknown. We pray for people who are recovering, waiting for tests or treatment—and for people who cannot reach or afford medical help. Thank you for medical professionals, for family and friends, and carers paid and unpaid. Show us how we can better support the people who suffer and the people who give help.

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.  
Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.  
Psalm 51:12-13 (NRSVA)*

# Pastorate News

## Weoley Hill News

*The retiring collection for April is in aid of Dr Barnardo's.*

### *Holy Week worship*

Thursday	2	7.30 PM:	<b>Maundy Thursday</b> worship led by Revd David Tennant, Revd Paul Cho preaching.
Friday	3	7.30 PM:	<b>Good Friday</b> worship led by Ann,
Sunday	5	7 AM:	<b>Early Easter</b> worship led by Ann.
		Ca 8.15 AM:	<b>Breakfast</b> —please notify Alan
		10.30 AM:	<b>Easter worship &amp; communion</b> led by Revd David Tennant.

The **Quiz Night** on 21 March had full tables and raised £272 for Fairtrade. Thanks to Lorraine for all the work she puts into these enjoyable evenings, and to Gini and Sue for their work as kitchen crew. (And thanks to Lorraine's family for turning out and helping with running the quiz.

### **AGM/Church Meeting Sunday 12 April**

Please check your copy of the Annual Report, please deliver any remaining copies of the meeting documents if the person named lives near you, and please attend the meeting.

## Weoley Hill Calendar for April 2026

Thursday	2	7.30 PM: Maundy Thursday worship led by Revd David Tennant, Revd Paul Cho preaching.
Friday	3	7.30 PM: Good Friday worship led by Ann
Sunday	5	7 AM: Early Easter worship led by Ann.
		10.30 AM: Easter worship & communion led by Revd David Tennant.
Sunday	12	10.30 AM: Worship led by Alan noon: Church AGM & meeting
Wednesday	15	7.00 PM Elders' meeting
Sunday	19	10.30 AM: Worship led by Revd Brian Brown
Tuesday	21	10.30 AM: TBC Tuesday group
Sunday	26	10.30 AM: Worship led by Ann.
<b>May</b>		
Sunday	3	10.30 am: Worship & communion led by Revd Alison Geary.
Thursday	7	Polling station for local elections
Sunday	10	10.30 am: Worship led by Ann.

*The **Community Choir** resumes at 6.45 PM on Friday 17 April. See Alan or Gordon for details.*

*The **Tuesday Group** meets on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at 10.30 AM. Please see Ann or Sue for details.*

## Eco corner

### *From Climate Stewards*

**What do a slice of bread, a potato, and a bunch of vegetables have in common?** They are among the most wasted foods in homes today.

In the UK every day, we throw away 24 million slices of bread and 4.4 million potatoes<sup>1</sup>. Weighing in the heaviest are fresh vegetables, with 1.3 million tonnes thrown in the bin every year<sup>2</sup>. The biggest driver of

food waste is from us at home! Not big businesses or far-flung places abroad—food waste is a problem brewing on our doorstep.

Beyond our own kitchens, globally, we throw away one-third of all food produced every year. Yet 800 million people go to bed hungry each night<sup>3</sup>.

Food waste is both a hunger and a climate issue. It contributes more to climate change than flying! 6% of global emissions come from food that is never eaten – three times higher than the aviation industry<sup>4</sup>.

**Why does this matter for us?** The average UK household throws away £620 worth of food every year<sup>5</sup>. That's money wasted – and carbon in the atmosphere. When food rots in landfill, it releases methane, a greenhouse gas over 80 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub> in the short term.

Climate change is already affecting our food. Extreme weather disrupted harvests across Europe in 2024 and 2025, pushing up prices on everyday staples. When we waste less, we ease pressure on a food system already under strain.

**Our food habits: buying, storing, preparing and reusing** The good news – if we pay attention to our food habits we can live more lightly on the land. **In this edition, we are fasting from food waste, sharing more of what we have, and reducing our meat and dairy intake.**

*Why reduce meat and dairy?* The climate impact of industrial meat is enormous. Industrial meat production drives deforestation and requires vast amounts of land and water. When forests are destroyed to produce industrial meat, billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide are released into the atmosphere.

Eating less or no meat, and buying locally produced, organic or low-input meat and dairy products will all reduce our carbon footprint.

How do your food choices impact on the environment? Use [the BBC's Climate Change Food Calculator](#) to find out. (Note: If you have health conditions or concerns, please talk with your GP before changing your diet.)

## RESOURCES WE ARE FEEDING ON THIS WEEK

[Olio](#): An app where you can pick up or give away food locally.

Tips for composting by the Royal Horticultural [Society](#)

[Too Good To Go](#): An app for buying food from local restaurants that would otherwise be thrown away, at a discounted price.

[Community Fridges](#): Find your nearest Community Fridge.

[Local Food Directory & Farm Shops | Food Finders Hub](#)

[Love Food Hate Waste](#): A recipe finder tool – type in the ingredients you want to use and browse suggestions.

[Veg Boxes](#): Find your local veg box scheme.

[Project Drawdown: Food Solutions](#): Explore the world's leading climate solutions for food, agriculture and land use.

[BBC Climate Change Food Calculator](#): See the carbon footprint of what you eat.

### Sources

[1] [2017 UK Harvest: The most commonly wasted foods in British households](#)

[2] [WRAP: Household Food and Drink Waste in the United Kingdom 2021/22](#)

[3] [FAO: Food Loss and Food Waste](#) & [WFP: 5 facts about food waste and hunger](#)

[4] [Our World in Data: Food waste is responsible for 6% of global greenhouse gas emissions](#) & [FAO: Food Wastage Footprint](#)

[5] [WRAP: Household Food and Drink Waste in the United Kingdom 2](#)

***So limit your waste food, cut down on meat and dairy products, try a plant-based meal or two. Also buy local products.***

**Ann**

## Mountains

Have you ever wondered how many times the word mountain is referred to in the Bible? Wow Over 500 times!

Mountains and hills have fascinated me since childhood, singing *All things bright and beautiful, the purple headed mountain, the river running by, the sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky*, written by Cecil F. Alexander. My imagination stimulated at the thought of sunrise and sunset over mountains.

The story of Heidi living high up in the Swiss Alps with her grandfather. The spring flowers appearing after the harsh winter snows have thawed. How I longed to run barefooted in the grass along with the newborn goats and lambs.

The story of Mary Jones, the little Welsh girl who walked bare foot over the Cader Idris mountain range to reach Bala, where she could finally buy her Welsh translated Bible. She had run errands for her neighbours, taken in mending and done all sorts of odd jobs to save her pocket money each week till she had enough. Many years ago I was able to go to the village where she had lived Llanfihangel y Pennant and there almost hidden in a hedge was a stone memorial dedicated to Mary and recognising the beginning of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. This society made it possible to translate the Bible into 72 languages and by now it is available in every country in the world.

My disappointment was enormous when I visited North Wales as an 11-year-old where my older brother was at Bangor University. The Snowdon mountain range was far from purple headed, the peaks were dark grey, overbearing, dark and terrifyingly sombre. The black-grey mining villages were grim, the enormous slate quarries were fearsome with the slag heaps rising desolately above the villages. My childhood fantasies were shattered.

Some years later a great aunt passed away and bequeathed us a huge oil painting by Roger Gallon of Cader Idris. This painting had hung majestically in the front parlour of this great Aunt's house whom we visited annually during the school summer holidays. The dining chairs had horsehair seats which were not comfortable for a child in summer shorts but I and my siblings were under duress to be seen and not heard in the presence of Great Aunt Ida. I sat directly opposite this wonderful painting with its gorgeous detail of a glorious mountain. There were minute figures of workmen tending the land . I was mesmerised by this ornate picture with its tremendous gold filigree frame. After my parents' demise the painting came to us and we determined to explore that mountain and surrounding countryside. In my twenties and seven months pregnant my husband and I climbed Cader Idris via the Saddleback as it was known. The gentle slopes were covered in soft wind-caressed grass, gently nibbled short by the woolly coated sheep in their hundreds. Wooded slopes eventually gave way to

stony paths to the summit . On the warm sunny day I felt I would surely be able to touch heaven.

Later we visited the Lleyn Peninsular and there at last I beheld my purple headed mountains. The miles of purple heather intermingled with golden gorse was truly awe inspiring.

Another year, another holiday brought us to Somerset and the gorgeous Cheddar gorge. It was here where the Rev Augustus Toplady was walking near Burrington Coombe in 1763 when a storm suddenly broke, Toplady found shelter in a break in the rocky gorge which was just large enough to shelter a person, so thankfully on his return home he wrote the hymn *Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.*

In 2015 our youngest grandson was born in Kathmandu, I was invited to join them and spent a joyous five weeks in Pathan. The year before there had been a devastating earthquake and buildings were shored up with wooden poles. Opposite our apartment was a Hindu Temple which had been damaged, tarpaulins covering the roof. We constantly heard chanting and the tinkling of bells as their services progressed. It was somehow reassuring to hear these sounds as I sat on the balcony snuggling the newborn. It was here that I heard of flights over the Himalayas being advertised, so for \$200 I booked myself onto a flight.

It was an amazing experience; the taxi driver took me to Tribhuvan, the domestic airport for Kathmandu, while it was dark still and raining heavily. The driver waited and watched me until I found my way into the terminal. It was dimly lit and a little bit scary but I managed to latch on to a group who were waiting for the same Buddha Air flight. There were no plush waiting lounges, no pre-flight drinks or breakfasts, no refinements at all, just huddles of people crammed onto bare wooden benches. The torrential rain drummed relentlessly on the tin roof... but finally the downpour stopped and we were allowed out onto the tarmac. and a half hour late , we boarded the 17-seater aircraft, propellers spinning We were in single seats; the pilot took us up ,soaring over Kathmandu just as dawn was breaking...Eventually over

the peaks of the Himalayas, there poking out of the clouds, was the unmistakable shape of Mount Everest, the tallest mountain peak in the world. What a privilege to see it in the morning light, the snow glistening! We were able to hand our cameras to the copilot who captured beautiful photos for us. It was a humbling moment to behold the majesty of nature at its most fascinating from a perspective elusive to most.

This trip truly enhanced my appreciation of mountains and I still marvel at their ability to instill a calming security to my thinking.

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the Hills, from whence cometh my help?  
My help cometh from the Lord...* Psalm 121 or known as the Song of Ascents

Margaret Hurlston

## Weoley Castle News

### Sunday morning services: 11 AM at Weoley Castle Community Church

Apr 5<sup>th</sup>: **Easter Sunday**—led by Ted & Carol; including **Communion**

Apr 12<sup>th</sup>: led by Frank Challenor; including **Communion**

Apr 19<sup>th</sup>: **Bible Study**—led by Ted

Apr 26<sup>th</sup>: led by Joe Bevan

May 3<sup>rd</sup>: led by WCCC member

### News of the Fellowship

We hear from Lorraine DaCosta, who visits **Margaret Wozencroft**, our oldest Church Member, that Margaret is not in good health.

**Diane & Keith Twamley's** granddaughter Charlotte is recovering—but slowly after her brain operation in February. **Keith's** health remains much the same.

**Chris Hopkins** says her health is improving, but she is not yet back to 100%. More tests are continuing.

Please hold these and others you know in your prayers.


## **Other News**

**‘Church Declutter’**: we have decided that the WCCC building is getting choked with objects, some of which have not moved for decades, and that sorting this out would take us for ever on our own. We are therefore engaging professional declutterers to help us in this task from Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April until Friday 17<sup>th</sup>. All the usual activities will continue during this period, with the declutterers working around them. As part of this, we are offering surplus goods of possible value (including toys and craft items) at a **“Cashless Jumble Sale”** on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> from 10 – 11.30 AM. Volunteers to help with deciding what to keep and what to say goodbye to are welcome during the week.

Many thanks to **Love Weoley Castle** for a large donation of non-perishable items for our **Food Pantry** at Warm Welcome on Fridays. Demand has increased and we serve more than 40 people each week.

We are welcoming a beginner’s **“English Conversation Class”** for people whose first language is not English, and would like to improve it. This will be at WCCC on Tuesdays from 1.30—3 PM, costing £1 a person per session (includes a cuppa!), starting on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April. This will be led by two experienced volunteers, Anne Burgess & Janet Collins, who are moving from their previous location, which is no longer available.

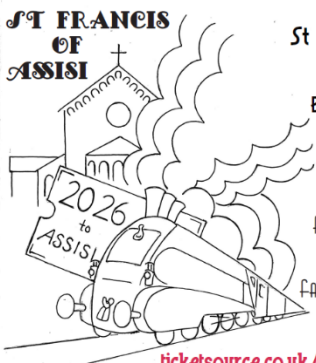
A repeat of the very successful **Weoley-Good: Food-Fayre**—organised by ‘Love Weoley Castle’ will take place at WCCC on Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup> from 1.30 to 3 PM. Come and try out different foods from around the world and chat to the others partaking.

Coming to a platform near you . . . 

## The 20:26 to Assisi

IN THE 800<sup>th</sup> YEAR OF HIS DEATH  
DISCOVER THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF

**ST FRANCIS  
OF  
ASSISI**



7pm Friday

10<sup>th</sup> April

2:30pm Sat

11<sup>th</sup> April

St Francis'  
Church  
Bournville  
B30 2AA

TICKETS

ADULTS - £8

U17 - £5

FAMILIES - £20

Booking:

[ticketsource.co.uk/st-francis](https://ticketsource.co.uk/st-francis)

A new play by

Malcolm Morse

Box Office:

0333 666 33 66

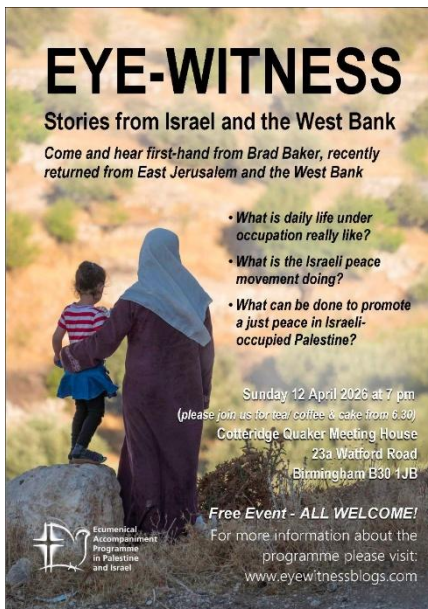


## The 20:26 to Assisi

St Francis' Church Bournville will be performing a play written to commemorate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of St Francis and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building of their church. 7 PM Friday 10 April and 2:30 PM Saturday 11 April. Tickets from [ticketsource.co.uk/st-francis](https://ticketsource.co.uk/st-francis)

## Eye-witness

Stories from Israel and the West Bank. Come and hear first-hand from Brad Baker, recently returned from East Jerusalem and the West Bank. What is daily life like under occupation really like? What is the Israeli peace movement doing? 7 PM Sunday 12 April. Cotteridge Quaker Meeting House, 23a Watford Road, B30 1JB. (refreshments from 6:30 PM)




**EYE-WITNESS**  
Stories from Israel and the West Bank  
*Come and hear first-hand from Brad Baker, recently returned from East Jerusalem and the West Bank*

- What is daily life under occupation really like?
- What is the Israeli peace movement doing?
- What can be done to promote a just peace in Israeli-occupied Palestine?

Sunday 12 April 2026 at 7 pm  
*(please join us for tea, coffee & cake from 6.30)*  
Cotteridge Quaker Meeting House  
23a Watford Road  
Birmingham B30 1JB

**Free Event - ALL WELCOME!**  
For more information about the programme please visit:  
[www.eyewitnessblogs.com](http://www.eyewitnessblogs.com)

 Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel

# More random jokes

My girlfriend adds mascara to emphasise her eyebrows. I told her she had drawn them too high. She seemed surprised.

*What do you call a nose with no body? No body nose.*

Never confide in a vacuum cleaner. They're always collecting dirt.

*Why do pirates have a black patch and only one eye? Because there is only one i in pirate.*

There are three unwritten rules for a good life: 1) , 2) , 3)

*Boy: "The headmaster is so stupid!" Girl: "Do you know who I am?"*

*Boy: "No..." Girl: "I am the headmaster's daughter!" Boy: "Do you know who I am?" Girl: "No..." Boy: "Good!" (Walks away...)*

I think that mountains are too high and mighty to be funny. I laugh about any rolling countryside: because they are all hill areas.

*Teacher: "If you had one pound and you asked your father for another, how many pounds would you have?" Boy: "One pound."*

*Teacher: "You don't know your arithmetic." Boy: "You don't know my father."*

**The next issue will be a little later than usual, but before 10 May. Contributions are requested! Send them to Ted Forgan at Weoley Castle or Cheryl Thornett at Weoley Hill.**

# Weoley Castle & Weoley Hill Churches

Weoley Castle Community Church, Quarry Rd:

Worship Sundays at 11 AM.

Sunday afternoons at 4 PM: *Informal, family-friendly services with food*

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.*

*We have formed a new Pastorate with Cotteridge & Carrs Lane churches and have called a minister who will join us later this year.*

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