

Weoley Hill & Weoley Castle Church News



February 2026

From Ann Evans—

February 2026

Dear friends,

As this is the first letter of the year let me wish you all happy and healthy 2026 even though one month has already gone. Did I blink and January disappeared? Wasn't Christmas just yesterday?

This made me think of the phrase 'time like an ever flowing stream sends all our cares away'. When I checked where this came from it turns out I misquoted it. It is:

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

This is the 5th verse of 'O God our help in ages past' by Isaac Watts and is usually sung about the time of Remembrance Sunday. This hymn is based on Psalm 90 and focuses on the fleeting nature of life and the eternal presence of God. The hymn gives us a reminder of God's constant support and guidance throughout our lives and that his help is always available whenever we need it.



This is not what I intended to write about, but I can always go off tangentially. I was thinking of new beginnings. We may have a new minister sometime during this year and find new ways of working together within the pastorate.

It is the time of the year when the first bulbs to flower are snowdrops. This is 'perce-neige' in French, I think this is a wonderful name for the delicate flower that pierces the snow. A new beginning for flowering plants in the year. Can it also indicate that winter is nearly over?

The snowdrops are coated by an enzyme which inhibits ice crystals forming on the plant and damaging it. The wonders of science and natural defences to prevent damage.

I have still some apples on a tree in my garden and wonder how they coped with the snow and freezing weather of recent weeks. They still look firm and not many have dropped from the tree and the birds and squirrels are enjoying them.

God is involved with nature and how each plant flowers in turn gives us a display which constantly changes. We start with snowdrops, move on to crocuses and then we have the daffodils and tulips. All are grown from bulbs which have laid dormant in the ground since they flowered last year.



We have a lot to be thankful for, the natural cycle of plant life, the changing weather during the seasons (if not even in one day!). We have the biodiversity which as part of God's planet we must endeavour to protect and care for because 'God in his love for us lent us this planet' (Fred Pratt Green). God's eternal love is for us all, caring and protecting us throughout our lives so we must love and care for our planet. Let us give thanks for this and for our friendships with each other. Let us also pray for the candidate as they prepare to come and preach with a view that it may be a new beginning for her and us.

God bless you all

Ann Evans

Prayer page

We give thanks for the lengthening days and first flowers.

We give thanks for new lives in our congregations, newly born and new friends and members.

We pray for people hard hit by recent storms and harsh weather, here and abroad, whether flood or drought, cold or heat. We pray for better wisdom and a stronger will to be faithful stewards of the earth we have been given.

We pray for people living in fear of violence and invasion, for people threatened by war. We pray for strength for the peacemakers and repentance by those who look to violence to get their way. We remember especially the peoples of Greenland, Venezuela, Ukraine, Gaza, Iran, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen.

We pray that in the coming season of Lent, the Spirit will show us our weaknesses and shortcomings, the places where we have gone astray or failed to love others as we are loved. Help us to mend our lives as individuals and as communities and move us to show the love of God more effectively in our families, churches, communities and the world at large.

We pray for the whole process of finding and calling a minister, for wisdom and discernment on our part and on the part of the candidate. May this help to bring the new Pastorate together and unite us in carrying out the work of the Kingdom.

We pray for all among us and in our communities who are ill, injured, in distress of any kind, and for the people who love and support them.

We pray that Your life will spring up anew in our hearts and minds ever and always.

Pastorate News

We are still waiting to hear when the candidate can visit the Pastorate and Preach with a View, which makes all dates and preaching rotas very provisional. Any news will be passed on as quickly as we can.

Weoley Hill News

The retiring collection is for **The Leprosy Mission**.

Our worship on Sunday 15 February will be based on materials provided by the URC, but we hope to have members of the congregation reading parts. Please let Ann know if you are available and willing to participate.

Early notice: the next **Quiz Night** is on Saturday 21 March.

Lent Groups 2026

This year there will only be one Lent group, which will operate ecumenically. It will be at Weoley Hill Church on Tuesday afternoons at 2.00 PM starting on 24 February and last for 5 weeks. We will be studying 'Lent Wise, Spiritual essentials for real life' written by Paula Gooder. We will have various people leading the sessions. Everyone is invited to attend. Light refreshments will be available.

Please remember any events may need to be cancelled or postponed on short notice.

Weoley Hill Calendar for February 2026			
Sunday	1	10.30 AM:	Worship & communion led by Revd Brian Brown.
Tuesday	3	10.30 AM:	Tuesday group
Sunday	8	10.30 AM:	Worship led by Ann
Sunday	15	10.30 AM:	Worship will be a URC service with readers from the congregation..
Tuesday	17	10.30 AM:	Tuesday group
Wednesday	18		Ash Wednesday
Sunday	22	10.30 AM:	Worship led by Alan

Community choir, Fridays 6.45 – 8 PM in term time. See Alan or Gordon.



*Brave or foolhardy daffs out before the end of January!
(In a sunny, sheltered corner on the Bryony side of Weoley Hill.)*

Weoley Castle News

Sunday morning services: 11 AM at Weoley Castle Community Church

N.B. Any one of these services may change if and when the candidate gets a visa and is able to travel to 'Preach with a view'.

Feb 1st: Bible Study—led by Ted

Feb 8th: led by Brian Brown: including Communion

Feb 15th: led by Sam Poursain

Feb 22nd: led by Ian Thornley

Sunday afternoons at 4 PM: because Jonah and Susie will be coping with their first baby, and anything we plan may be postponed by the candidate's visit, Sunday afternoon activities are paused for now.

News of the Fellowship

Congratulations to **Susie & Jonah Bateson**: their first child, a **baby boy**, finally arrived safely on January 28th.

Keith Twamley's scan revealed that his cancer is not progressing, but he recently had a brief stay in hospital for antibiotic treatment of an infection.

Chris Hopkins is not in the best of health; she is recovering from a couple of setbacks due to stomach trouble, but people are helping with the work for Day Centres etc.



Two helpers at the Lunch Club Christmas dinner, at which 30 people were served.

Other News

The **'Weoley Good-Food Fayre' (or is that Weoley-Good: Food-Fayre?)**—organised by 'Love Weoley Castle' is taking place at St Gabriel's Centre B29 5LS on Sunday Feb. 8th 1.30 – 3 PM. It is a chance to get together and taste food from different cultures. Admission free. Kim who comes on Fridays will be contributing.

In half term on Tuesday 17th Feb. from 10 AM - 2 PM, we are having another **'Family Fun Day'**—with crafts, games and a free light lunch. Since this is just 3 days after St. Valentine's, the theme this year is 'Love'—actually.

Peacemaking

On Saturday 7th Feb, Selly Oak Quaker Meeting are organising a workshop from 10.30AM - 3.30PM on **'Challenging Narratives of Division'**—a chance to think about responding to the divisions in our communities. Let them know you are attending at peacehub.org.uk/division and bring a lunch to share. Selly Oak Meeting House is on the Bristol Road at the top of the hill coming out of Selly Oak towards Northfield: B29 6NB.

Eco notes for this month

Can we do this together as a church or as individuals? If we all do our bit where we can it will help our environment.

Enhancing Biodiversity

Biodiversity underpins everything from clean air to stable ecosystems. Here's how individuals can help preserve and enhance it:

Support Native Ecosystems

Plant Native Species: Indigenous plants require less water and provide food and habitat for local wildlife.

Create Wildlife Havens: Install bird boxes, bee hotels, or hedgehog highways to encourage biodiversity in urban settings.

Join in "No Mow May": Give native species time to thrive in your lawn and provide cover for wildlife.

Reduce Harmful Practices

Avoid Pesticides and Chemicals: These disrupt ecosystems and harm pollinators. opt for organic gardening solutions.

Compost: Reduce landfill by composting your garden waste and vegetable cuttings.

More Plants, less Lawn: Replace some of your lawns with wildflower gardens or mixed plantings that support insects and birds.

Protect Waterways

Stop Pollution at the Source: Properly dispose of waste and minimize use of household products with microplastics.

Participate in Cleanups: Join or organize local efforts to clean rivers, parks, and coastal areas.

Make Biodiversity-Friendly Choices

Consume Sustainable Seafood: Check labels or apps that confirm responsible fishing practices.

Choose Products which are Sensitive to Biodiversity: Fair trade for preference but also Rainforest Alliance etc.

Join Forces for Nature

Volunteer Locally: Help with native plant restoration, citizen science, or wildlife monitoring.

Join Staffordshire Wildlife Trust: support our leading local organisation for wildlife.

Support Conservation Organizations: Donate time or funds to groups protecting habitats and endangered species.

Ann Evans

The next issue will be available around 1 March. Contributions are requested! Send them to Ted Forgan at Weoley Castle or Chris Marlow at Weoley Hill.

Bible questions: how well do you know your Bible?

What did God think after He created Adam?
"I can do better than that."—and He created woman. (Genesis 2: 22)



Who was the earliest female financier in the Bible?

Pharaoh's daughter -- she went to the Bank of the Nile and drew out a little prophet. (Exodus 2: 6)

What kind of man was Boaz before he got married?
Ruthless. (Ruth 4: 13)

What make of motor vehicles did early Christians ride in?
Acts 2: 12 says Jesus' followers "were all in one Accord"—a car produced by Honda for 50 years. It must have been a bit of a squeeze...

Which one of Yahweh's servants was the most flagrant lawbreaker?
Moses: because he broke all 10 commandments at once. (Exodus 32: 19)

Where is the first tennis match mentioned in the Bible?
When Joseph served in Pharaoh's court. (Genesis 41: 46)

Which Bible character had no parents?
Joshua, son of Nun (Joshua 1:1).

Where is a big square dance class mentioned in the Bible?
"There are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left." (Jonah 4: 11)

Who was probably even more unhappy than the older son when the prodigal son returned home?
The fatted calf. (Luke 15: 23)

Which Bible book sounds like it might be a theatrical production?
Acts

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 are forming a new Pastorate with Cotteridge & Carrs Lane churches and hope to call a minister to the Pastorate soon

WEOLEY HILL CHURCH Office: 244 6711

Secretary: Ann Evans 628 4558

B29 4DE

weoleyhillchurch.org.uk

WEOLEY CASTLE COMMUNITY CHURCH: 475 3841

weoleycastlecommunitychurchurc.org.uk

weoleycastlecommunitychurch50@gmail.com

B29 5LE

