

Weoley Hill & Weoley Castle Church News



The pastorate has called Revd Naomi Sakala to be our minister and the call has been accepted.

March 2026

From Ted Forgan—

Life in a Cool Climate

Have you seen Clive Myrie's African Adventure series on the BBC? If not, do get to watch it on catch-up! You will see the respected newsreader eating, dancing and drumming with the people he meets and clearly enjoying himself in the lively welcoming feel of the places he visits. Africa is a huge continent, and Clive didn't visit Zambia or the Seychelles, but he did travel all the way from Cape Town in South Africa to the northern tip of the continent: Tangier in Morocco. Everywhere he went, there was an infectious joyful spirit, which seems to me like the spirit of Africa. Can you imagine yourself letting your hair down like Clive Myrie did, as he greeted everyone he met with enthusiasm, a firm handshake and a hug and then engaged in cooking, artwork, dancing and music-making? I think this makes the point that there will always be cultural differences between different countries—even say between England and Scotland—and there will also be differences in the way we do Church.

Clive Myrie was a joy to watch, but I sat there thinking that I am a restrained Englishman, who doesn't show his emotions much—partly my upbringing and partly cultural. Clive whose parents came from the Caribbean—and generations before that, from slavery in West Africa—was maybe finding his roots, expressing his heritage (and recalling his time as a reporter in South Africa). Maybe English reserve goes with our cool climate: we have had weeks of depressing weather, often dull and rainy. Some places in the UK have had more than 40 days with rain every day, and the inhabitants there have no doubt been considering making an Ark.

If you search for a picture of the Seychelles, where Naomi and her husband are currently working, you will find blue seas, sandy beaches and palm trees. It looks like the perfect holiday destination; even better as a place to work! Why should anyone leave there—or Zambia—and come to live and work in Birmingham? Let's not talk down our City too

much: it has more miles of canals than Venice (and isn't full of tourists, or the super-rich getting married). Many of us have lived here for many years and appreciated the life here. However, Naomi is bound to get a physical shock at the different climate, even if her children are looking forward to finding out what snow feels and looks like (snow is not guaranteed every winter!). Naomi may also experience a culture shock, as I doubt that she has seen many of us dancing and drumming with enthusiasm and abandon—at least not so far!

Let's not forget that this works both ways. Why welcome a minister from abroad, if we expect them to fit in entirely with British ways? Perhaps Naomi will find that British society in general is rather irreligious; that it is individualistic rather than communitarian; struggling for a better material rather than a spiritual life. In our Churches, she may find our Christianity is often rather reserved. We cannot expect Naomi to come and just blend in with how things have always been. On the other hand, I'm sure that she will want first of all to observe and build on the assets we already have. After that, there may well be changes that represent a contribution from the World Church to our own Church life. Perhaps we shall pick up some African joy and freedom like Clive Myrie. The process of working together will take time. It should be easier *within* our congregations, because we have chosen to call Naomi to serve here, and will promise to support her. However, it may be more difficult for Naomi to discover how to deal with the nature of British society in general, and the attitudes of people outside our congregations. Let's not expect instant perfection and no teething troubles: and let's expect that both we and she have a lot to learn!

Ted Forgan

The next issue will be available around 1 April. Contributions are requested! Send them to Ted Forgan at Weoley Castle or Cheryl Thornett at Weoley Hill.

Prayer page

Lord Jesus Christ, we pray week in, week out, that your kingdom will come and your will be done. It's easy to say the words, far harder to mean them, for they are concerned finally not just with you, but with us. Help us to understand that your kingdom is not just in the future, but something that begins within us, here and now, so help us to recognise our role in bringing it nearer, through the love we show, the care we display, and the service we offer.

So we pray for our world and for an end to all that frustrates your purpose.

We think of those in countries racked by conflict, famine, disease and poverty; of those who face repression and discrimination, persecuted for what they believe or for who they are; and for those who are victims of crime, violence and war.

We pray for the unemployed and homeless, the sick and suffering, the lonely and unloved, the disabled and disadvantaged.

We pray for those who work to build a more just and loving world, all who strive to bring help and healing to those in need—pastors, preachers, missionaries and evangelists, doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, counsellors.

We think too of aid agencies, pressure groups, charities, churches, politicians, police and members of the armed forces—these and so many others who, in different ways contribute to the fulfilment of your purpose.

***Your kingdom come, your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.***

Please pray for peace in the Middle East and safety for those caught up in the conflict.

Please pray for Revd Sakala and her family as they prepare to join us and for our pastorate being ready to work with her.

Pastorate News

LENT CHALLENGE: 10 SECONDS A DAY

The Lent Challenge that was sent out by Synod last month included the wrong address. Here it is, with the correct address.

Lent challenge: 10 seconds a day

Would you give up 10 seconds each day this Lent? Pray this 15-word prayer:

“Gracious God, today is there someone You want me to connect with outside the church?”

Then stay attentive. If something happens— conversation, a nudge, an encounter—email a short line to acorn@nwsynod.org.uk

No pressure. No fixing.

Weoley Castle News

Sunday morning services: 11 AM at Weoley Castle Community Church

Mar 1st : 3 pm led by Naomi

Mar 8th : led by Anji Barker; including Communion

Mar 15th : Mothering Sunday—**informal family service with lunch**

Mar 22nd : led by Paul Tucker

Mar 29th : Palm Sunday—led by Barbara Calvert; at WCCC; joint with WH.

Apr 5th : Easter Sunday—led by our members; including Communion

On **Maundy Thursday** at 8 pm there will be Communion service remembering the Last Supper. Venue to be decided.

News of the Fellowship

We hear that Church Member **Margaret Wetherall** died peacefully on February 26th at the age of 93. She had been a faithful member of this congregation for more than 75 years and indeed joined as a ‘junior member’ 79 years ago! She was not a person to push herself forward,

but quietly expressed her Christian faith. She is remembered as having a lovely reading voice. In 1986, she wrote a history of the first 50 years of the Church, going back to the time when it was founded as a Congregational Church. We are most grateful for the loving care that she has received in recent years from the staff at Castle Croft care home and Uplands nursing home.

Diane & Keith Twamley's granddaughter Charlotte finally—after a couple of cancellations—had an important brain operation on February 25th. Initial indications are that this complex operation went well.

Chris Hopkins says her health is improving, but she is not yet back to 100%. More tests are continuing. Meanwhile, Mary, Latha, Kim & Rona have taken and passed '**Food Hygiene for Catering**' training courses. You can ask to see their certificates if they are volunteering in the kitchen!

Other News

The **Weoley-Good: Food-Fayre**—organised by 'Love Weoley Castle' took place on Sunday Feb. 8th at St. Gabriel's: see the picture. It was judged a huge success and we hope to repeat this experience at WCCC in April.

We hear that **Daniel Teplitski**, son of Yvonne & Oleg who lead the Elite Dance Group, has recently been awarded his **second Guinness World Record**. In the picture, you see him (in our Sanctuary) juggling with



extremely heavy cannonballs! In 30 seconds, he achieved a world record of 43 catches.

Ten of the people who come to Warm Welcome will get the chance to take part in a **Slow Cooker Training Course** on 13th March organised by Anji's friend Katerina. Participants will hear how to eat well and save money, time and power by batch cooking, and end up with a free slow cooker! We hope to repeat this...

Weoley Hill News

*The retiring collection this month is for **Restore**. Restore is a project of Birmingham Churches Together, which welcomes and supports refugees and those seeking sanctuary.*

World Day of Prayer

This year, the World Day of Prayer service will be at Langleys Rd Methodist Church at 11 AM. The programme has been prepared by women of Nigeria on the theme 'I will Give You Rest'. It will be followed by a Lent Lunch of soup, bread and fruit . Donations will go to the World Day of Prayer international funds.

Hopefully, we will be able to support this service as well as we have done at Weoley Hill.

FISH AND CHIP SUPPER AND QUIZ

This first quiz of the year will be on SATURDAY 21ST MARCH for FAIRTRADE with a start at 6.30 PM, so get there for around 6.00 PM to get a seat. There will be the usual fish, chips, sauces, pickles and a hot drink, with a doughnut, for £9.00 per person and join, or make up, a team of six. We will have a raffle so donations of items will be gratefully received, We hope to finish by 9.30. Please see Lorraine to book a place.

LD

TRADCRAFT IS 40!

Traidcraft as we once knew it is now known as ‘**Transform Trade**’, and this year they are celebrating 40 years since this organisation helping disadvantaged farmers and growers around the world was formed. This is what they say as we celebrate this anniversary.:

- **1979-85** And so it begins, the first Traidcraft catalogue and ‘Campaign Coffee’ is launched. (Do you remember **Campaign coffee**? I do—it was awful, but we bought it because of where it came from and who produced it. Thank goodness the coffee gradually improved over the years! CM)
- **1986** Supporters are selling Traidcraft products in churches and shops and want to donate profits to a related cause. **Traidcraft Exchange** is born: a charity designed to support people to get a fairer deal from trade, reaching people that Traidcraft couldn’t, but built on the same ethos.
- **Late 80s, early 90s** We realised we needed to work to end unjust trade rules and practices.
- **The 90s** We started to focus on shaping business practices—influencing many of the positive trade policies put in by the early Blair government.
- **In 1994** The first Fairtrade product hit the shelves
- **The 2000s** Our work with producers around the world really started to grow—from tea growers in India to dairy farmers in Kenya, reaching millions of people.
- **Late 2010s** Lots of appeals: Fair Necessities, Half Acre, Show you care—your support powered life-changing work with producers.
- **2013** A huge campaigning win—the Groceries Code Adjudicator is formed after years of influencing work. The next ten years see a huge improvement in the treatment of suppliers by supermarkets.
- **2022** We change our name to Transform Trade, to encapsulate our ultimate goal—reshaping trade so it benefits everybody fairly.



- **2023** The end of an era—after a few tough years, Traidcraft went into administration—eventually passing on the guardianship of the brand to Transform Trade.
- **2023 to present** In the last few years we’ve celebrated some big wins: helping to bring fairer prices for tea growers in Kenya, cocoa growers achieving record-breaking prices for their crops, bringing fairer prices to the vulnerable Pahariya community in India, the UK exiting the Energy Charter Treaty, working with fashion brands to improve and publish their informal worker policies.”

But there is still much to do. The proceeds from our Quiz and Fish and Chip Supper this month will go to Transform Trade, so although we no longer have our Traidcraft sales each month we are still contributing to their efforts.

If you would like to learn more about Transform Trade’s efforts to persuade the government to set up a fashion watchdog to protect vulnerable workers in the fashion industry, visit Transform-Trade.org/fashion-watchdog.

CM

Eco Corner

Have you ever considered how your own individual lifestyle is having on climate change? Using electricity, gas, travelling by car or air and what we buy to eat, etc? These are factors which contribute to the situation. It is possible to calculate your Carbon Footprint via websites and there are then hints on how to offset your figures.

One such website is the Climate Stewards one. The carbon footprint is worked out on energy usage at home, travel by car or public transport, short or long-haul flights, the food that you eat and purchasing goods and services.

Although we are a bit late there has been a Lent initiative to lessen your carbon use during Lent, one item per week from 18 February to 3 April over 7 weeks.

WEEKLY THEMES:

- Week 1: Creation Care Week 5: Transport / Driving
 Week 2: Consumerism / Shopping Week 6: Energy / Electricity / Gas
 Week 3: Money / Investments Week 7: Social Media
 Week 4: Food Waste / Meat &
 Dairy

Sign up to get the emails which accompany each weekly theme and learn how to reduce your carbon usage. I have copies of them all and they are each about 6 pages long of useful information. For the theme for week 2 there is a repair café at St John’s church, Harborne but I know no further details. Getting things repaired rather than replacing is a saving of land fill etc.

If we all do a little it can help our planet.

Ann Evans

Weoley Hill Calendar for March 2026		
Tuesday	3	2 PM: Lent Group
Friday	6	11 AM: World Day of Prayer, Langleys Rd Methodist Church, Lenten soup lunch afterwards.
Sunday	8	10.30 AM: Worship & communion led by Ann.
Tuesday	10	2 PM: Lent Group
Sunday	15	10.30 AM: Mothering Sunday worship led by Revd Ian Thornley.
Tuesday	17	2 PM: Lent Group
Wednesday	18	7.00 PM Elders' meeting
Saturday	21	6.00 PM Quiz & fish & chip supper
Sunday	22	10.30 AM: Worship led by Alan.
Tuesday	24	2 PM: Lent Group
Sunday	29	11 AM: Palm Sunday worship at Weoley Castle.

Fridays 6.45- 8 PM in term time: Community Choir. See Gordon or Alan.

Excerpts from ‘How Green was my Valet’

Jeeves: call me a taxi! You are a taxi, sir.

Lady of the house: "I want you to stand at the front door and call my guests' names as they arrive."

Butler: "Very well, madam. I've been wanting to do that for years!"

The man who wanted to become a butler started by applying to be a doorman: because he thought it would be an entry-level position.

"Butler! I will need my black coat tomorrow, as I am going to a funeral of a relative."

"Very well, Sir—and your binoculars?" "Binoculars?" "I understand that it is a distant relative, Sir."

A wealthy woman had lost her right hand and left foot in a car accident. Her doctor told her that he would have her new prosthetics ready the next day. She sent her butler to go pick them up from the hospital. The butler was a couple of hours early, so he waited on her hand and foot.

Lady of the house to the butler: "Your thumb was on top of my steak when you served it to me!"

"I'm sorry, madam, but I wanted to make sure it didn't fall on the floor again."

A butler quit his job in a stately home. He refused to be ordered around in that manor.

Wife: "We've got to fire the chauffeur—he's such a terrible driver! This is the third time he almost got me killed...."

Husband: "But my dear, I think we ought to give him another chance."

Weoley Castle & Weoley Hill Churches

Weoley Castle Community Church, Quarry Rd:

Worship Sundays at 11 AM.

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. We have now called a minister who will join us later in this year.

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

